Heritage Statement

117A Withington Road
Whalley Range
Manchester
M16 8EE

Prepared by the Applicant:
RANGE PROPERTIES

March 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Range Properties in connection with a full planning application for the Erection of three-storey rear extension to form ground floor office extension and flat above (the 'Proposed Development') at 117a Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester (the 'Application Site').

1.2 The formal description of development is as follows:

"Erection of three-storey rear extension to form ground floor office extension and flat above"

1.3 The Application Site is located within the Whalley Range Conservation Area. Manchester City Council (MCC) therefore, in determining the submitted planning application, has a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'pay special attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. Case law has determined that these are matters to be given 'considerable importance and weight' in the planning process.

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, Paragraph 194 states the following:

'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'.

1.5 To comply with these requirements, Section 2 of this Statement identifies the Application Site and describes its history and development, concerning historical mapping. Section 3 identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by the Proposed Development and Section 4 provides an assessment of their significance; proportionate to both the importance of the asset and the likely impacts. An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on the significance of the relevant heritage assets is set out in Section 5, in light of the statutory duty of the 1990 Act, national planning policy set out in the NPPF and local planning policy for the historic environment (set out in detail at **Appendix 1).**

1.6 This Heritage Statement has been undertaken based on published information, archival research and site visits.

2. Context

The Application Site

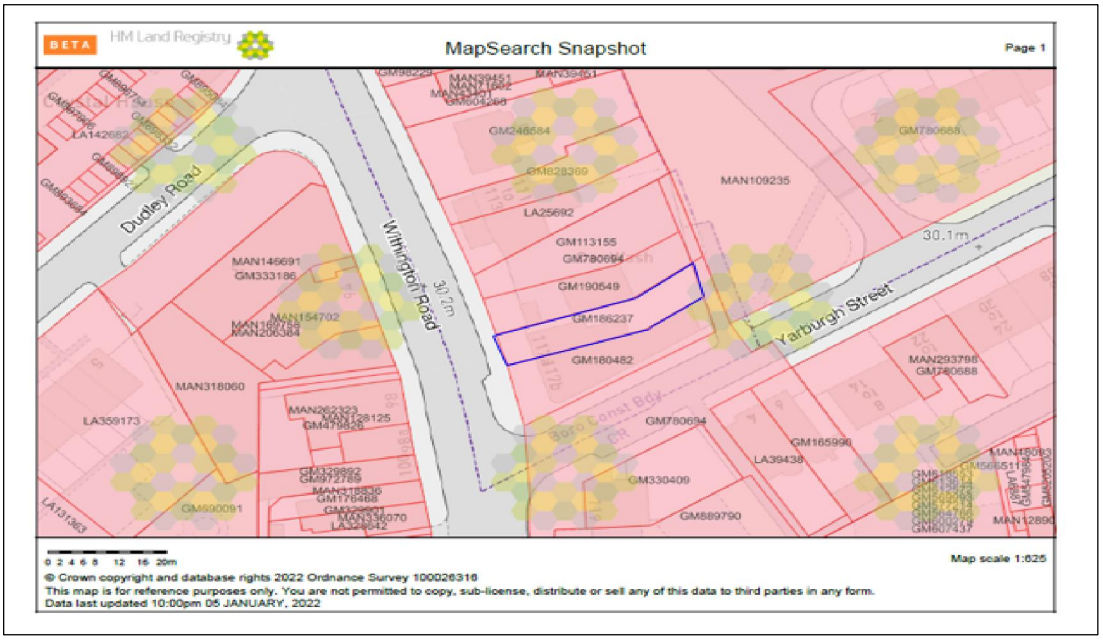
2.1 The Application Site is located within the Whalley Range area south of Manchester City Centre. It is situated in a small commercial centre but the surrounding area is predominantly residential.

