



HERITAGE STATEMENT

Rear extension and refurbishment of 10 Rushford Avenue, Levenshulme

August 2021

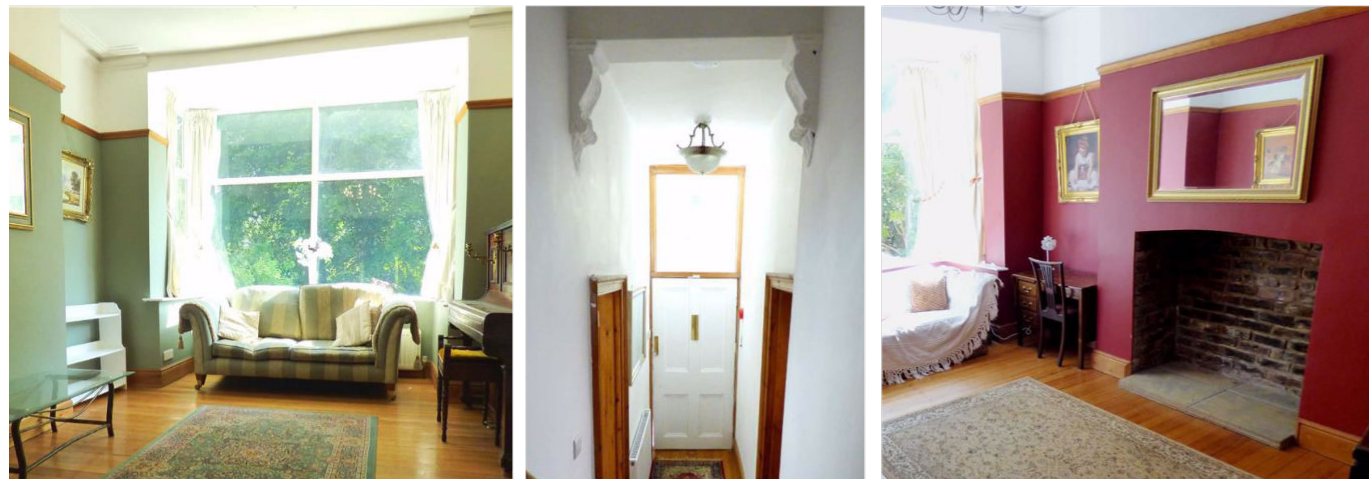


FIGURE 1: existing front elevation and internal spaces to 10 Rushford Avenue.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document accompanies a full planning application for a rear extension, external insulation and internal modification works to 10 Rushford Avenue and should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement issued separately.

10 Rushford Avenue is positioned at the Northern Periphery of the Rushford Park Conservation area and dates from the late 19th Century. It is the first of 4 dwellings that all appear to be have been constructed at the same time, being reflected down the party of the neighbouring semi-detached dwelling at 8 & 6 Rushford Park. The existing dwelling has been significantly altered at some point in the past 50 years such that it now appears significantly different from other buildings in context of the conservation area. The proposed works are intended to sensitively adapt the existing structures, retaining significant features and being sensitive of the surroundings, while enhancing the fabric performance of the building to make the house suitable for a new generation of inhabitants.



FIGURE 2: figure ground showing extents of conservation area

2. URBAN GRAIN

10 Rushford Avenue, and it's contemporary neighbours conform to the original, characteristic urban grain at Rushford Park, with house frontages uniformly set back a considerable distance to the centre line of the road. This contextual grain is significantly disrupted by the 1960's / 70's 3 storey apartment blocks at Scott House and Rushford Court, which ignore this rule. The remaining frontages are not uniformly designed but feature formal elevations (see Figure 3.1), being generally heavily vegetated on either side of the road. Number 10 is host to a large mature Beech tree and several smaller trees and shrubs bordering Rushford Avenue that entirely block the house from public view at most times of year. Surrounding vegetation makes it nearly impossible to read the front elevations of most of the houses in context with the neighbouring houses throughout the area.

The rear urban grain is less formal, with a variety of rear outriggers, extensions and out-buildings of different depths, heights and construction evident throughout the estate (see Figure 3.2). Park Grove acts as a rear service track to 10 Rushford Avenue and it's immediate neighbours. The application site is immediately adjoined by incongruous low level communal garages for the neighbouring apartment block to the West, while further along Park Grove the road becomes an informal frontage for a pair of slightly later semi-detached houses with articulated front gable facing across the playing fields. Vehicular access for these dwellings is from Central Avenue past another incongruous 3 storey apartment block at Warwick House. It is considered that there is no clearly defined building line facing Park Grove at this point, although the neighbour at 6-8 Rushford Avenue features a prominent 2-3 storey outrigger whose gable acts as point of reference within the rear gardens.



