

550b Wilbraham Road, Chorlton, Manchester Heritage Statement



JW | Conservation

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April 2022

**550b Wilbraham Road
Heritage Statement**

**Prepared for Helen Frazer
by
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April 2022

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This updated report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2022 by Helen Frazer. Its purpose is again to assess the contribution which the site makes to the Wilbraham Road / Edge Lane Conservation Area and to assess the impact of revised proposals to replace the property with a new house. It relates to a new application for planning permission and the Local Authority has asked for an updated Heritage Statement to reflect any changes in the conservation area and updated policy since 2017. Planning permission was previously granted in 2017 for a replacement house (ref. 115014/FO/2017) and again in 2020 (ref. 125348/FO/2019).

Section 3 summarises the development of the associated number 550, formerly Merlewood, which appears to date from the 1880s and was probably built for local engineer, Thomas Craven. Number 550b was built on Merlewood's garden, probably in the 1980s.

Section 4 assesses the significance of the site. The **site does not fulfil any of the requirements for contribution to special interest** although number 550 does fulfil a number of them and is still considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Section 5 outlines the heritage planning policy context. The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act is the primary legislative document; there is a presumption in favour of preserving and enhancing heritage assets. The NPPF provides national policy on heritage assets and development, and sets out a proportionate approach taking account of significance. The public benefits of a proposal likely to affect the character of a designated asset should be balanced against the harm to heritage assets.

The assessment of the impact on the heritage asset and its setting is set out in Section 6. Policy 202 sets out that where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The principal benefits of the proposals are that they will again replace a building which adds nothing to the Conservation Area with a building of a very high quality contemporary design using a sympathetic palette of materials already approved by the Council, which will add interest to this part of the Conservation Area and will provide a single new family house in an area of high levels of multiple occupancy. The design is similar to that given planning permission in 2017 but has a smaller footprint to reduce impact on the rear garden.

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF. **The proposals are considered to be beneficial to the significance of the Conservation Area and meet the requirements of local and national planning policy.**

This report could be added to the Historic Environment Record as a permanent publicly-accessible record, in keeping with the requirements of Policy 193.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background to the Report

This updated report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2022 by Helen Frazer. Its purpose is again to assess the contribution which the site makes to the Wilbraham Road / Edge Lane Conservation Area and to assess the impact of revised proposals to replace the property with a new house. It relates to a new application for planning permission and the Local Authority has asked for an updated Heritage Statement to reflect any changes in the conservation area and updated policy since 2017. Planning permission was previously granted in 2017 for a replacement house (ref. 115014/FO/2017) and again in 2020 (ref. 125348/FO/2019). The NPPF requires significance to be assessed when changes are proposed to heritage assets, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance.

2.2 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the staff of Manchester Archives and Local History and the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record for their help with the research for the previous report.

2.3 Purpose of the Report

The report is designed to provide the author's professional opinion of:

- A summary of the history and development of the site;
- An assessment of its contribution to the Conservation Area;
- An assessment of the impact of revised proposals to replace the property.

This report has been written by Jenny Wetton, BA MSc (Arch Cons) IHBC, Consultant based on evidence from documentary sources and a new survey of the site.

2.4 Copyright

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3 HISTORY OF SITE

3.1 History of Site

By the mid-19th century, Chorlton-cum-Hardy was still a rural area with only the lanes of Edge Lane and Manchester Road in existence and one or two properties. After the arterial route of Wilbraham Road was constructed in 1861, the character of the area changed from open fields to that of a suburban area. The Lloyd and Platt Hotel was built at the junction of Wilbraham Road and Manchester Road in 1870. The opening of a railway station at Chorlton in 1880 accelerated this change.

