Feb 2021

106, College Road, Whalley Range, Manchester.

Design and access statement
Inc Heritage statement

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Introduction

This Design and Access statement has been prepared by SW Foulkes BA(hons) Dip Arch to accompany and support an application for planning permission with consent to demolish within a conservation area by Mr Michael Cohen to Manchester City Council for the proposed extension to the existing apartment building at 106, College Road, Whalley Range, Manchester.

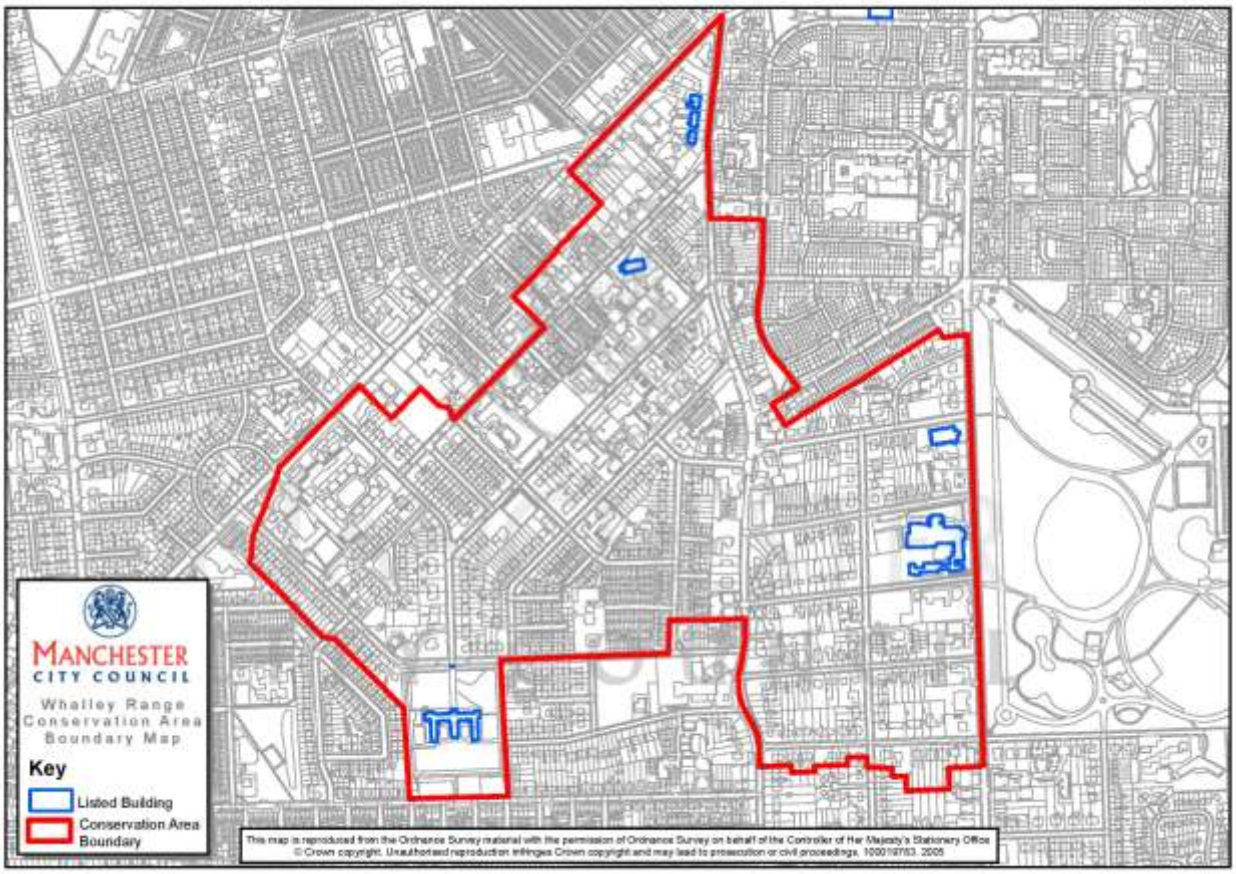
Site location

The Site is located on a corner plot in the leafy suburb of Whalley Range, some two miles to the south of Manchester City centre on the corner of College Road and Wood Road. The site is on the southern edge of the Whalley Range conservation area and is opposite the magnificent listed building for which the road was named. A fuller description of the site within the context of the conservation area together with an assessment of the significance of the site and the impact of the proposed works on the conservation area is to be found as part of the Heritage statement that also accompanies this application

Background

The building on the site was constructed as a substantial villa over three floors with a partial basement and a detached garage. At sometime later it was converted to six self contained apartments. The existing apartments that have been created by the conversion are now considered too small and the layouts too awkward for the current rental market. The Site was recently purchased by the applicant and he is thereby seeking to upgrade the building and the site as a whole to create more spacious and more relevant accommodation that will better justify its prominent position in the conservation area. This application was approved in 2020 (ref 127458/FO/2020. Beyond the refurbishment of the existing building the client applied for an extension to the building to form an additional two apartments. This was refused because it was felt that the mass of the proposed extension closed the gap too much between the existing building and the houses along Wood Road. This revised application has substantially reduced the footprint of the proposed extension to address these concerns.

