Heritage Statement

in connection with

Residential conversion and extension at 18 Range Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8ES

Prepared by

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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Methodology

1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to assess the potential impact of proposals to convert and extend 18 Range Road, Whalley Range, upon the heritage significances of the Whalley Range Conservation Area.

1.2 The approach taken adheres to the principle of managing change intelligently, which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment. The methodology employed involves the following sequential steps:

- Establish the nature of the proposed change(s), including the overall aim of the change and any emergent design proposals
- Identify any designated and/or non-designated heritage assets potentially affected by proposals for change
- Evaluate the heritage values and significances of the heritage assets, placing particular focus on values and significances that might be affected by the proposed change(s)
- Produce a statement of significance which is to be used to guide the design of changes in a manner that places conservation of significance as a priority
- Analyse the potential impact of the finalised design upon the significance(s) of the heritage asset(s)

1.3 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation'[i] and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'[ii] and responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2019). Historic England guidance in preparing heritage statements, entitled 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019) has also been used. The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. Further guidance has been obtained from the following Historic England publications:

- GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)
- GPA3 - Setting and Views
- Historic England Advice Notes (HEAN) 1-12

The Author

1.4 Chris O'Flaherty, the author, is a Chartered Building Surveyor and professional member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). With a background in the

recording, analysis and conservation of historic buildings, the author holds a Master's Degree in Building Heritage and Conservation and specialises in heritage planning matters.

Methods of Research and Investigation

1.5 Inspections of the site were carried out in June 2020 to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. In accordance with the NPPF, background research has been proportionate to the nature of the building/site, the proposed change(s) and the likely impact of the change(s).

2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location

2.1 18 Range Road lies on the northern side of the road just west of Deerpark Road. A location plan is given in figure 1.