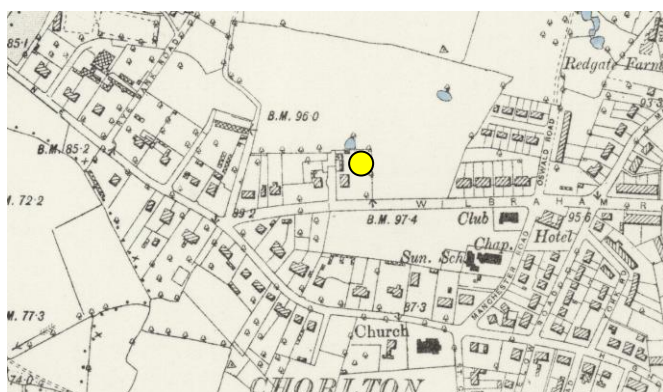
Development of Wilbraham Road was slower than at the junction with Manchester Road but much of the frontage had been filled in by 1905, with detached and semi-detached houses on their own plots.

Title deeds show that Thomas Craven purchased the land now covered by number 550b Wilbraham Road in 1877 from the Right Honourable William Tatton, Baron Egerton of Tatton. He built a house known as Merlewood¹, now at number 550, which is shown on the 1894 map as a large detached property with outbuildings along Maidstone Road to the north and a large garden to the east. In the 1881, Census Thomas Craven is listed as a mechanical engineer living with his family and three servants. He was a partner in the engineering firm of Gresham & Craven which had a factory in Ordsall Lane, Salford, initially making sewing machines and later locomotive braking systems. The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester holds company archives and sewing machines. Craven soon moved to The Avenue in Ashton-on-Mersey.

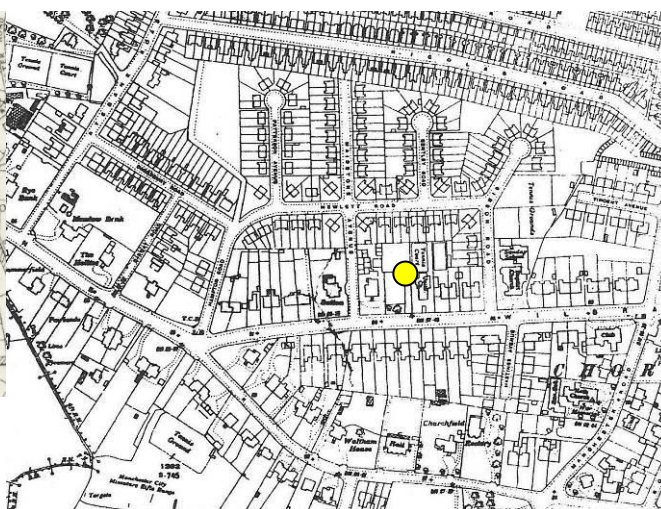
By 1901, the house was occupied by Samuel Ashton, bleacher and dyer. By 1933 the Unitarian chapel and detached and semi-detached houses had been constructed to the east and south and the housing estate along Hewlett Road to the north. A historic photograph from 1959, taken from the garden, shows the house at the time. At around this time, Merlewood was converted into flats.

In the late 20th century, a house was built on the garden and is shown on the 1989 map.

¹ Andrew Simpson, *What you find when you go looking down Wilbraham Road* [online]. Available at: <https://chorltonhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/what-you-find-when-you-go-looking-down.html> [accessed 13.08.16]