Heritage statement



The site at 106 College Road in Whalley Range is within the Whalley Range Conservation area. Much of the area is predominantly residential and contained within 63 acres of land purchased for development in 1832 by prominent banker Samuel Brooks.

The Conservation area was designated in October 1991

The layout of Whalley Range as established by Samuel Brooks survives today as an area of large houses on tree-lined avenues. Many of the original houses remain, with new development taking place on the site of demolished houses and on the site of plots left vacant during the initial stages of the area's development.

For some years after the Second World War the area went into decline. Families living in the large houses moved away, further from the city centre, leaving some properties to decay. Some redevelopment took place and many houses were converted into bedsits for multiple occupation.

Recently however, there has been further investment in the area, with the upgrading of properties or conversion to self-contained flats or nursing homes and residential institutions. Housing associations have been actively refurbishing buildings and developing vacant sites.

Most vacant sites have now been built upon and development pressure has more recently turned towards applications for demolition of the old large houses and the subsequent redevelopment of their sites.

Designation of the conservation area was aimed at halting this trend and actively encouraging refurbishment of what is left of the fine quality original housing stock. Several buildings in Whalley Range are individually listed by the Department of the Environment.

The most prominent building in the Whalley Range conservation area is the former Lancashire Independent College on College Road. It is a gothic-style stone building with octagonal tower and pinnacles, completed in 1843. A refurbishment of the building converted the site into a residential college for the General and Municipal Boilermakers' Union and the site is now used as the British Muslim Heritage Centre.



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The entrance gates and octagonal gate piers are in the same style and are also listed buildings in their own right



The area around the site is typical of the conservation area as a whole with wide tree lined roads. Also, as described above it is a mixture of buildings developed at different times. Opposite the site on the south side off college road is the 19th Century college campus itself and on the other corner of the 'T' junction with Wood Road is a large detached Victorian villa in substantial grounds. The building at106 is part of a run of detached 3 storey Edwardian houses stretching east along College Road with a run of semi-detached properties of a similar vintage stretching north along Wood Road.



The mature tree lined roads at the junction of College Road and Wood Road obscure the buildings beyond.



The smaller semi detached properties to the north of the site along Wood Road

By virtue of being a corner site at one of the principal junctions in the conservation area opposite a major listed building and facing the listed gates of that building careful consideration is needed for any proposed development so as not to compromise or weaken the intrinsic character of the conservation area or effect the setting of the listed building and gates.

The works outlined below, although including an element of extension to the property at the rear, are principally an internal reorganisation and will not impact on the setting of the listed building or the character of the conservation area. The proposed refurbishment and repair of the building as a whole and particular the exterior elevations is an investment that should be an improvement to the area.

There are no intensions as part of this proposal to affect the trees or the boundary treatments of the site. The screening of the existing ever green foliage at the back of pavement line is almost opaque and virtually obscures the building from view from the entrance to the college.

Description of the design – design intentions

The principal practical design goal of the recently approved application was to correct the issues of concern with the existing layout. These were most strikingly the entrances to the building and the layout of the flats which is characterised by small badly proportioned rooms and cramped circulation spaces. The floor area of many of the rooms, and indeed the flats as a whole falls well below the current space standards recommended by Manchester City Council.

The existing entrances to the building were a concern both visually and from security perspective. Two of the six apartments have separate entrances with the remaining four served by a cramped entrance tucked around the back of a staircase that we believe was added to the building in the 1990's. This entrance is out of site of the road and offers little or no natural surveillance. The entrance to flat 6 is through the original entrance porch which is attractive but in need of some attention, and the entrance to flat 5 is again tucked around the back of the building down the passage between the building and the boundary fence.