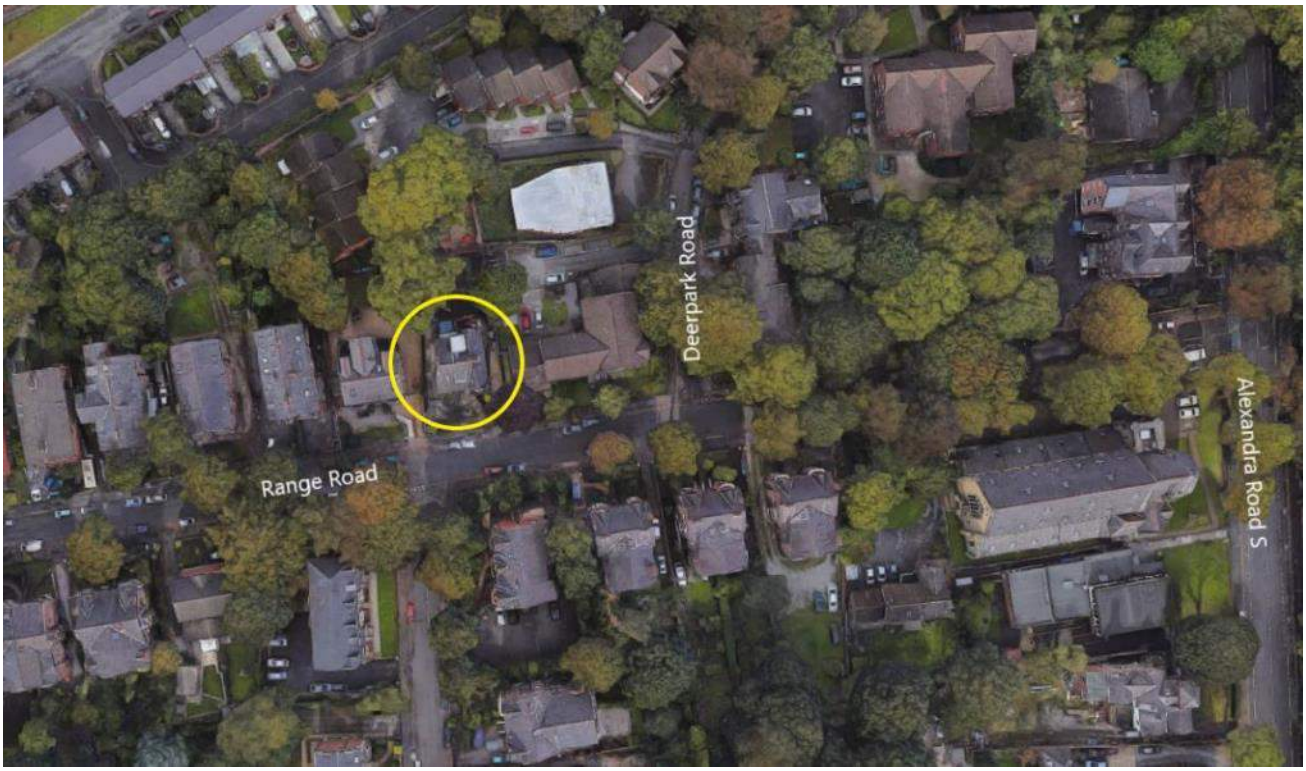

Figure 1) Site location

Outline Description & Historical Background

2.2 Whalley Range Conservation Area is situated approximately two miles south of Manchester city centre. Much of the Area, which is predominantly residential, lies within a parcel of 63 acres of land purchased for speculative building in 1832 by a prominent banker, Samuel Brooks. Brooks' acquisition resulted in a planned early suburban development of large dwellings set mainly within a neat grid pattern of roads, east of which lies Alexandra Park laid out between 1868 and 1870.

2.3 Mapping shows Range Road was established near the middle part of the C19th and number 18 with its neighbours are first shown in detail on mapping from 1893 (figure 2). At this time the building had a large rear annexe, which had subsequently been removed by the mid C20th as shown in figure 3. Immediately east of number 18, two former detached dwellings, 14 and 16, were demolished (1980s) and replaced by a large two storey L-shaped apartment block that turns the corner to Deerpark Road.

2.4 The houses built on Range Road are quite typical large detached and semi-detached

Victorian villas, many two storeys with attics and cellars, set in reasonably generous plots on a mature tree lined road. Although generally developed by the end of the C19th, there have been significant changes along the road in more recent years with a number of replacement modern buildings, including the apartments and adjacent St Pius church building east and north of 18 Range Road, housing to the north of St Pius, a much altered and extended former tram depot at the east end of Range Road with modern apartments opposite, and a further small apartment block mid way along the Road. These various modern interventions are shown below in figures 3-8.

