

Heritage Statement

136 Withington Road, Manchester

July 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of VIEWS Holdings in connection with a revised full planning application for the conversion of existing buildings and residential development (the 'Proposed Development') at 136 Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester (the 'Application Site').

1.2 The formal description of development is as follows:

"Partial demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide 35 no. residential homes, consisting of apartments and townhouses, landscaping, access and associated works."

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 NPPF provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, Paragraph 200 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.

1.5 To comply with these requirements, Section 2 of this Statement identifies the Application Site and describes its history and development, with reference to historic 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 on the basis of published information, archival research and site visits.

¹ MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - para. 200

2. Site Context and Historic Development

The Application Site

- 2.1 The Application Site is located within the Whalley Range area to the south of Manchester City Centre. It is close to a small commercial centre to the north but the surrounding area is predominantly residential in character.
- 2.2 It is broadly rectangular in shape and is bounded by a row of commercial units to the north, Withington Road to the east and existing residential properties to the south and west.
- 2.3 The southern part of the Application Site contains an existing dwelling, an adjoining outbuilding and a combination of hardstanding and garden area. The northern part of the site is the former lawned garden of the house.

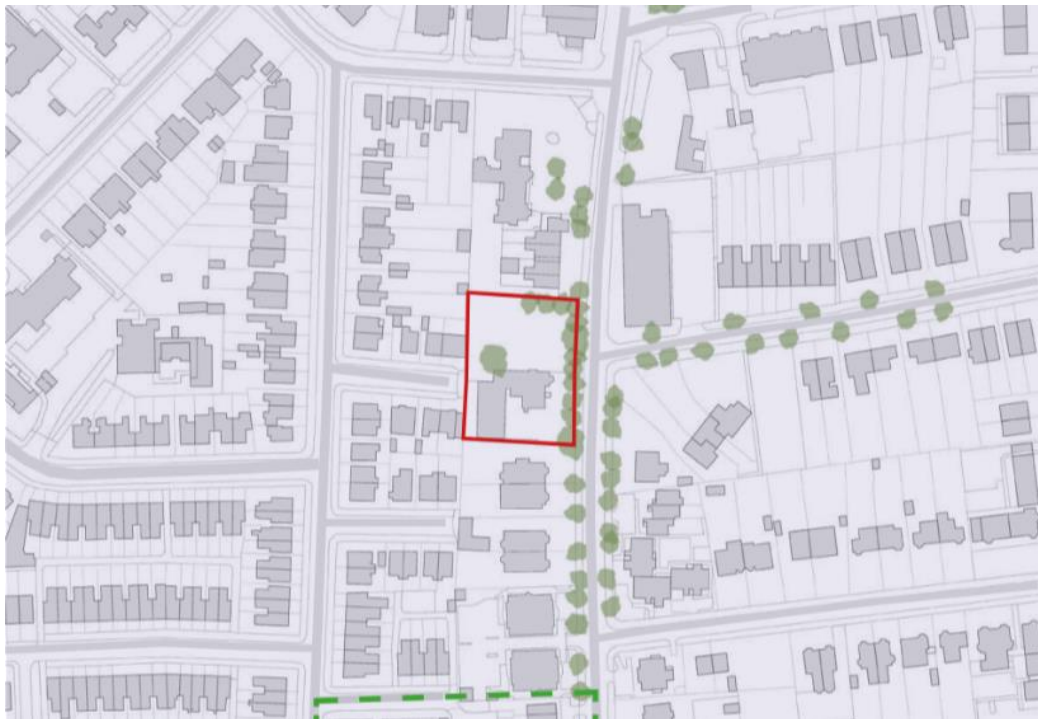


Figure 2.1: The Application Site

The Existing Buildings

- 2.4 The existing two storey dwelling on the Site has an L-shaped plan form with wings parallel with and perpendicular to Withington Road. It is finished in render throughout and has a pitched slate roof with a number of chimney stacks. The majority of the door and window openings have been boarded over. The building as a whole is in a very poor state of repair.
- 2.5 136 Withington Road is referred to as 'Rose Cottage' on the 1848 Ordnance Survey Map (OS Map) at Figure 2.2. This map shows the early open context and former expansive setting of the building before development began to encroach, as shown on

the subsequent 1881 OS Map at Figure 2.3. The name and form of the building and this early rural context suggests that it may have been built as a farmhouse or rural cottage.

- 2.6 Historic map regression, historic photographs and on-site visual survey indicates that the original core of 136 Withington Road was parallel to the street and may date to the late 18th century. This was then extended northwards in two phases; the first was added in the early 19th century and in the mid to late 19th century, the second phase of extension appears to have been undertaken to the north west. The building has been subsequently altered and extended during the 20th century.
- 2.7 The linear outbuilding along the western boundary of the Site is evident on the 1848 OS Map but on-site visual survey indicates that it has been completely rebuilt and extended to connect with the existing main building at first floor level (to the rear).