FIGURE 3.1: examples of frontage elevation conditions throughout Rushford Park (based on Google Maps imagery)

FIGURE 3.2: examples of rear elevation conditions throughout Rushford Park (based on Google Maps imagery)



FIGURE 4: breakdown of front elevation details: “Original Detail” Vs “Lost / Additional Detail”

1. Pilastered door reveal, with appropriate front steps apparently having been rebuilt in a different brick.
2. Prominent brick reveal detailing to frame bay windows, now rendered.
3. Painted stone cills, now appear offset due to windows having been apparently rebuilt.
4. Bay window structure appears original at low level, now rendered - as are others in context.
5. LH chimney appears original scale according to neighbours.
6. RH chimney appears to have been made taller and appears out of context.
7. Windows have been rebuilt with lower heads and reveals adapted in relation to original cills.
8. Windows have been replaced throughout with modern style timber frame windows with opening top lights.
9. Bay window / canopy roof was rebuilt apparently higher than neighbours resulting in boarded bay head detail.
10. Roof has been rebuilt with altered materiality and eaves detail that does not match neighbours.
11. Original brickwork has been covered by Tyrolean cement render painted white throughout. Patching and eaves level damage results in generally uneven arris lines and poor surface finish generally.



FIGURE 5: neighbours at 8 & 6 Rushford Avenue (image credit: <https://media.onthemarket.com/properties/9071699/1310970718/image-0-480x320.jpg>)

3. EXISTING VS CONTEXTUAL DETAIL - FRONT ELEVATION

It is apparent that the neighbours 8, 6 & 4 Rushford Avenue, as well as the majority of original houses within the conservation area that remain have been generally more sensitively maintained in the past century and retain a good degree of original or equivalent high quality detail. Buildings throughout the state tend to retain their original materiality and formality for their frontages, although it must be appreciated that the one unifying feature of the estate is variety (see Figure 3.1) with a number of notable creative adaptations and details that have added to the unique character of the area. It is considered that the original front elevation of number 10 would have been at least equivalently detailed as it's neighbours until works undertaken in the 1970s. According to the previous owner, at this time the house was rented out as a house of multiple occupancy and the existing brick facade had been allowed to deteriorate “beyond repair”. It is apparent that in subsequent works, a number of original features were lost or altered, significantly changing the appearance and proportions of the house such that it is quite blank compared to it's neighbours.

The key remaining elements of the original design are the original vertical delineation and segmented elevation around and over the bay windows, and also the decorative reveal around the front door and light, which contains inset neoclassical pilasters, scrolls below an architrave header below a large square transom light. It is evident that both the main roof and the lean-to roof above the bay windows have been rebuilt, with the latter having apparently been constructed at a higher level than the original (evident when compared to the neighbour at number 4). The later roofs were finished in interlocking concrete pan-tiles, which replaced former slate roof, which are still evident on the majority of neighbouring buildings. The main roof eaves do not match neighbouring details, being flush to the uneven render finish of the prominent centre bay and cheeks. The bay windows and all other windows were replaced with modern timber frame windows with opening top lights, that lack the elegant proportions of the neighbours. It is evident by the location of the cills at first floor level, when compared with the neighbours, that the windows have been reduced in size and offset to one side, which explains the clumsy proportions in the elevation. The window heads have also been lowered, which likely results from the clumsy replacement of original brick flat arches that had failed.



FIGURE 6: breakdown of rear elevation details: “Original Detail” Vs “Lost / Additional Detail”

1. Line of original 3 storey outrigger evident on neighbour at number 4.
2. Window reveals and cills apparently original placement, although windows are modern.
3. Chimney stack retains original height, apparent size increase compared to number 4.
4. C20th extension with reduced eaves line compared to neighbours and internal floor levels
5. Loss of 3rd storey with valley roof structure.
6. Mismatched kitchen window and door lack detail or proportions of earlier building. Steps are poorly detailed and not suitable for location.
7. Window cill non aligned and window width does not match windows elsewhere.
8. Low arch window heads are inconsistent, in poor condition and do not relate to context.
9. Chimney is increased in height in relation to existing.