2.5 Most recently 18 Range Road was converted as a nursery, but this business is no longer viable.

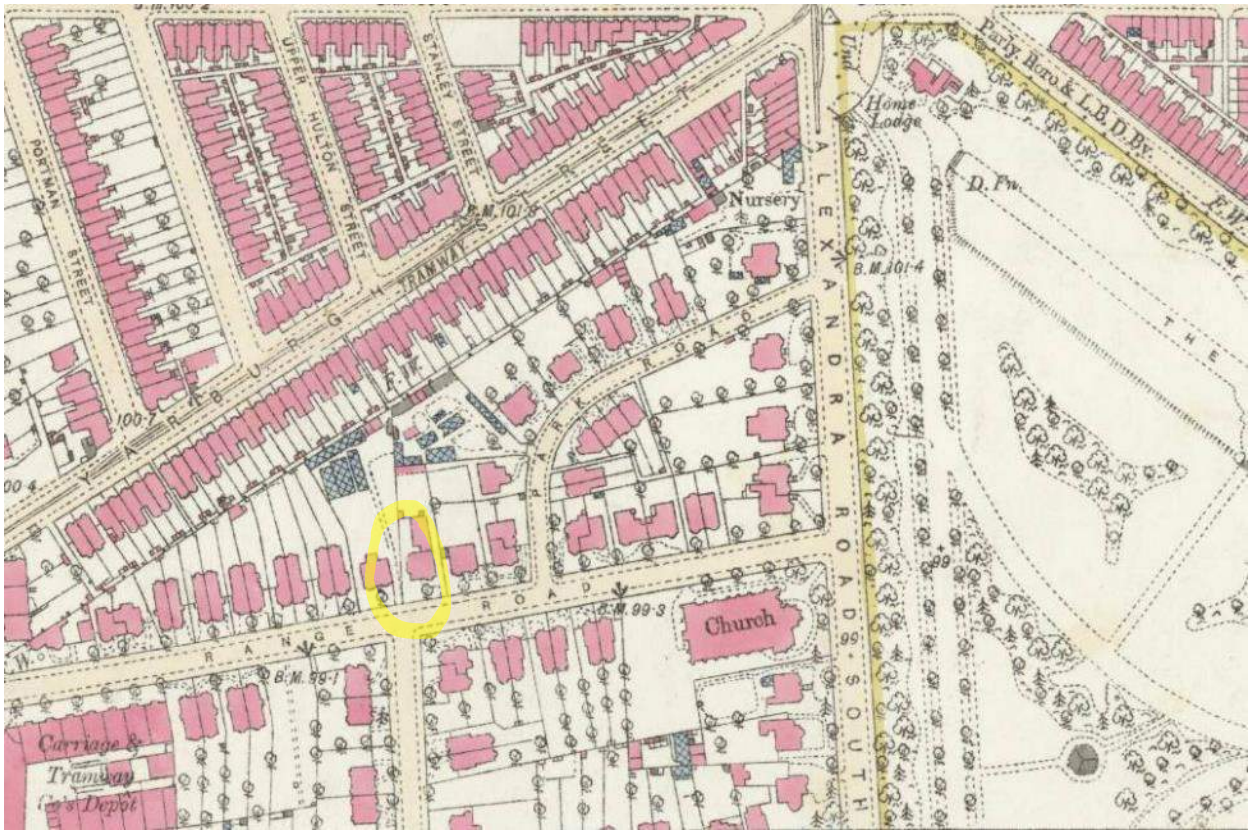

Figure 2) OS map of 1893 showing Range Road and Alexandra Park to the east. Number 18 is highlighted showing a large rear annexe beyond which there are a series of glasshouses (now a road of modern houses)

Figure 3) 18 Range Road

Figure 4) Apartment block to the east of number 18 on the site of two former dwellings

Figure 5) Church of St Pius (right) and apartment block (left) with glimpse of the rear of 18 Range Road looking west from Deerpark Road

Figure 6) Converted former tramway depot with large apartment block at the west end of Range Road

Figure 7) Modern housing on south side of Range Road

Figure 8) Aerial view showing later C20th development in the vicinity of 18 Range Road

Heritage Asset Designations

2.6 The property lies within the Whalley Range Conservation Area, which was designated in October 1991. A partial boundary map showing the subject property is given below.

