



BLUECHIP ARCHITECTS



Heritage Statement

for

Mr B Doveton
Appledale croft Ltd
2 Vincent Avenue
Chorlton
M21 9GR
June 2021

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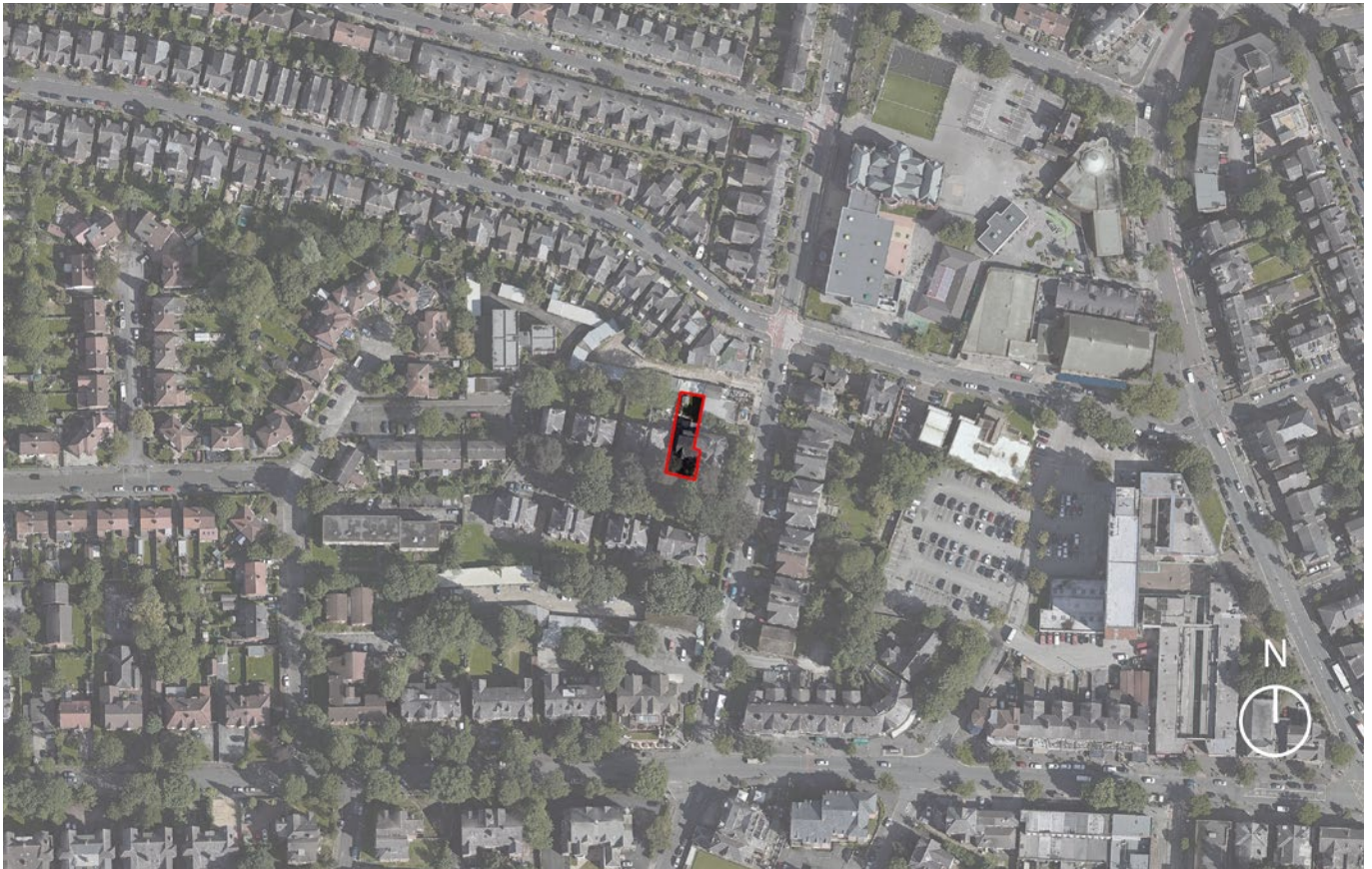
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Introduction

This heritage statement was produced in support of the current planning application reference 130429/FO/2021, for the basement conversion with enlargement of studio apartment to create a duplex apartment at 2 Vincent Avenue, Manchester, M21 9GR.

The document will include a brief history of the site and local area, an investigation into the significance of the site and review of the proposed scheme.



Site Location Plan

Site Location and Context

The application site is located in the northern part of the Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area, on a suburban residential road 3 miles from Manchester City Centre, and walking distance from Chorlton district centre.