Existing entrance to flats 1-4



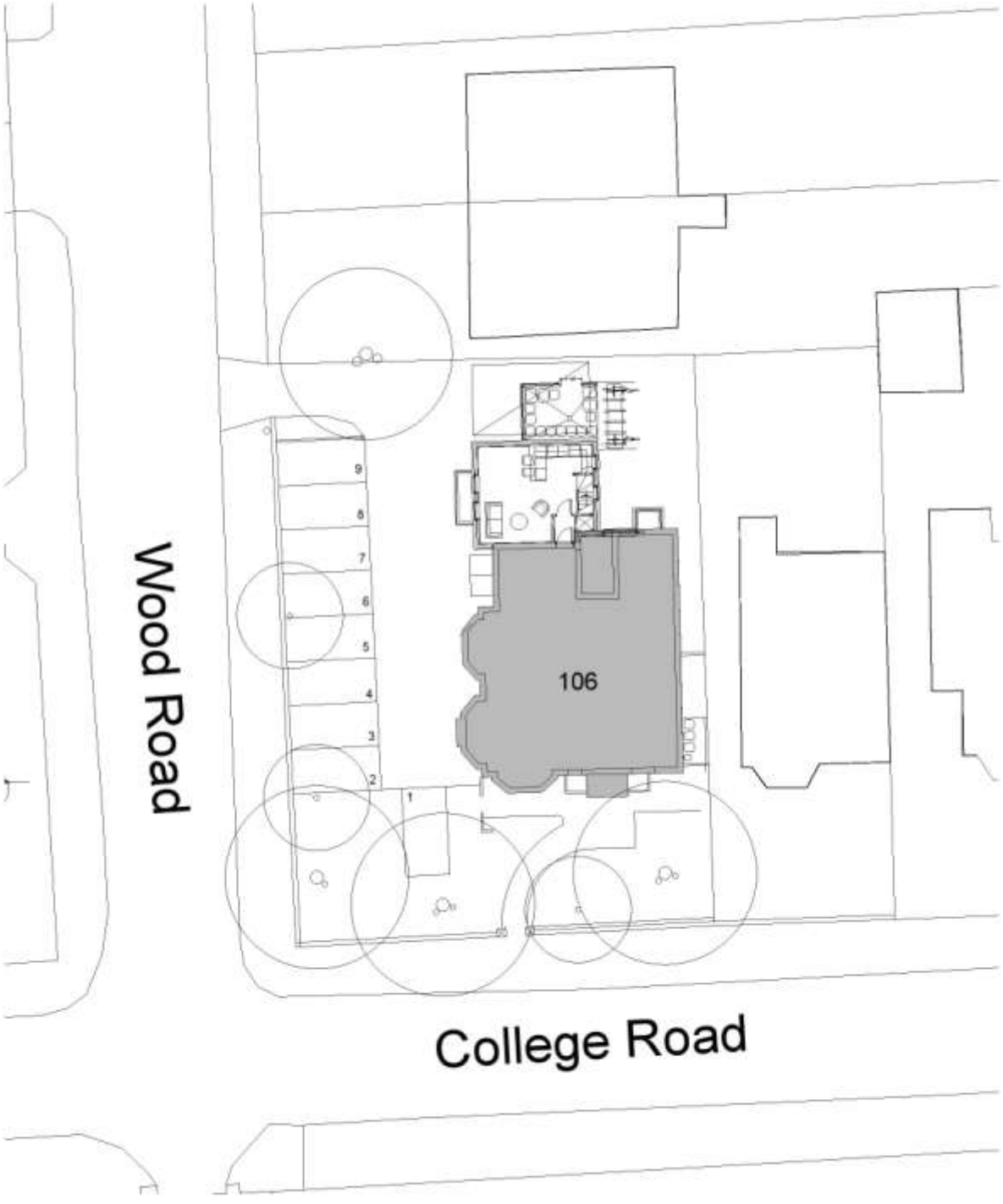
entrance to flat 6

The proposal was to rationalise all but the entrance to flat 6 through a new principal entrance porch that will front onto Wood Road. The new entrance porch design will take its details from the original house porch retained as the entrance to flat 6.

This new principal entrance will now be visible from the road, improving the security of the building and the introduction of some detail onto a hitherto blank wall will provide a focus to the elevation as a whole.

A proposed two storey extension is suggested to the north of the building fronting onto Wood Road after the demolition of the dilapidated garage building. Access to the two new apartments created will be from the new entrance porch created as part of the previous approved application. The current proposal substantially reduces the foot print of the proposed extension from the layout suggested in the recently refused application.

The extension still includes two apartments but by creating 2 duplex units by utilising a basement area and the roof space over the extension.


Wood Road
College Road
106
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In terms of scale, mass and elevation treatment the design of the extension is conceived as a sort of outrigger to the existing building. The detailing of the openings and pallet of materials reflect the style of the original building.



side elevation as proposed



Garage to be demolished

The existing vehicle access off Wood Road is to be retained and the parking provision and servicing have been re aligned to create two additional parking spaces. In addition there is to be 12 covered cycle spaces and a secure enclosed bin store.

All the existing trees are all to be retained and are all unaffected by any of the proposals.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the revised application proposal addresses the concerns expressed about the previous application and, if considered favourably by the planning department, can provide some additional good quality accommodation in a popular residential area on an existing ‘brownfield site’ and compliment the upgrading of the original building so that it can make a positive contribution to the conservation area as a whole.