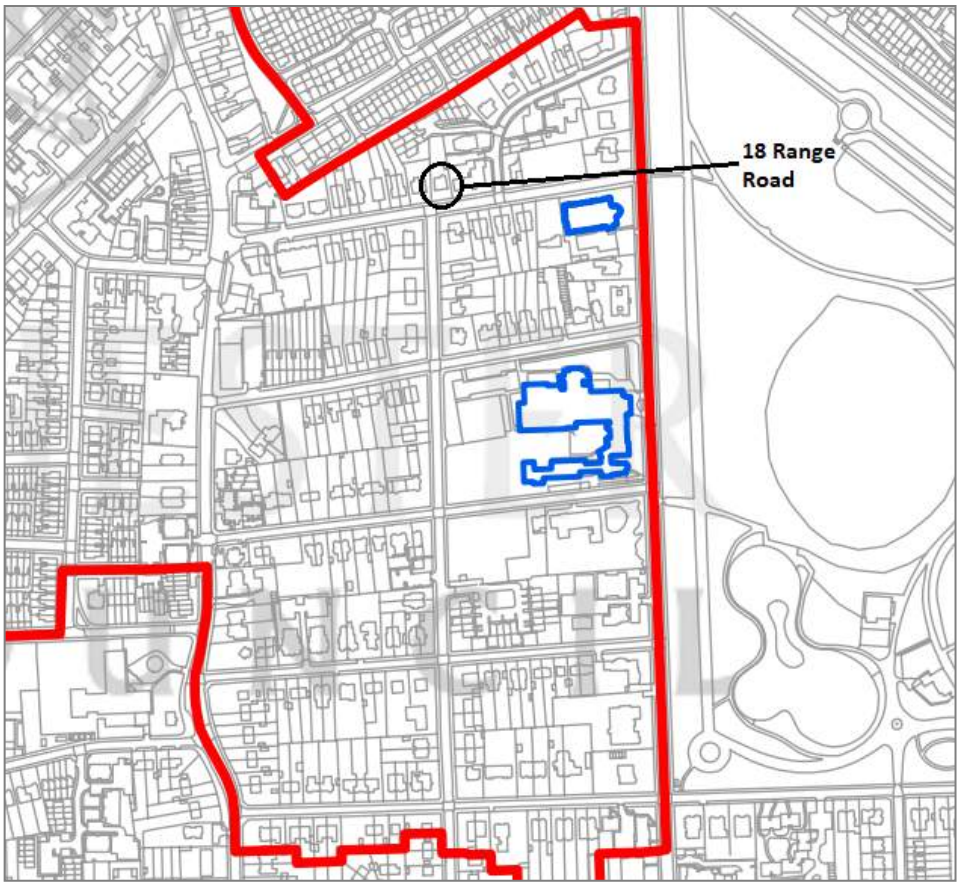

Figure 9) Whalley Range Conservation Area map (part) showing 18 Range Road. The buildings outlined are listed and Area boundary is shown outlined in red

3 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

Introduction

3.1 The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by Historic England (2008 and 2019)[iii],[iv] and relates specifically to the requirement contained in paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), given in extract below:

3.2 "*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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."*

3.3 The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values/interests that might be affected by the proposals, before evaluating these and composing a 'Statement of Significance'. The essential purpose of the Statement is to set priorities for conservation of significance and enable an objective assessment on the likely impact of the proposals, with specific interest in the avoidance of harm.

Heritage Interests

3.4 The heritage interests explored below are distilled under the following headings: archaeological interest; historic interest; architectural and artistic interest. The exploration focusses specifically on those interests deemed of possible relevance to the proposals site, and it is not an exhaustive assessment of the inherent heritage interests of the relevant heritage assets. The phrase 'heritage interests' is interchangeable with the phrase 'heritage values', which was used in Historic England guidance from 2008[v].

Archaeological Interest

3.5 Historic England (2019) suggests that "*There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."*

3.6 Mapping from the 1890s shows that there used to be a large annex to the rear of 18 Range Road. This was demolished in the 20th century and it is possible that some buried remains of the annexe exist. There is unlikely to be any notable archaeological interest, however. Earlier mapping shows the site was farmland in the 1840s.

Historical Interest

3.7 Historic England (2019) suggests this to be - "An interest in past lives and events (including

pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity".

3.8 The property provides an illustration of suburban development of the mid to late 19th century and herein it possesses some historic interest which contributes to the wider historic interests of the Conservation Area. This illustrative quality is primarily enjoyed from the public realm off Range Road, with views of the main front elevation.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

3.9 Historic England (2019) suggests that: "*These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.*"

3.10 The property is a fine and substantial former Victorian villa which is typical of its age and type and contributes to the blend of architectural styles present on the road. It is perhaps less ornate and less accomplished than many of the dwellings on the south side of the road, and its architectural qualities have been somewhat diminished by past alterations, including the fitting of plastic windows and replacement roof tiles. However, the building contributes to the architectural interests of the wider Conservation Area, and these visual qualities are further enhanced by the mature tree-lined road.