2.2 The property is one half of a pair of traditional semi-detached buildings located at the junction of Withington Road and Yarburgh Street in Whalley Range. The property is three storeys with the ground floor element being entirely in retail use in connection with the Range Solicitors; the first and second floor is used as a residential flat. The flat is also in the ownership of the applicant.

2.3 The other semi detached property is in mixed use with commercial use as pharmacy business at ground floor with residential use on the first and second floor.

2.4 It is broadly rectangular in shape and is bounded by a row of commercial units to the north, south and west, and existing residential properties to the south and east.

2.5 The western part of the Application Site contains an existing dwelling. The eastern part of the site is the former lawned garden of the house.



The Existing Buildings

2.6 The existing two-storey dwelling on the Site has a rectangular-shaped plan. It is masonry walls throughout and has a pitched slate roof with a number of chimney stacks. The ground floor is a commercial unit, let to RANGE SOLICITORS, while the First and second floors are residential. The building as a whole is in a very

good condition.

2.7 117A Withington Road is referred to as Commercial cum Residential.

Neighborhood's Relevant planning history

2.8 A desk-based review of the relevant planning history for no 117B Withington Road has been carried out and the following applications are considered to be relevant:

- July 2013 – planning permission granted for single storey side and rear extension to provide
- storage for pharmacy approved – application reference 102276/FO/2013/S1

- June 2021– planning permission refused for first floor extension on top of existing single storey
- extension to form additional storage – application reference 129729/FO/2021.

- December 2021 – planning permission granted for installation of prescription dispensing machine on the ground floor elevation facing onto Yarburgh Street - application reference 131927/FO/2021.

3. Policy context

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan:

> *"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

3.2 The application must (in part) also be considered in the context of the legal duty as conferred by S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which states:

> *"In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under the provisions mentioned in subsection (2)*), special attention must be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and special appearance of that area."*
>
> (* includes the Planning Acts)

4. Heritage Assets

4.1 The NPPF (2021) 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."

Designated Heritage Assets

4.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

4.3 The Site is located within the **Whalley Range Conservation Area,** designated by MCC in October 1991 and covering an area of approximately 63 acres.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

4.4 The NPPF identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). Historic England's guidance on 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment' (2015) states that:

"Non-designated heritage assets include those that have been identified in a Historic Environment Record, in a local plan, through local listing or during the process of considering the application."

MCC does not have a local list of heritage assets, however the existing building complex is not recorded on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER). The building is therefore not Designated Heritage Assets nor has it been treated as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset within this Statement.

5. Assessment of Significance

5.1 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

"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 from its setting."

Conservation Areas

5.2 Conservation areas are *"areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."*

5.3 Historic England has published Good Practice Advice (GPA) on 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' to assist in assessing the significance of heritage assets. This guidance has informed the following assessments of significance.

5.4 In this section we have referred to the conservation area descriptions published by MCC on its website and include other observations on the character of areas or streets close to the Application Site and most likely to be affected by the Proposed Development.

Setting

5.5 The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

5.6 Historic England has published guidance in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes. The guidance confirms that:

"setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself".

5.7 The guidance sets out a step-by-step process for proportionate assessment of the significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal.

5.8 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in NPPG. NPPG Paragraph 013 sets out that:

"The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the

vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places".

Whalley Range Conservation Area

Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

5.9 Like other suburbs of Manchester, Whalley Range was developed as a response to the increasing industrialisation and congestion of the city. It was one of the first suburbs and broadly dates to 1831 when prominent banker Samuel Brooks acquired 63 acres of land for development. According to MCC, he described it as 'a desirable estate for gentlemen and their families' and roads were laid out and building plots sold with certain conditions to ensure development of the area would be delivered according to his vision.

5.10 The estate was laid out between two farm tracks (now Withington Road and Upper Chorlton Road) and the tree-lined avenues of Dudley Road, Whalley Road and Chorlton Road form the basis of the estate. The eastern side of the conservation area around Alness Road was built in the latter half of the 19th century on land sold by Lord Egerton of Tatton.