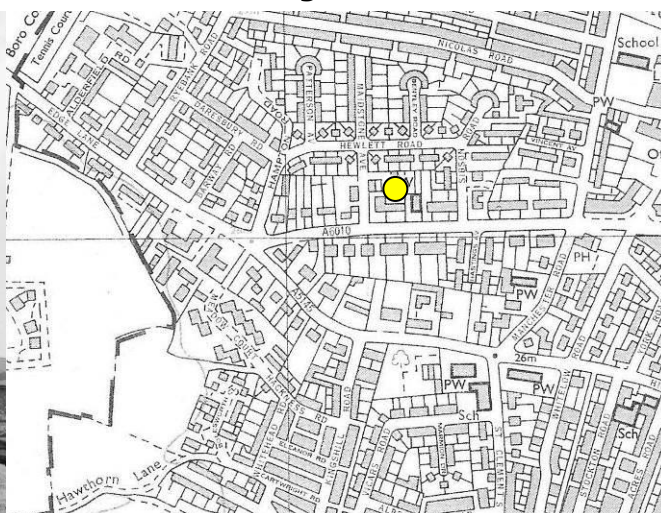
OS 1894 Showing Location of the Site



OS 1933 Showing Location of the Site



Merlewood in 1959 by A. E. Landers ²



OS 1989 Showing the Site

3.2 Planning History

- Ref. No: 125348/FO/2019 Erection of a part two/part three storey dwelling house with basement and associated car parking and landscaping following demolition of existing building on site. 550B Wilbraham Road Manchester M21 9LB | Validated: Fri 07 Feb 2020 | Status: Decided
- Ref. No: 115014/FO/2017 Erection of a part two, part three-storey dwelling with basement, and associated boundary treatment, landscaping and car parking following demolition of the existing dwelling 550B Wilbraham Road Manchester M21 9LB | Validated: Thu 12 Jan 2017 | Status: Decided
- Ref. No: 071278/FO/2004/S1 Erection of a four storey block of 8 self-contained flats with basement car parking following demolition of existing building 550b Wilbraham Road Chorlton | Validated: Mon 19 Apr 2004 | Status: Decided
- Ref. No: 070047/OO/2003/S1 OUTLINE APPLICATION for the erection of a 2 storey block of 4 flats and a three storey block of 10 flats with associated car

² Manchester Archives and Local History, ref. GB127.m18286

parking and landscaping 548a/550b Wilbraham Road Chorlton | Validated: Thu 20 Nov 2003 | Status: Decided

- Ref. No: 069300/00/2003/S1 OUTLINE APPLICATION for the erection of a three storey block of 12 self-contained flats after demolition of existing bungalows 550B Wilbraham Road Chorlton | Validated: Mon 22 Sep 2003 | Status: Decided
- Ref. No: 068805/00/2003/S1 Erection of a 5 storey block of 23 self-contained flats following demolition of existing houses 548A/550B Wilbraham Road Chorlton 548A/550B Wilbraham Road Chorlton Validated: Tue 15 Jul 2003 | Status: Decided

4 SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 The Site

Number 550b Wilbraham Road is a single-storey house of an irregular shape. Constructed in red brick with part of the front elevation clad in timber, there is a central entrance flanked by windows and with a garage on the west side. The roofs are pitched with a waterproof bitumen covering and a small central chimney.

The front yard is covered with a poor quality concrete and asphalt surface although there is a garden at the rear. The front boundary is defined by a historic stone wall with moulded stone copings topped by a poor quality modern timber fence and with a timber gate which together largely obscure the house from the road. The side and rear boundaries are defined by a poor quality timber fence with concrete posts, although part of the rear fence is covered by ivy growth. There is a view towards the rear of the property from Maidstone Mews.



550b Wilbraham Road Front Elevation



Rear of 550b

There is no record relating to the site on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.

4.2 Contribution to Conservation Area

The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the two listed buildings in the Conservation Area, of which 550b potentially falls into the setting of the Grade II listed Lloyd & Platt's Hotel:

'Built in the typical Manchester red/orange brick with buff coloured sandstone dressings Lloyd's Hotel is a high two-storey building with a third storey contained within the steeply pitched roof that is covered in blue/black welsh slate. Brick and sandstone corbels form the brackets to the eaves and are emphasised by a course of blue brick at the lower level with the wall junction.

Vertical sliding sash windows are evident in all window openings. A single storey bay window on the Manchester Road elevation is linked by a horizontal stone balcony to an adjacent doorway. A brick faced dormer window breaks up the roofline to this elevation.

At the corner of the building a double height curved bay is surmounted by a conical roof, providing an architectural statement at the Wilbraham Road/Manchester Road junction. A double height splayed bay window, with its own roof, characterises the Wilbraham Road elevation.³

The Appraisal also summarises the contribution of key unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area:

'Many of the buildings that line the streets within the area are architecturally impressive and most of them can be regarded as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.'