3.11 Without doubt the primary architectural interest of the building lies in its main front elevation facing the road. The rear of the property, by comparison, has comparatively minimal architectural interest and owing to its private position it does not make a notable contribution to the Conservation Area. In terms of the building's setting, the property does sit close to more modern development to the east and north, and this establishes a mixed character which only partially relates to the Victorian development of the 19th century.

Statement of Significance

3.12 Having assessed the heritage interests associated with the site, it is now possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance. This will consider prioritising conservation, in light of the proposals for change. In this context, a statement of significance is given below.

3.13 An appraisal of heritage interests has been conducted to explore the inherent heritage

interests of 18 Range Road and the contribution made to the architectural and historic interests of the Whalley Range Conservation Area. The overall findings of the appraisal are that the property is an attractive and substantial Victorian villa which reflects some of its neighbours in terms of age and style. The building makes a positive contribution to the road in which it sits and is complimented by mature trees that line of the road.

3.14 The positive architectural and historic qualities of the building are principally embodied in its main front elevation, and conservation of the front elevation is of primary importance when considering the potential impact (positive or negative) of any future development upon the significances of the Conservation Area. The rear of the building, against which a large annex used to stand as shown on mapping from the late C19th, is by contrast situated away from the public realm of the conservation of area, therefore does not present a particular priority in terms of conservation. This is mindful that the rear, particularly to the north and east, is also situated close to C20th buildings which are not reflective of the 19th century era and do not contribute to the architectural and historic interests of the Conservation Area.

3.15 In terms of potential development, the rear of the building provides an obvious and low risk location for extension, in a position where the property formerly had a large rear annex evident on C19th mapping.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSALS

General Principles

4.1 General guidance on assessing proposed changes to heritage assets is given in chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). The NPPF establishes the premise that conserving significance should be a guiding principle when designing proposals for any development. In order to do this, it is first necessary to understand the heritage significance(s) of heritage assets before commencing with design.

4.2 Part 3 of this statement fulfils the need to understand significance and the findings of part 3 have informed the design of the proposals. There follows, here in section 4, an objective review of the finalised scheme, verifying to what extent conservation of significance has been achieved or whether any harm is likely to accrue.

Summary of the Proposals

4.3 The proposals involve conversion to apartments and the building of a new rear extension with car parking area beyond. The rear extension is not quite as long as the original rear annexe, but unlike the annexe it extends the full width of the building. The design of the extension is contemporary, blending old and new in much the same way as the conversion of the former tram depot at the east end of Range Road.

4.4 There follows a series of drawings depicting the scheme and specifically showing how the side and rear elevations will change and how the site layout will change. The only change to the front elevation is replacement of the unsympathetic plastic windows with fittings that are more in keeping with the style of the host building.