5.11 Whalley Range Conservation Area is of significance as a verdant suburb, the character of which is derived from the arrangement of large houses of high-quality construction and detailing on tree lined avenues. MCC notes that 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 development of the area.

5.12 MCC recognises that Whalley Range is an area that has experienced decline, particularly after the Second World War when families left the area and many of the larger properties were converted for multiple occupation. It also notes that development pressure has more recently targeted demolition of old larger houses and subsequent redevelopment of their sites. It states the following:

"Designation of the conservation area is aimed at halting this trend and actively encouraging refurbishment of what is left of the fine quality original housing stock."

Contribution made by the Application Site and Existing Buildings

5.13 The exact date of the original building or its subsequent phases is not known. Information gleaned from research, analysis and site inspections indicates that the original core of 117A Withington Road was parallel to the street and may date to the late 19th century.

5.14 Today, the building is expressed as a single but multi-phased with multi-purpose commercial cum residential use and an enlarged building.

5.15 The building is comprised of load-bearing masonry walls with timber floors. A series of later extensions and alterations have been made as follows:

- The loft has been converted into storage and Toilet Bath;
- Chimney stacks have been removed from the original building;
- All three phases have been finished in cement render;
- The new double-glazed windows have been installed throughout.
- A separate Entrance for the residential flat on the first and second floors was added.
- The whole building was re-wired in 2018
- The whole building has new central heating installed in 2017
- The original building has been partly re-roofed.
- The building has no trees and does not contribute to the conservation area.

6. Impact Assessment

6.1 Impact of Proposal

No standard method of evaluation assessment is provided for the assessment of effects upon curtilage heritage therefore a set of evaluation assessment criteria has been developed using a combination of Secretary of State Criteria for Scheduling Ancient Monuments (Scheduled Monument Statement Annex 1), Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Part 3 Section 2, HA208/07, Transport and Analyst Guidance (Tag Unit 3.3.9, Heritage of Historic Resources Sub Objective) and Historic England's Good Practice Planning Advice on the Setting of Heritage Assets.

6.2 Value

As the conservation area is quite wide in terms of its area, it is noted that this eastern boundary has probably the least significance in terms of aesthetics. There are two rows of property and then a pair of semi-detached houses. But surrounding this is new development both to the rear, to the right hand side looking at the property and on the opposite side where there are modern shops.

In that respect and the fact that there are no listed buildings within the immediate area, but we
acknowledge that it is a conservation area, we consider the heritage value to be medium.

6.3 Magnitude

As the rear extension does change the asset's quality, this would change slightly the property's characteristics. But would not overly be intrusive or diminish the context or the understanding of the conservation area.

Neither is the setting of the heritage asset in terms of this area of the conservation area affected
dramatically (slight-negative).

6.4 Significance

By combining the value of the cultural heritage as medium and the effect as slight, we consider that it has a minor impact on the property.

7. National Planning Policy Framework

1.1 127
When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

There is some question about the designation of these properties within the conservation area, albeit on the basis that there has been a lot of new development around and it is somewhat disconnectedfrom the main block of large Victorian townhouses in the centre of the conservation area.

1.2 128
In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of details should be proportion to the assets important 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 be consulted on the heritage assets assessing assets assessed using an appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site in which development is proposed or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest local planning authorities should require the developer to submit an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary a field evaluation.

We accept that the Samuel Brooks vision and building of the estate contained within Withington Road and Upper Chorlton Road has a significance in terms of vernacular architecture and large Victorian houses. Particularly the blocks of 93 – 99 and 101 – 107 represent typically those type of properties.

We accept that the frontage of the properties have remained unchanged. The rear of the properties however on a number of residents have changed more dramatically than some extensions being carried out to 97, 99, 101, dormer to 103 and double extensions to 107. The other semi-detached property, 117b Withington Road has side and rear extensions.

