

Proposed Alterations to Shop Frontages in Conservation Area at 481-485 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 4AN

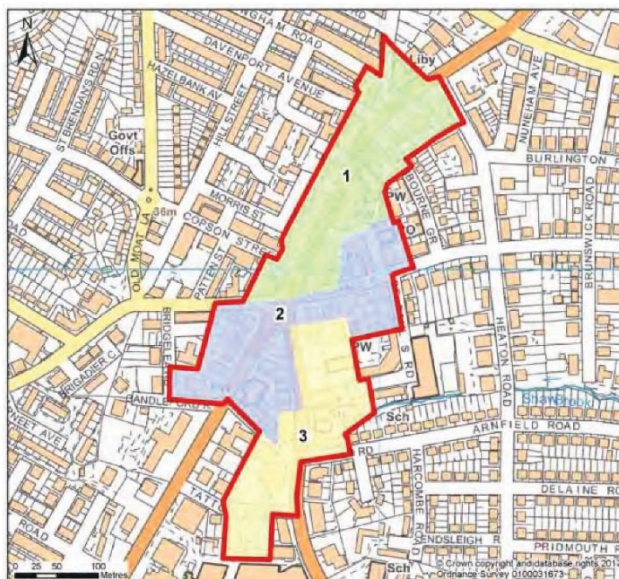
Conservation Area Appraisal

1.1 Assessment

The Withington conservation area is situated approximately three miles south of the city centre of Manchester. It consists principally of a linear shopping centre with some nearby housing. The conservation area was designated by the City Council in July 1983, and the boundary is composed mainly of property boundaries rather than streets, but includes Tatton View in the south and Withington Public Library in the north.

The economic development of Wilmslow Road was in response to the needs of increased housing, consisting of rows of small shops, banks, public houses and public library, Wilmslow Road became part of the shopping centre of Withington. There is a mix of 17th, 18th and 19th century buildings throughout the town, use of red brick is common with stone or terracotta detailing. Gothic style public houses and banks, a Norman style church and Victorian terraces and houses are present through Withington, many situated along Wilmslow Road. The town is predominantly characterised by the ground floor shops with one or two storey office or residential accommodation above.

Manchester City Council in partnership with community based Withington Village Regeneration Partnership has commissioned Nexus Planning to prepare a Framework plan for Withington Village. As part of the process BB Heritage Studio were engaged to undertake an historic baseline assessment of the Withington Village Conservation Area. The baseline identifies the characteristics of the Conservation Area. The Framework is currently in development with the intention that it will eventually be approved by the Council Executive and will sit within the context of formal Local Plan. In the meantime the Withington Village Regeneration Partnership is encouraging investors to implement sensitive design solutions within the Conservation Area. For this reason the historic baseline Heritage Assessment produced by BB Heritage Studio has been used as a reference document for this application.



The conservation area of Withington Village been broken down into three zones of 'Character Areas' in the Heritage Assessment prepared by BB Heritage Studio. The three zones have been identified as follows;

- Zone 1 The Commercial Core
- Zone 2 Private Homes & Villas
- Zone 3 St Paul's Church