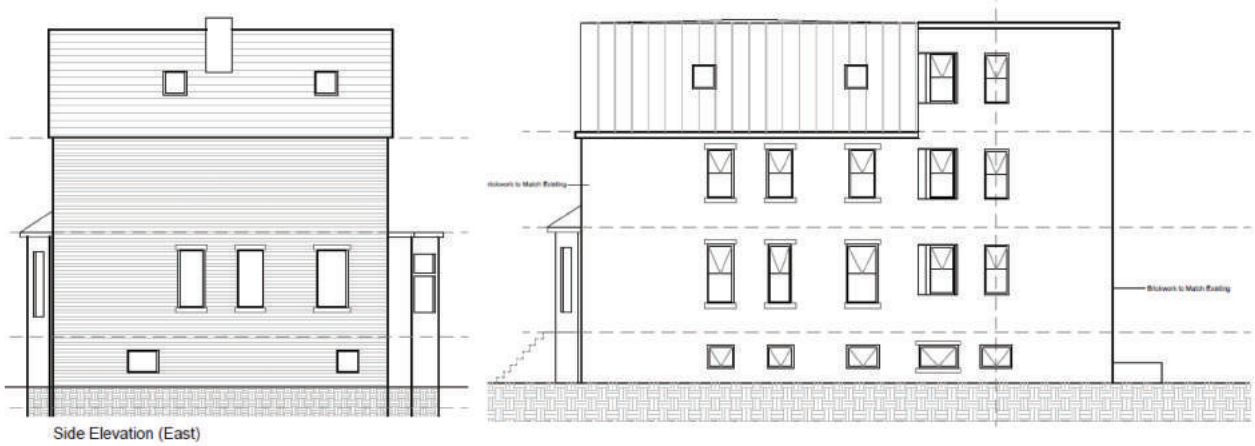

Figure 10) Right side elevation existing and proposed – the extended part being of matching brick with windows of matching proportions to the existing. The roof at the rear will be flat, allowing an extra storey of rooms and giving the building more of a contemporary appearance to the rear

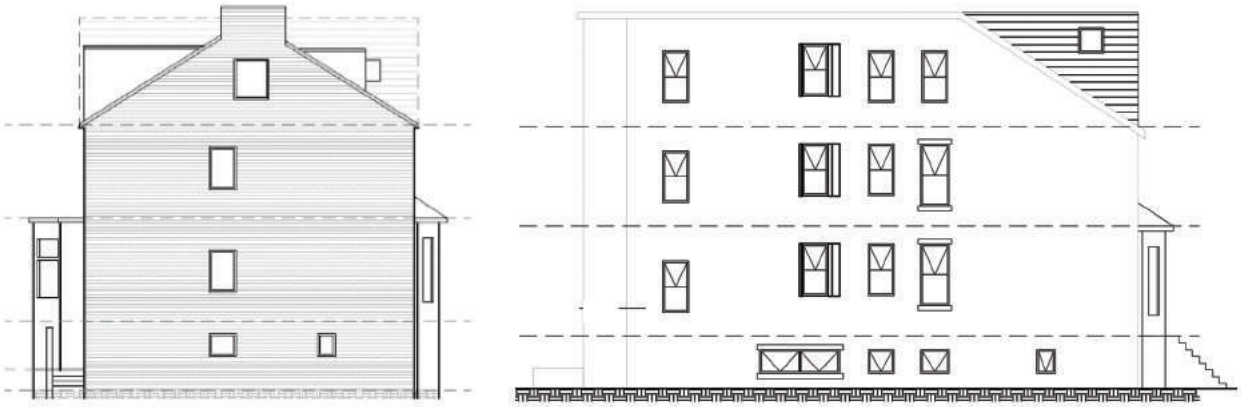

Figure 11)Existing and proposed left side elevations

Figure 12)Existing and proposed ground floor plans

Figure 13) Existing site plan showing neighbouring C20th buildings

Figure 14) Proposed site layout plan

Analysis of the Proposals: National Planning Policy Framework

4.5 As discussed earlier, section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2019) considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:

- 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;
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.6 The NPPF unifies the overall approach to planning, in order to ensure that deliberations over decisions relating to heritage assets are made in the full planning context. Securing sustainable development is the primary driver of the NPPF: in the heritage context this relies on maintaining active use (long term) in a manner that seeks to limit potential harm to significance.

NPPF Paragraph 193

4.7 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF 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."*

4.8 Parts 2 and 3 of this heritage statement acknowledge the need to explore and understand heritage significances in order to guide proposals for change and review likely impacts, all as outlined within the NPPF. On the matter of whether any harm to significance accrues, this is discussed in the passages below.

NPPF Paragraph 195

4.9 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF 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."

4.10 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF considers the circumstances where total loss or substantial harm to significance of a designated heritage asset might accrue on account of a development proposal. In this case, as the proposals relate to changes to only one property within the Conservation Area, there is no reasonable or appreciable risk of substantial harm or total loss of significance.

NPPF Paragraph 196

4.11 Paragraph 196 of 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*."

4.12 The potential risk of less than substantial harm to significance of a designated heritage asset, as referred to in paragraph 196 of the NPPF, could only theoretically arise in this case should the proposals alter the Whalley Range Conservation Area to such an extent that its special architectural and historic interests (the 'heritage significances') are eroded in an appreciable manner.