1.3 131
In determining the planning application, local planning authority should take account of: The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage assets and putting them to a viable use is consistent with conservation;

The scheme does not enhance but it does sustain the significance of the heritage asset and put it into a viable use. This is one of few properties which still remains as a

Commercial cum Residential, the remainder being flats. It is therefore the erection of three-storey rear extension to form ground floor office extension and flat above which will make it a viable asset.

1.4 134
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 as proposed including the optimum viable use.

This is not a listed building or locally listed and therefore we do not consider that there is any substantial harm to the significance of the larger heritage asset being the conservation area.

1.5 135
The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

This is a non-designated heritage asset as a property in itself. Whilst there is some minor effect on the asset, we do not think it is significant enough when a balanced judgement is required regarding that against the viability of the property.

8. Local Plan

This is with reference to the Manchester City Core Strategy 2012 – 2027

Policy EN3 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.

We believe, as carried out by the assessment and impact, that this is not particularly referring to existing buildings, but reinstates the NPPF in terms of keeping the character of the heritage asset intact.

9. Conclusion

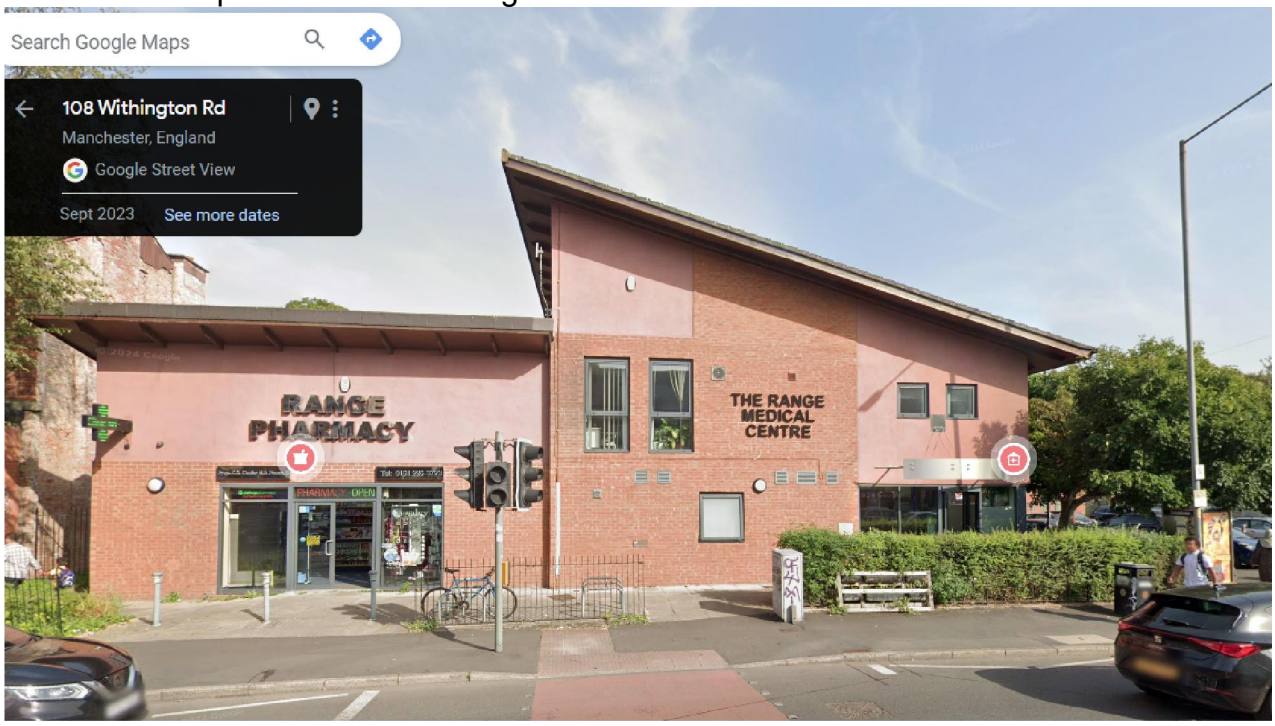
We believe the extension to the rear of the property does not harm in principle the street scene and the conservation area itself. The extension does create some massing, but not exceptional in terms of the volume and size of the existing building.