The site is easily accessible being located along one of the main bus and tram transport corridors through the area and in close proximity to schools, shops and employment opportunities. The nearest bus stop is 500 metres from the Property. Chorlton is very well serviced by the bus network both east-west via Wilbraham Road and north-south via Barlow Moor Road into the City. The nearest tram station is Chorlton which is 0.3 miles from the Property. The Property is also close to a second tram line, Altrincham-Bury which is serviced closest by Stretford Tram Station on Edge Lane (1.2 miles from the Property).

The local architectural vernacular is predominantly Victorian three storey properties, with mature foliage and trees lining roads and frontages of dwellings. The area is comprised of dense plots with a mixture of detached and semi detached houses, terraces and apartments.

Site Character

The existing site is a large Victorian three storey semi-detached property, estimated to be built in the 1890s, which interlocks with No.3 Oswald Road. The property is divided into six self contained apartments which are accessed via the main front door on Vincent Avenue.

The property is in keeping with the historical vernacular of the Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation area being built in Manchester red/orange brick with buff coloured sandstone features. The frontage includes a two storey bay window with large sandstone headstone and ornate brickwork. The front door is set within an arched opening, whilst the vertical sliding timber sash windows are typical of the area. The pitched roof is clad in natural slate, with a steep pitched gable to the front elevation.

The site also has a private amenity space to the rear of the property and small paved driveway to the front. An established bin storage area is located to the side of the building, which is accessible to all apartments.

The front boundary of the site consists of a mid height brick wall and hedgerow, with white rendered piers surrounding the site entrance. The rear and side boundary are a mixture of independent mid height brick walls and the walls of neighbouring properties and planting. A number of mature trees also surround the site along the front boundary and apex of Vincent Avenue and Oswald Road.

Planning History

The planning history of the site as per the Manchester City Council online portal is as follows:

- App Ref. No: 098087/FO/2011/S1
Conversion of basement into two x 1 bedroom self-contained flats. (Application Refused 17/02/2012)

Appeal Ref No: APP/B4215/A/12/2172891 (Appeal Dismissed 20/09/2012)
- App Ref. No: 104147/FO/2013/S1
Erection of single-storey rear extension to ground floor flat. (Application Approved 31/01/2014)
- App Ref. No: 105444/JO/2014/S1
Variation of Condition no.3 attached to planning permission ref: 104147/FO/2013/S1 to allow alterations to the design of the rear extension. (Application Approved 28/05/2014)
- App Ref. No: 105444/JO/2014/S1
Works to trees- proposed removal of Sycamore tree from rear garden and replant with Cherry tree.
(Application Approved 01/07/2014)

Planning Policy

The following policies are relevant to the site and the proposed works submitted for determination.

Manchester Core Strategy (adopted 2012)

Policy CC 9 (Design and Heritage) states that 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.

Policy EN 3 (Heritage) states that 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

Paragraph 132 notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

Paragraph 134 in the NPPF 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 securing its optimum viable use'.

In regards to heritage policies, The NPPF provides the following definition of significance (Glossary Annex 2):

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also by virtue of its setting'.

Paragraph 138 confirms that not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will contribute to its significance.

Taking account of the above information, it is clear that the main policy focus is the protection of the significance of the heritage asset. In addition, it is clear that proposals should seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Site and Its Legal Status

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, in respect of conservation areas, that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability or preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

In considering applications for planning permission, local authorities are also required to consider the policies on the historic environment set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. At the heart of the Framework is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment. The Framework states that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'. The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as: A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). The Framework, in paragraph 189, states that: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Concerning conservation areas, in paragraph 201, that: Not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, considering the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

This document will aim to assess the significance of No.2 Vincent Avenue in sufficient detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals.

Definition of a Conservation Area

A conservation area is an area “of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Designation takes place primarily by local planning authorities under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Local planning authorities also have a duty from time to time to review the extent of designation and to designate further areas if appropriate. Section 71 of the Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Proposals should be publicised and incorporate public comment. Conservation area designation recognises the unique quality of an area as a whole. It is not just the contribution of individual buildings and monuments, but also that of features such as topography, layout of roads, pathways, street furniture, open spaces and hard and soft landscaping which assist in defining the character and appearance of an area.

Conservation areas identify the familiar and cherished local scene that creates a sense of place, community, distinctiveness, and environment. The extent to which a building positively shapes the character of a conservation area depends not just on their street elevations, but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, perhaps in an interesting roof scape, or skyline. Back elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards.

Control Measures Brought about by Designation

In determining applications for development in conservation areas, local planning authorities must pay special attention “to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

This requirement, as set out in legislation, is also reflected in national and local policy.