It is the relationship of these various buildings to each other, to their sites and to the streets that mostly determine the character of the area, rather than individual buildings of high architectural or historic quality. The fact that only two buildings in the area are formally listed bears out that fact.'

One of these is the former Conservative Club built in 1892, also in the characteristic red/orange brick with stone dressings in a Gothic Revival style.

Adjacent to number 550b is the former Merlewood, built in the same brick and of two storeys with an attic and basement in a Gothic Revival style. Its size gives it a presence on both Wilbraham Road and Maidstone Avenue, where it has a three-storey outrigger. On the other side is number 548a, dating from the 1950s and built of red brick of two stories with an attic, a central white-painted rendered gable on the front elevation and a pitched red-tiled roof. Regency Court dates from the 1990s and is less successfully designed in a standard red brick of three stories with a concrete-tiled pitched roof. It has been built in front of the Chorlton Unitarian Church which is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as the rear remains of a larger building on the site opened in 1901. However, this has been substantially altered with a modern entrance and its significance diminished.

On the opposite side of Wilbraham Road are Edwardian semi-detached villas, also in red/orange brick with stone dressings, of two stories with prominent three-storey gables, many of which have had modern dormers added.

³ Manchester City Council. *Wilbraham Road / Edge Lane Conservation Area* [online]. Available at: http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/1398/wilbraham_road_edge_lane_conservation_area [accessed 13.08.16]



Lloyd & Platt's Hotel



The Former Conservative Club



550 Wilbraham Road Front Elevation



550 West Elevation



Numbers 548a and Regency Court



Edwardian Villas

Boundaries tend to be historic stone or brick walls with copings and many properties have mature trees and shrubs within front gardens or at boundaries. There are also trees planted within pavements. The Conservation Area Appraisal goes on to say:

'The spaces within the conservation area are based on the street pattern, so spaces are essentially linear, their width determined by the distance buildings are set back from their road boundaries.'

The spaces are characterised by the front gardens to individual properties, sometimes containing mature trees, by the brick or stone boundary walls and their related gateposts, by the pavements, kerbs and highway surfaces.'

'The trees and garden hedges to the front of properties make a significant contribution to the character of the street 'corridor'. The trees planted within the private gardens make an important contribution to the public realm, to which can be added the street trees planted within pavements, as in Wilbraham Road and Hastings Avenue.'

Views along the length of Wilbraham Road are identified as being significant.



View Eastwards Along Wilbraham Road

View Westwards Along Wilbraham Road

4.3 Summary of Significance

The current Historic England guidance *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* contains a check list to identify elements in a conservation area which may contribute to the special interest. A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and value have not been eroded.⁴:

- Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
- Does it have landmark quality?
- Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
- Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
- Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?

⁴ Historic England. *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1* (English Heritage, 2016), 16

- Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g., a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

Number 550b does not fulfil any of these requirements although number 550 fulfils the requirements in the following ways:

- It has a historic association with the former Merlewood which appears to have been built for the regionally significant engineer Thomas Craven and is built of materials typically found within the Conservation Area;
- The house illustrates the development of Chorlton;
- The house has an association with the historic road layout;
- It reflects the traditional functional character of the area;
- Its use contributes to the character or appearance of the area.

There have been very few changes to this part of the Conservation Area since the previous assessment. Number 550b still makes little contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area, apart from its stone boundary wall, although number 550 fulfils a number of the requirements for contribution to special interest and is considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. However, unsympathetic modern housing and asphalted parking at Maidstone Mews appears to have replaced its associated outbuildings, which may have included stables, and a rear walled garden which are considered to have diminished the significance of number 550.



Late 20 Century Housing at Maidstone Mews

Number 550b is obscured from the Grade II listed Lloyd & Platt Hotel by distance and trees and is again **not considered to fall within its setting**.