The block of houses have had various extensions. There is however evidence in the appendix A of photographs to indicate that various extensions have been approved in the past, which are much greater in terms of volume.

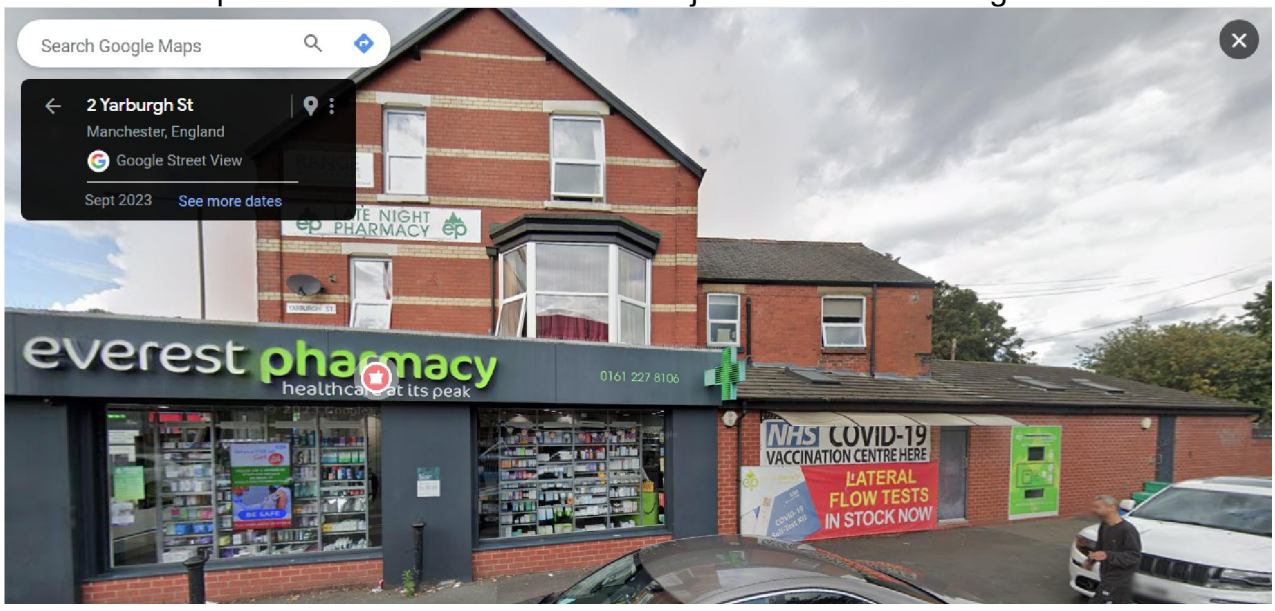
The date of these extensions however cannot be determined, as whether these were under prior policies. We consider that there is some minor harm but is not significant enough to affect the conservation area as a whole.