Fig 1: Withington Conservation Area Character Zones, BB Heritage Studio

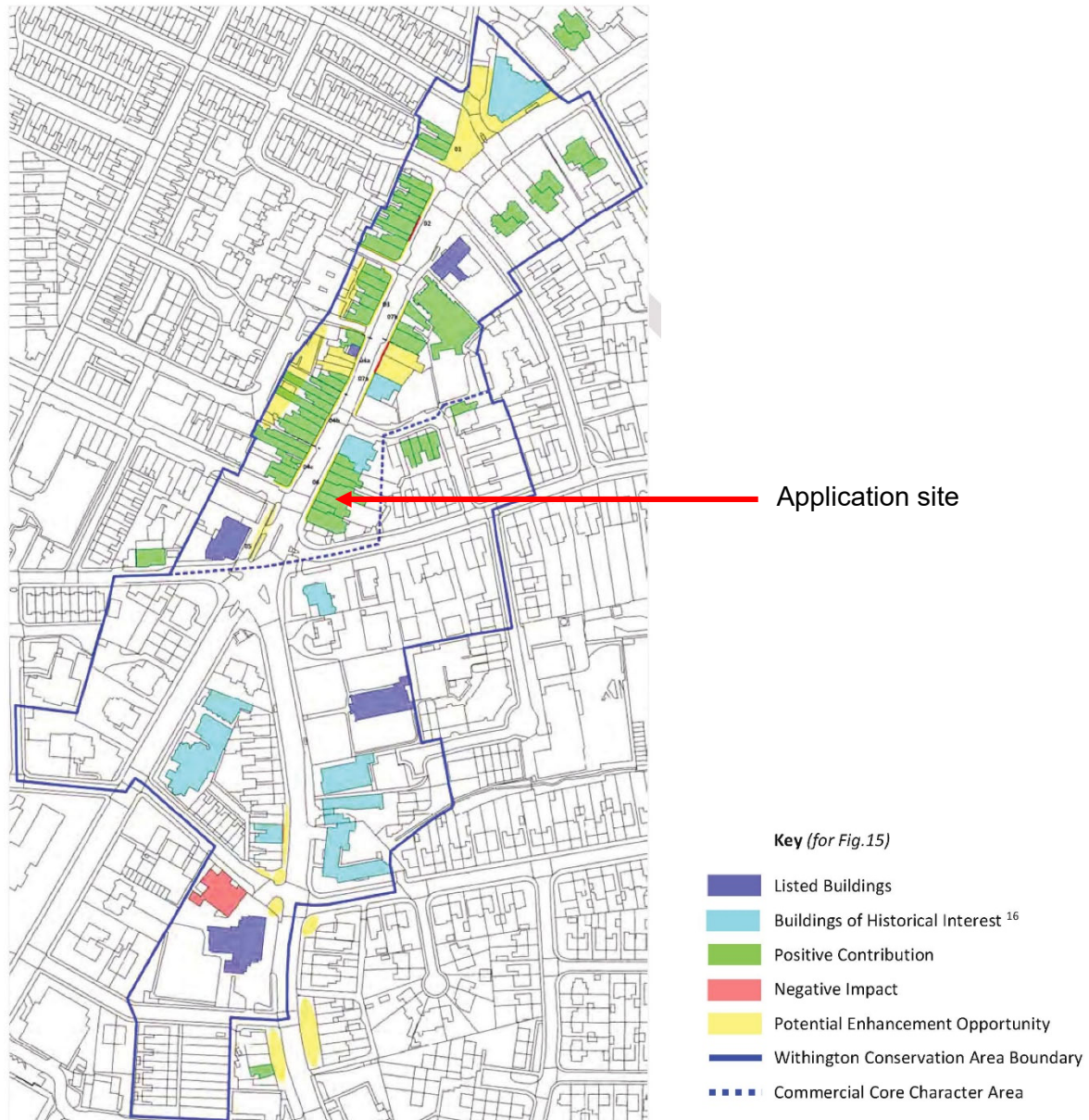


Fig. 15: Townscape Analysis for Withington Conservation Area. BBHS 8th April 2019

Fig 2: Townscape Analysis of Withington Conservation Area, BB Heritage Studio

As part of the townscape analysis within the conservation area, heritage assets have been identified along with the identification of buildings/areas/elements that provide both a positive contribution and negative impact on the area.

The application site falls under Zone 1 Commercial Core and has been identified as a positive contribution to the area.

There are 8 listed buildings on Wilmslow Road in Withington, the closest being the Former White Lion Public House on the junction of Wilmslow and Burton Road. A prominent building for its level of visibility and striking features, it is grade II listed, in an eclectic Gothic style with a clock tower and consoled cornice with moulded terracotta flower motifs. The buildings is currently in use as a Sainsbury's Local convenience store.



Fig 3: View north-east of Wilmslow Road from Palatine Road, 1910



Fig 4: View east of application site, Wilmslow Road 1972



Fig 5: View east of application site, Wilmslow Road 2019

The application site is amidst a terrace run of shops on the eastern side of Wilmslow Road in proximity to the junction of Wilmslow, Parsonage, Palatine and Burton Road. The ground floor street front accommodation is single storey with the second storey recessed from the street shop front.

The shopfronts in the commercial core of the conservation area vary in format and style and roller shutters have been identified over many stores where the boxing has not been incorporated into the signage.

It is felt that there is some consistency between the designs of the ground floor shop frontages of 467 - 489 Wilmslow Road, with relatively similar depth store fascias.