FIGURE 7: neighbours at 8 & 6 Rushford Avenue (image credit: <https://media.onthemarket.com/properties/9071699/1310970718/image-16-1024x1024.jpg>)

4. EXISTING VS CONTEXTUAL DETAIL - REAR ELEVATION

Rear elevations are generally informal in Rushford Park. The immediately neighbouring buildings appear to retain more or less original outriggers but they have generally been modified and amended such that the material and styling varies from plot to plot. Throughout the estate a range of rear installations provide a variety of precedents, including large 3 storey outriggers, expansive glazed extensions, linear extensions strung between the rear elevation and the end of the garden and a variety of alternative roof forms ranging from flat roof, hipped, parapets, gable and cat-slide (see Figure 3.2).

Even considering the informality of the context, the existing rear elevation of number 10 stands out as particularly poorly detailed, incoherent and out of proportion. It is apparent that during the major works in the 1970s, an original 3 storey outrigger (evident in the reflected neighbour at number 4) was reduced in height and resolved within the same reduced flush eaves line as a 2 storey extension to infill the remainder of the rear elevation. The result is an apparently lower scale building compared to its neighbour, despite having more or less matching eaves at the front. Moreover, the additional rooms have resulting windows and a rear door that are quite disorderly with differing head heights, cill heights and widths than the existing and ignoring the proportions of the existing building. The internal resolution results in large blank spaces in the elevation and distinctively uneven appearance.

It is considered that there are no details in the existing elevation that would stipulate preservation in order to protect the visual amenity of the neighbours or the broader conservation area.



FIGURE 8: Precedent - 6 Zetland Road, Chorlton Passiv Haus refurbishment completed by EcoSperic (image credits: <https://www.e-architect.com/manchester/zetland-road-homes-in-chorlton>)

4. EVALUATING HERITAGE IMPACT

Based on the character of the site, it is considered that there are 3 distinct aspects to the potential heritage impact implied by this planning application. The first and most significant impact arises out of works to be undertaken to remediate and upgrade the frontage elevation facing Rushford Avenue. The second and less significant impact arises from works to construct the rear extension facing Park Grove. The third and least material from the perspective of public interest, is the impact of the works to reorder internal accomodation.

To articulate the primary impact, the existing frontage elevation is not in good condition and has been significantly altered such that it no longer meets a standard worthy of preserving the current state. The limited vantage points and views from neighbours minimizes the visual disturbance. The proposed works are intended to sensitively rationalise the frontage in it's existing condition while enabling the building to have a significantly reduced operational carbon footprint. While the materiality will remain largely the same, sharper detailing will be achieved and the proposed change of colour will help the look feel more intentional. It should be noted that the tactic of painting the facade a different colour reflects a nearby building within the conservation area that has a painted frontage (see Figure 3.2). The most significant remaining element at the front door will be preserved and expressed by the addition of a contextually appropriate tile surround, which will be carefully designed and specified to meet the requirements stipulated by the conservation officer.

The secondary impact is less significant owing to the contextual informality at the rear of dwellings both neighbouring number 10 and throughout the Rushford Park Conservation Area. It is considered that the proposal will be a radical improvement to the bland state of the existing elevation and will properly articulate the new internal accommodation in the facade. While using strongly contrasting materials, the new extension will appear harmonious in context with the variety of contextual palettes. It is considered appropriate to adopt this approach considering the broad variety of styles and materials that characterises the existing conservation area. There are many precedents for this, however considering the intention to significantly improve the dwelling's thermal performance, it is perhaps most appropriate to refer to the recently completed Passiv Haus refurbishment project at Zetland Road in Chorlton (see Figure 8): the rear gable of this project was articulated distinct from the existing materials using contrasting petrified timber cladding and stark minimal detailing in a similar manner as is proposed in this project.

The third and perhaps least admissable impact in relation to the public intent of the conservation area relates to the private, internal quality of the existing building. The formal front rooms in 10 Rushford Avenue boast more original detail and are arguably more worthy to preserve and enhance in their current state than anything within the frontage elevation. It is this reasoning that further justifies the intention to insulate the external face of the building, in order to enhance the fabric performance without disturbing decorative cornices, original hardwood floors and other rich details that are far more evident when inside and looking out, than from the outside looking in.



FIGURE 9: Proposed impressions of the front, rear and internal views of number 10 Rushford Avenue.



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