To protect and enhance conservation areas, any changes that take place must do so in a way that encourages positive conservation and management. Statutory control measures are designed to prevent development that may have a negative or cumulative effect on the character and appearance of an area.

Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area

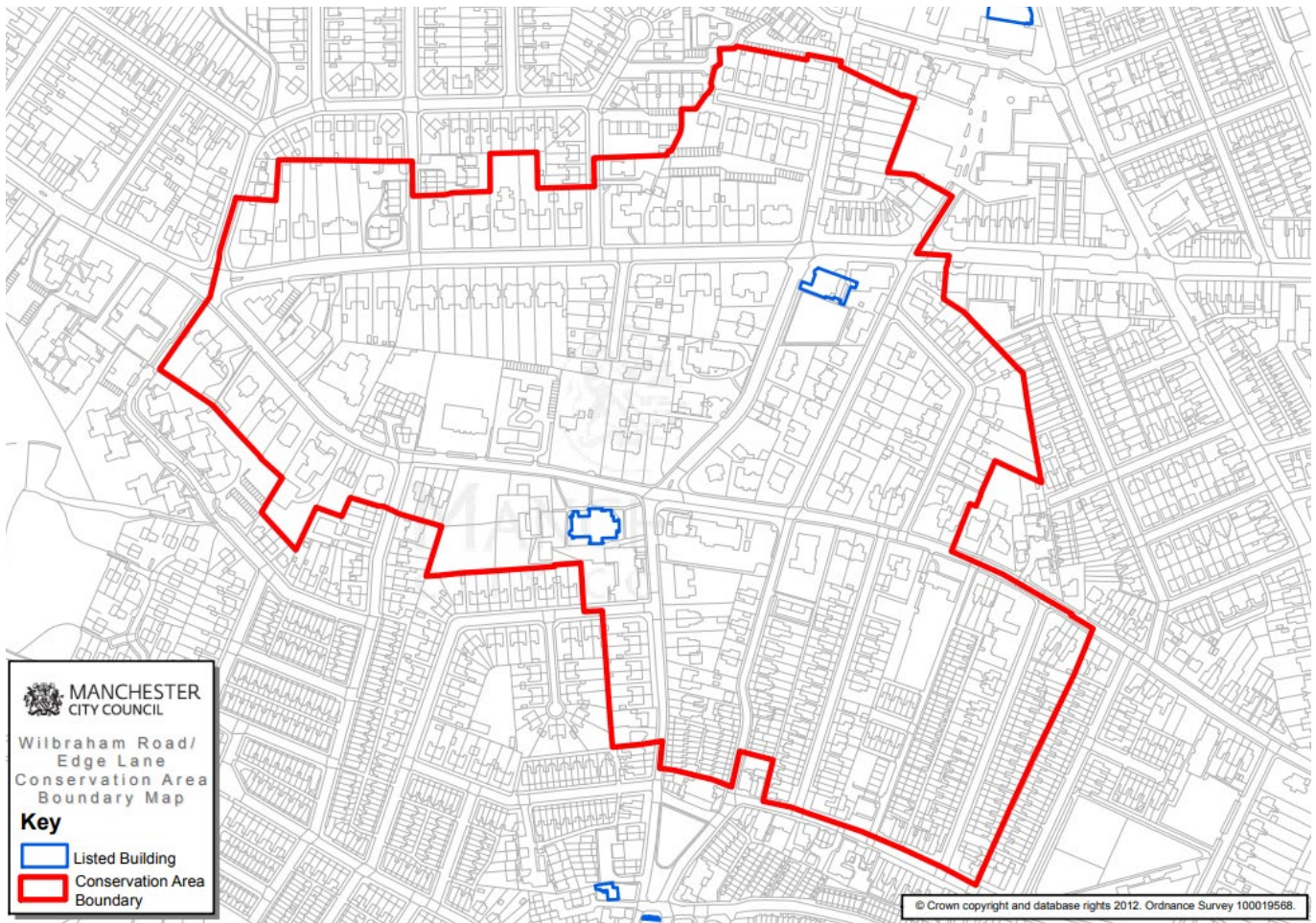
The Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area was designated in September 2005 following consultation with local residents to protect, maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the area by requiring a more stringent analysis of proposed developments whilst preserving the historic fabric.

The conservation area contains the settlement surrounding the junction of Wilbraham Road and Edge Lane, consisting of buildings and spaces of similar character dating back to the late 19th Century, often surrounded with dense, mature foliage and tree coverage.

The area is located approximately 3 miles south east of Manchester City centre and immediately north of the previously designated conservation area of Chorlton Green.



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Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area

Character Analysis of Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane Conservation Area.

Properties within the conservation area are based on the street pattern, with linear, plots whose widths are determined by the distance buildings are set back from their street boundaries. Front gardens to individual properties, sometimes contain mature trees, and are bounded by either brick or stone boundary walls with related gateposts.