10. Appendix A – Photographs

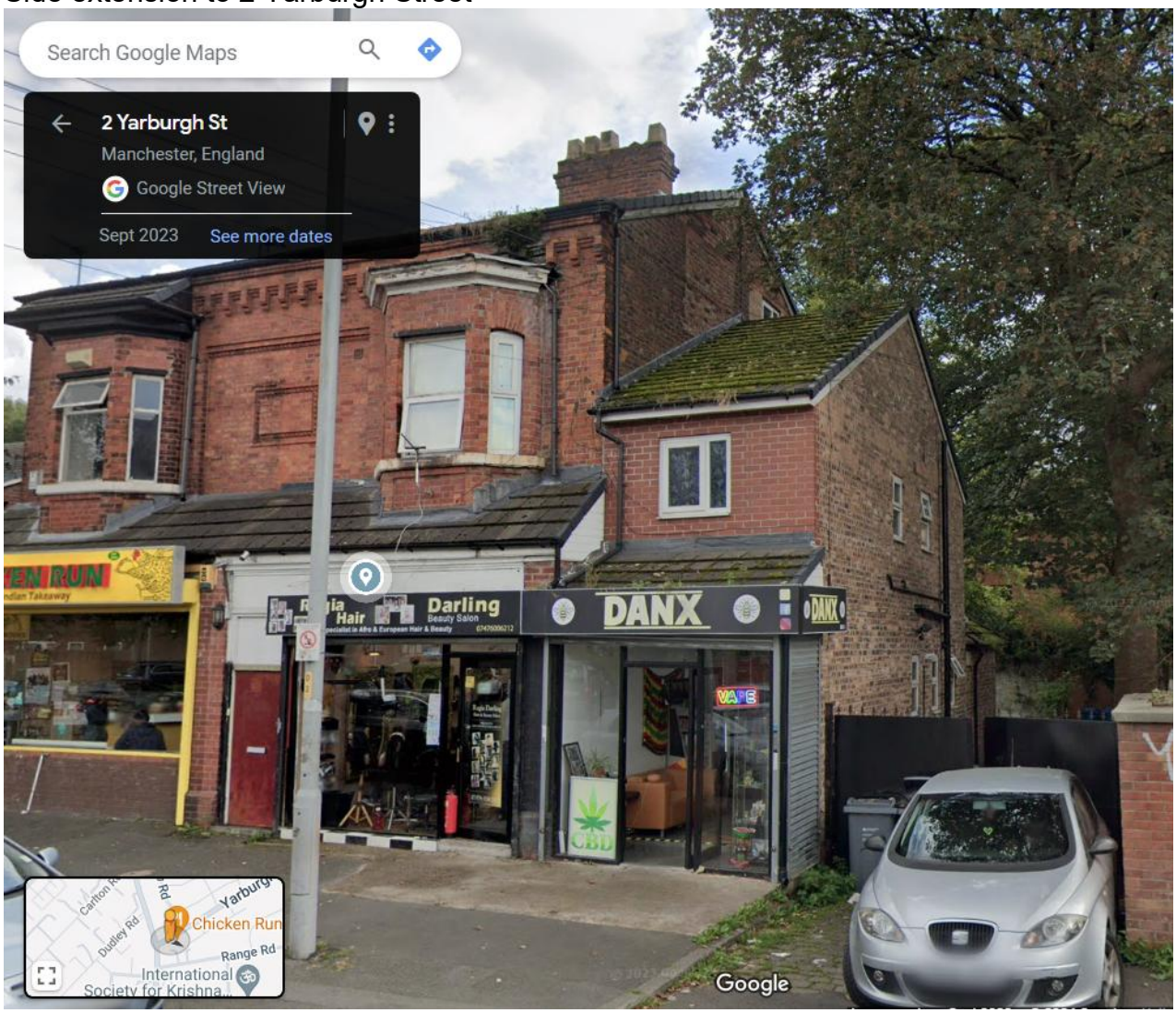
Modern development at 121 Withington Road



Modern development side and rear extension adjacent to 117b Withington Road



Side extension to 2 Yarburgh Street





Large ground floor, first floor and dormer extension to number 107



Large single storey extension to number 101 and dormer to 103



Rear view of property showing more clearly the dominance of the extension to number 97, which has come out further than that of number 95



Right hand side is the boundary of the conservation area, left hand side modern development



Rear of block showing the white extension of number 97, being an extension from the original building



Modern development adjacent to 93 Withington Road



Modern development opposite the site