5 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The national legislative framework for development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; often referred to as the Listed Buildings Act. This sets out the duty on local planning authorities with regard to listed buildings and any buildings or land within a conservation area, when determining applications for planning permission. It is essential that these legal duties are considered, alongside the contents of the NPPF and other planning policies and guidance.

For listed buildings, the planning authority '*shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses*' (section 66).

Listed building consent is required for alterations which are likely to affect the character and special interest (significance) of the building. It is not required for like-for-like repairs, nor for alterations to modern fixtures and fittings which will not affect historic fabric, such as the removal of a modern partition.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2021 replacing all former planning policy statements (previous edition NPPFs). *The Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* should be read in the light of the NPPF and does not comprise policy.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government has three interdependent objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The latter objective includes contributing to 'protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.' So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**. Policies 189-208 are related to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

The *Planning Practice Guide* states: 'In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.'

Policy 193 states: 'Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.'

Policies 194 and 195 of the NPPF require planning applicants and local planning authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be appropriate to the

assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when the potential impact of proposed development to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Policy 196 states: 'Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.'

Policy 197 states: 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

Policy 199 states: 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

Policy 200 states: 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Policy 201 states: 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'

The *Planning Practice Guide* gives guidance on how to assess if there is substantial harm:

'In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm⁵.'

Policy 202 states; 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

Policy 205 states: 'Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'

5.2 Manchester City Council Core Strategy

Policy CC 9

Design and Heritage

Design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be given to the City Centre context and character.

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the

⁵ Department for Communities & Local Government. *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: Decision-taking: historic environment* [online]. Available at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/> [accessed 13.05.15]

range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

Policy EN 1

Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes. Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives.

8. Southern Character Area

There is a notable presence of older development (1750-early 1900) at key junctions and along historic radial routes such as Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road, often but not exclusively associated with District Centres. The largely flat terrain has enabled the subsequent infilling of land between these routes with a more regular layout of predominantly residential development up to the 1960s. Much of this subsequent development was associated with the purpose built radial parkways, serving the City Centre. Princess Parkway now forms the principal road link between the City Centre and the Airport. The area contains pockets of formal open space including some significant historic parks.

- New development needs to retain the identity and focus of activity associated with the historic District Centres.
- Where appropriate development along the radial routes such as Princess Parkway should be commensurate in scale with the prominence of its location.

Policy EN 3

Heritage

Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

5.3 Manchester City Council Heritage Asset Strategy

Manchester has its own local list of Mancunian Assets. Whilst designated assets have statutory protection, those which are identified locally (and therefore not designated) have no statutory protection; but are a material consideration for planning purposes. The criteria for inclusion are published as Appendix A.

6 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Summary of the Proposals

Andrew Wallace Architects have designed a revised scheme for a new two-three-storey detached house to replace the existing number 550b.

There are further details in the Design and Access Statement and the drawings which accompany the application.

6.2 Impact of Changes on the Conservation Area

This analysis is based on the guidance given within the Historic England *Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets*. In Chapter 3 *Addition and Alteration*, and under *General Points*, the guidance states:

'The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting. Replicating a particular style may be less important, though there are circumstances when it may be appropriate. It would not normally be good practice for new work to dominate the original asset or its setting in either scale, material or as a result of its siting.⁶

Magnitude of Impact on Conservation Area

The plans and elevations which show the proposals show a number of changes, principally the demolition and replacement of the existing house, with a new house with a somewhat smaller footprint than that given planning permission in 2017, thereby retaining more of the rear garden.

Impact on Significance

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The question to be addressed is how far the proposed change impacts on the designated asset and, in that respect, what effect it would have on its significance.