The characteristic pavement detail, which still contains visible historical elements, is comprised of riven surfaced natural stone flags, bonded at right angles to the boundary walls, contained by a 300mm wide stone kerb, whilst road surfaces as seen on St Clements Road, had 3 or 4 courses of either granite or gritstone setts bonded parallel with and next to the kerb, whilst the rest of the carriageway was bonded at right angles, but in the same sett.

Rear gardens that line streets provide an important amenity facility to the wider area, because they can be viewed from the roads between buildings. They can be regarded as being within the public realm, even though they are privately owned. Collectively, gardens, both front and rear, provide important spatial characteristics relevant to the conservation area.

The conservation area has two formally listed building of architectural and historic interest; St. Clements Church on Edge Lane and Lloyd's hotel on the junction of Wilbraham and Manchester Road. Buildings which have historical elements and features are regarded to add substantial value to the distinctiveness of local area.

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Proposals

The proposed scheme intends to extend the existing ground floor studio flat into the basement of the property to create a duplex two bedroom apartment and introduce a further two bedroom apartment in the remainder of the basement.

The existing basement, which is currently a vacant void space, will be converted and upgraded to make comfortable liveable space which will protect the entire building from further infestation of vermin and damp due to a lack of heating and insulation. The proposals will reinstate the basement windows to provide essential natural daylighting and ventilation to the lower ground spaces and return the exterior appearance of the property to its original design - maintaining the character of the site and area.

In addition, two light wells to the front of the property will be reinstated to provide daylight, ventilation and serve as a means of egress in the event of fire to the spaces. The light wells will be formed from with brickwork retaining walls. The only part of the light wells which will be visible externally will be Victorian style wrought iron or steel fences painted traditionally black. The black paint is intended to match the existing front steps balustrade and the existing black painted top floor balcony and rainwater goods, visible on the exterior of the property. The proposed reinstatement of the two light wells at the front of the property will take up a small proportion of the existing front garden. This will not impact greatly on the existing planting, and the existing form of landscaping to the front and side of the Property will be maintained.

The proposed scheme will not make any alterations to the existing access driveway, front garden or boundary, nor utility services. The propose development is limited to the existing building envelope and does not seek to extend or add additional volume of the building.

Detailed plans of the elevations have been included as part of this application depicting the works to the light well brickwork, railings and windows which will match existing. In keeping with local policy and Conservation area, the proposed design will be in keeping with the character of the traditional style with all works are to be carried out sympathetically and in keeping with the property's architectural features and where possible match existing materials and period features.



Photographs of Existing Basement (including bricked up bay window)



Photographs of Exterior of the Basement

Justification and Mitigation

The proposed scheme seeks to utilise an existing basement, reinstating external windows which had been bricked up in recent history, to create two generous two bedroom apartments.

Whilst the site had a previous refusal to create additional accommodation in the basement, application ref. no: 098087/FO/2011/S1, the client has taken into account the criticisms of the previous scheme and significance of the property within the Wilbraham Road/ Edge Lane conservation area leading to a more sensitive and thoughtful design, which will only proposes a single additional apartment.

In addition to the renovation, the proposed works will aim to restore the building to its original appearance with matching windows and brickwork for the reinstated basement openings and light wells, and matching cast iron railings to match the existing balustrade of the entrance staircase. The impact of the scheme will be minimised further by the retention and maintenance of the front boundary wall, hedgerow and mature trees, keeping the site consistent with the character of the area.

Similar properties in the immediate area have basement conversions and flats, whilst numerous dwellings along Vincent Avenue have blocked up cellar windows. The existing basement is already a generous size, with good structural integrity and enough head height, that no underpinning is required for the proposed works. This would mean that external construction works will be minimal to the creation of the light wells.



Proposed Plans and Elevations

Conclusion

In summary, the positive benefits of reinstating the original openings of the 2 Vincent Avenue and upgrading the basement for residential occupation far outweigh the impact of construction works on the site.

The proposed scheme has been designed sensitively to retain and maintain the front garden and boundary of the site to protect the street frontage and appearance of the property, whilst diligently restoring the light wells to the front of the building in materials which match the historic architectural features of the building. There are no above ground extensions or alterations proposed which would increase the massing or footprint of the building.

Hence, this scheme should be recommended for approval to provide an urgent amenity and restore the exterior of 2 Vincent Avenue to its original form, enhancing the character of the area.

Resources

Historic England (English Heritage), Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management. (2011)

Historic England (English Heritage), Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, (2005).

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Manchester City Council, (https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/1398/wilbraham_road_edge_lane_conservation_area)