Historic shopfront detailing is evident on some of these properties in the existing pilasters and corbels, there are also sections of railings above the shop front from the original scheme as seen over no. 473 Wilmslow Road. The intervention of some modern shopfronts with large fascias are felt to detract from the overall character.

The street facing elevations at first floor are of a brick facade with soldier courses over the windows and timber brackets below the gutter and soffit line along the length of the terrace. The properties are in varying conditions of disrepair with significant levels of graffiti present.

Future management of the conservation is focused around encouraging development which enhances the prosperity of the area whilst paying attention to the special architectural and visual qualities. Withington Village Regeneration Partnership are encouraging investors to implement sensitive design solutions within the Conservation Area including avoiding acrylic/plastic signage and adopting more traditional timber (externally illuminated) solutions.

The applicant is seeking to refurbish the shop frontages as part of a larger scheme, to provide 4no. new self-contained apartments in the rear main mass of the property under an associated planning application reference no. 125673/FO/2019. This proposal is to refurbish and restore the shop fronts in accordance with the recommendations provided as part of the upcoming Framework Plan.

1.2 Photographs of Existing Building & Context



Fig 3: View south-west down Wilmslow Road



Fig 4: View north-east up Wilmslow Road at junction of Wilmslow, Parsonage, Palatine and Burton Road.



Fig 5: View north-east up Wilmslow Road.



Fig 6: Former White Lion Public House, grade II listed, on the corner of Wilmslow and Burton road.



Fig 7: View across Wilmslow Road of application site.



Fig 8: Street front elevation of application site.



Fig 8: No. 473 Wilmslow Road (identified by BB Heritage Studio for demonstrating historic features).

1.3 Proposal

The storefronts have been identified as a Positive Contribution to the townscape and conservation area forming part of a terrace block of late 19th Century development. Modern interventions of enlarged fascias are felt to detract from the overall character.

For these reasons there are nominal changes proposed to the shop frontages, reinstating the store front to original proportions to reinforce historic character, enhance and contribute to the character of the conservation area.

It is proposed to reinstate the cast iron railing over the store fronts as identified by BB Heritage Studio as an identifiable feature to the streetscape to enhance the character of the conservation area. The signage board to 485 Wilmslow Road is proposed to be raised so the glazing element of the store window is closer in height to the two adjoining properties, this more consistent fascia depth is of a more appropriate scale and will contribute to the overall continuity along the terrace. It is also of a more appropriate proportion to the original designs. The cornice above the sign board will remain as existing as also identified by BB Heritage Studio in Fig.16.



Fig 16: Sketch 'Block 06 BBHS_SK04 June 2019' of 467 Wilmslow Road.

The new glazing to no. 485 will be ppc coated aluminium framed. Whilst it is noted that this is not the traditional material choice of timber, it is felt however, that the proposed choice of material is not an incongruous one and is still an enhancement to what is existing. It is also felt that it is one that will enable better preservation and longevity of the conservation area character.

Having been identified as notifiable features of the terrace, the stone consoles between the stores will be carefully retained and restored to preserve and enhance the feature. These will remain visible over the stores signage not hidden behind out of scale fascias and redundant fittings.

When undertaking works in the conservation area it is incumbent to *preserve or enhance* the conservation area. The key features of this particular block, such as the iron railing, timber signage board and stone consoles and pilasters, have been identified and considered in the redesign of the store fronts with restoration, repair and replacement of these features, as shown, all for the purpose of enhancing the asset and character of not only the property but the village centre as well. The proposal is not considered to be incongruous, it is intended to have a positive impact on the preservation of the conservation area contributing to the street scene and heritage character of the area.

1.4 Summary

The proposed works are considered to be in keeping with the area, to have given due consideration to the site context, recommendations and to contribute to the character of the area. It is thought that the development will aid in the overall development of the town by enhancing the desirability and aesthetics of the street, particularly for properties that have been identified as requiring maintenance.

The proposals will provide for an ongoing a viable use and allow the investment required to correct the remedial problems identified and therefore offers genuine public benefit to secure the heritage of the conservation area. The proposed scheme is in keeping with the overall aesthetics, scale and design of the existing property, which forms part of the terrace that adds to the streetscape. The materials used will complement the existing, it is felt that what is proposed meets the design guidelines and does not negatively impact on the character of the conservation area.