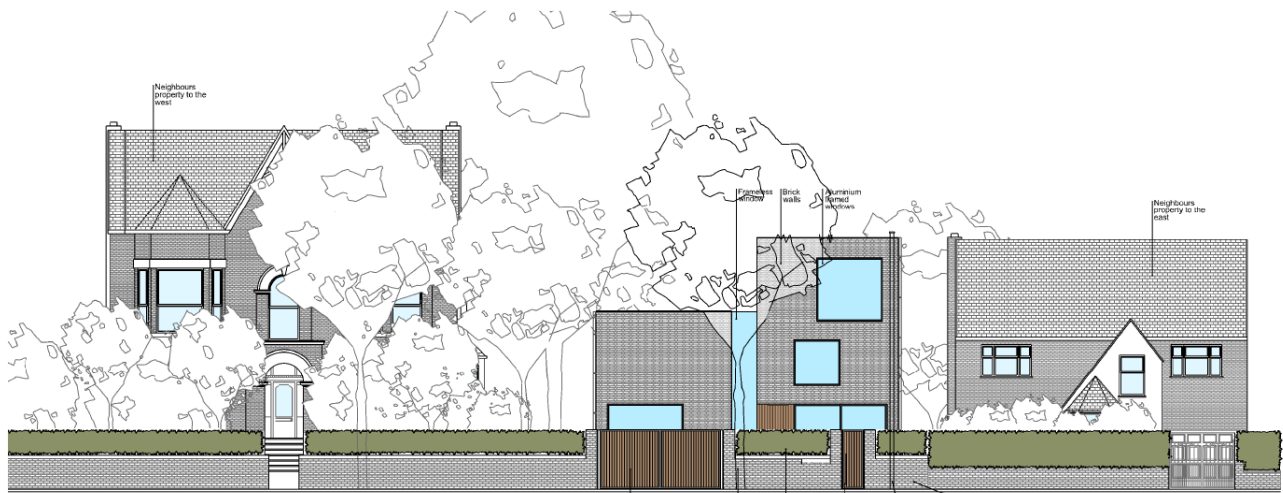
It is the degree to which the change of environment would impact on the values identified in the sections above.

The new house will change the character of this part of the Conservation Area, by virtue of constructing a two-to-three-storey house where there is presently a single-storey house. However, the height and massing are the same as the proposals previously given planning permission, the position is the same as that given planning permission in 2017 and the design is again in a very contemporary style. In order to

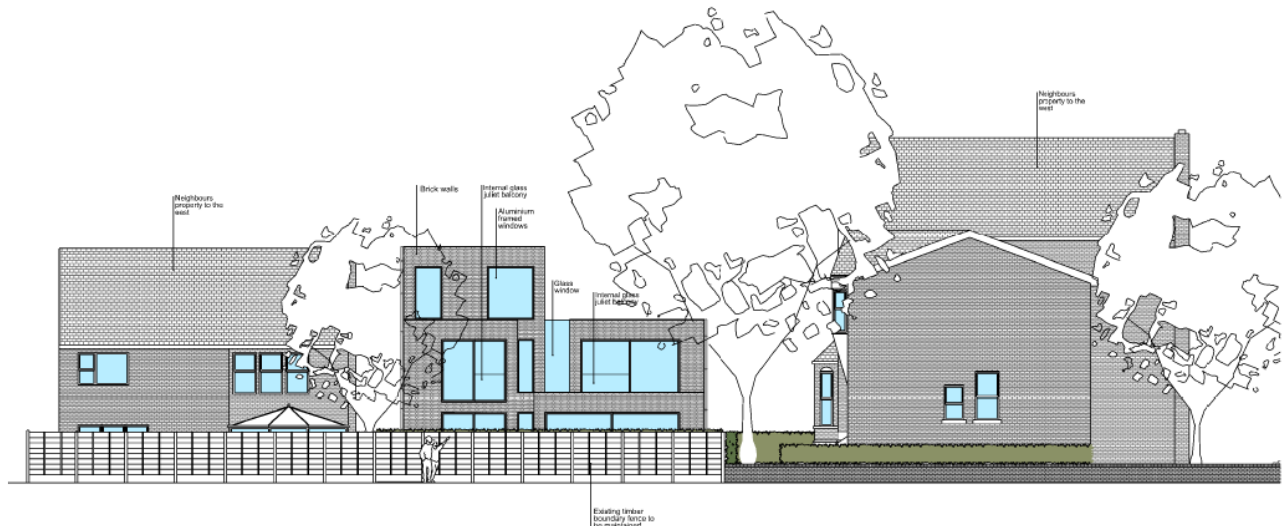
⁶ Historic England. *Making Changes to Heritage Assets: Historic England Advice Note 2* (Historic England, February 2016), parag. 41