4.13 There is no doubt that the proposed extension will, when viewed from the sides and rear, represent a significant change to the property. This change will be partially visible from the road; however, the primary main facade of the former dwelling will remain as the principal contributor to the Conservation Area with its visual qualities enhanced by replacement windows. The glimpses of the extension from the road will generally comprise a continuation of matching brickwork, and the flat roof, given its height, will not generally be visible from the public realm. Where the building is more visible, namely towards the rear, this is principally private space and also space that is partly dominated by 20th century buildings as shown on the previous maps and plans. The extension will therefore represent a new addition in an area that is as much characterised by modern development as it is by 19th century domestic dwellings.

4.14 The changes to the former rear garden area , which has been released recently used as a playground, will involve conversion to a car park. This will sit immediately adjacent to the car park of Saint Pius church and therefore will not represent a notable change in terms of

land use. As shown in previous photographs of the site views off the property from the car park of Saint Pius will be partially obscured by trees and fencing, but will also be in a location where modern development is most prevalent.

4.15 In terms of the design of the extension, this blends the traditional material palette of the original building with some contemporary design features such as the flat roof and some cladding to the rear. A similar mix of traditional and contemporary is evident to the converted former tram depot to the east end of the road, which brings visual interest into the Conservation Area. Whilst the proposals for the extension to the property will likewise bring some visual interest, it is to be remembered that this will occur position of low visibility.

4.16 The overall impact of the proposals will be low as experienced from the publicly accessible parts of the Conservation Area. The primary significances of the Area will be conserved, with the front elevation and principle contributor to the special architectural and historic interests of the Area being enhanced. The scheme will return the property to its original use, namely residential, and therein will reinforce historical interests of the Area. This will occur with the construction of a new addition which in fact replaces a demolished annex to the rear of the property as evident in the late 19th century. Accordingly, the proposed extension follows historical precedent.

4.17 In conclusion it would appear reasonable to state that the conversion and extension reflect the original use of the building and also the original layout of the building. They do so in a manner which differs architecturally, however any concerns over the impact of this visual change how much reduced by the limited visibility of the proposed extension. By contrast replacement windows to the front elevation will be a very visible enhancement to the building and the conservation area. On balance it would therefore be reasonable to state that at the very least the proposals sustain the significances of the conservation area, or otherwise 'preserve' them in line with the requirements of planning law.

Analysis of the Proposals: Local Heritage Planning Policy

4.18 Local planning policy effectively follows, as it must legally do, the policy requirements of the NPPF, therefore separate consideration of local policy in the heritage planning context is not deemed necessary.

5 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1 This heritage statement has assessed the potential impact of proposals to convert and extend 18 Range Road, Whalley Range, upon the heritage significances of the Whalley Range Conservation Area. The overall findings of the statement are that, whereas the extension will significantly alter the rear of the building, its overall impact on the conservation area will be minimal and will not cause any harm. This is for the following reasons:

- The extension is in the position of an original rear annex to the property that was demolished in the C20th
- The extension is situated to the rear of the property, away from the public realm
- The extension is positioned adjacent to numerous C20th buildings which dominate the visual character of the Area to the northern and eastern sides of the site, where heritage interest peters out towards the edge of the Conservation Area.
- Glimpsed views of the sides of the extension from Range Road will encompass new walls built of traditional matching brickwork
- The conversion back to residential use respects and reflects the original use of the property
- Replacement of unsympathetic plastic windows to the front elevation will visually enhance the Conservation Area
- The proposals will secure a sustainable use for the building

5.2 In summary, it is therefore evident that the proposed scheme promises some enhancements but also some notable visual changes to the rear. On balance the overall impact of the scheme, considering the positives listed above, will be that of no harm to the significances of the Whalley Range Conservation Area.

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[i] Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation,* Historic England 2003

[ii] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008

[iii] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008

[iv] Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019) *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*

[v] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008