keep views of the historic house at number 550 open, the second floor has been lowered on that side. Construction materials are again proposed to be brick with aluminium framed windows and doors, with the front door and garage door in a good quality timber. It is again proposed to use buff brick, in keeping with houses in the area in a similar material; this material was approved in the first application but could be secured by condition. A number of windows at different levels are proposed on the front, which will give a more active frontage than the existing very closed frontage.

The stone boundary wall and street tree will be retained and the poor quality timber fence at the front will be replaced with a hedge to the same height which will help to soften the boundary. The frontage to the house will again be laid to grass with a tiled pathway but with no basement rooflight.



Proposed Street Scene



Proposed Rear View

6.3 Overall Impact on Significance

Although the proposals would again result in a house of a very different character to those existing in the area, there is already some variation in style along the north side of the road and the new house would add interest to this part of the Conservation Area.

Planning permission has already been granted in 2017 for a similar replacement house (ref. 115014/FO/2017) and again in 2020 (ref. 125348/FO/2019). The revised proposals are for a house on a somewhat smaller footprint, thereby retaining more of the rear garden. The position of the proposed house is the same as that given planning permission in 2017.

The principal benefit of the proposals is again that they provide a single new family house in a high quality, contemporary design in keeping with best practice and which will add interest to this part of the Conservation Area, in materials found in other houses in the area and already approved by the Council. The building is considered to be subservient to and does not dominate the historic number 550. The design has been altered to ensure that views of the upper part of the east elevation of that building will be kept open and will not harm its setting. The historic boundary wall and many of the trees will be retained and the front and rear will benefit from high quality landscaping in an appropriate style.

The revised design incorporates photo-voltaic and solar hot water panels, which will reduce the environmental impact of the house, and a sedum green roof at the rear.

The *South Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework* states:

'Achieving best-practice design and sustainability in new development

As with development in other parts of Manchester and nationally, many new schemes in South Manchester in recent years have not capitalised on the opportunity to install the highest standards of sustainable and innovative design. Instead, a large number of flats and standard design developments have tended to detract from the character and distinctiveness of the area.⁷

The proposed design will add to rather than detract from the character of the area. Overall, the proposals will be **beneficial** to the significance of the Conservation Area.

⁷ Manchester City Council. *South Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework*2, 86

7 CONCLUSION

The information in Sections 3 and 4 of this report provides an assessment of the significance of the former Merlewood and its garden. Merlewood appears to date from the 1880s and was probably built for local engineer Thomas Craven. Number 550b was built on the garden, probably in the 1980s. The site does not fulfil any of the requirements for contribution to special interest although number 550 does fulfil a number of them and is still considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Section 5 sets out the legislative and planning policy framework and gives guidance on the circumstances in which consent may be required. Policy 197 of the NPPF sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to heritage assets. This should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing significance, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to the establishment of sustainable communities and economic vitality and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The assessment of the impact on the heritage asset and its setting is set out in Section 6. Considered overall and taking account of the benefits and mitigation outlined in Section 6, the impact of the proposals on the significance of the Conservation Area will again be beneficial. Policy 202 sets out that where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The principal benefits of the proposals are that they will again replace a building which adds nothing to the Conservation Area with a building of a very high quality contemporary design using a sympathetic palette of materials already approved by the Council, which will add interest to this part of the Conservation Area and will provide a single new family house in an area of high levels of multiple occupancy. The design is similar to that given planning permission in 2017 but has a smaller footprint to reduce impact on the rear garden.

The proposals are again **considered to be beneficial to the significance of the Conservation Area and meet the requirements of local and national planning policy.**

This report could be added to the Historic Environment Record as a permanent publicly-accessible record, in keeping with the requirements of Policy 193.

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