Figure 2.2: 1848 Ordnance Survey Map (OS Map) – ‘Rose Cottage’

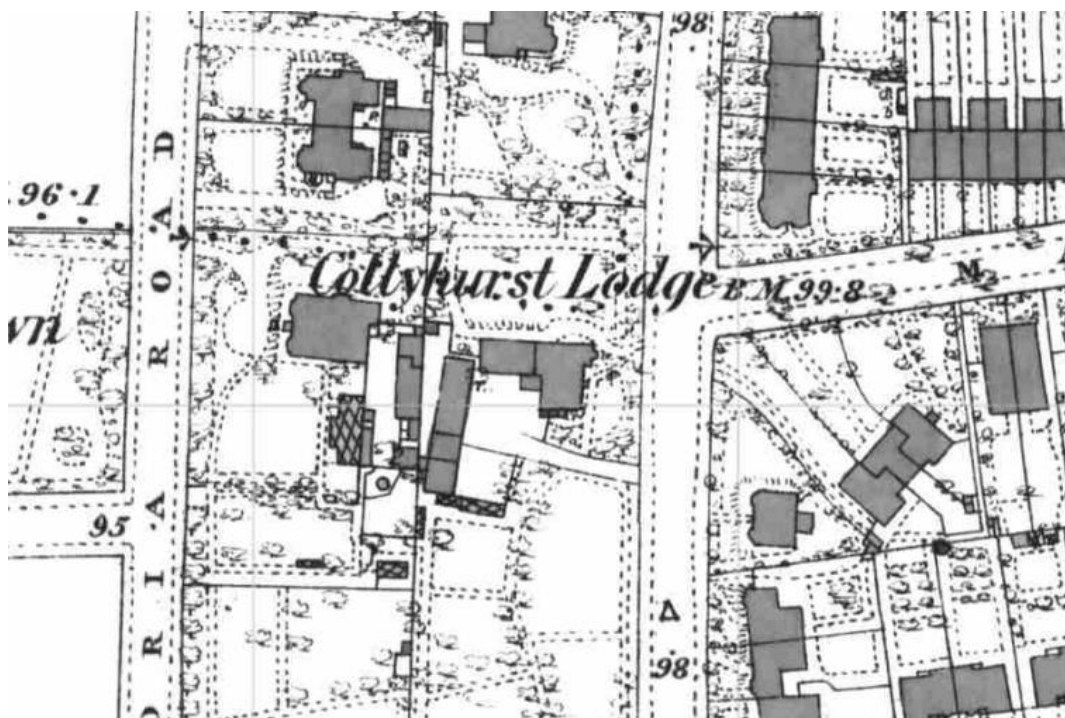


Figure 2.3: 1881 OS Map



Figure 2.4: 1907 OS Map



Figure 2.5: 1922 OS Map



Figure 2.6: 1951 OS Map



Figure 2.7: 1986 OS Map

3. Heritage Assets

- 3.1 The NPPF (2023) 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

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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

- 3.4 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.”*
- 3.5 MCC does not have a local list of heritage assets, however the existing building complex is recorded on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER). The building has therefore been treated as a non-designated heritage asset within this Statement.

4. Assessment of Significance

- 4.1 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.”²

Conservation Areas

- 4.2 Conservation areas are *“areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”*
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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

- 4.5 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 neutral³.”

- 4.6 Historic England has published guidance⁴ 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”.

- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 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:

² MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

³ MHCLG (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

⁴ Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets

“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

- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 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

- 4.13 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 136 Withington Road was parallel to the street and may date to the late 18th century. This was then extended northwards in two phases; the first was added in the early 19th century with two storeys, a consistent ridge line and a symmetrical elevation to the north. A later double height canted bay window was added to the side elevation of the extension, facing Withington Road. In the mid to late 19th century, the second phase of extension appears to have been undertaken to the north west with a taller two storey building with a higher ridge line. It is likely that the whole building was rendered during this time and architectural features added, including hoodmoulds, to

create a consistent appearance. The building appears to have been successively altered and extended during the 20th century.

- 4.14 The linear outbuilding along the western boundary of the Site is evident on the 1848 OS Map but on-site visual survey indicates that it has been completely rebuilt and extended to connect with the existing main building at first floor level (to the rear).
- 4.15 Today, the building is expressed as a single but multi-phased and enlarged building. Although covered in cement render, the simplicity of the building differentiates it from others in the conservation area and it is legible as a vernacular building. It is largely featureless, with the exception of remaining windows and later additions such as the altered entrances, the tall bay projecting from the eastern elevation and the hoodmoulds on the northern elevations.
- 4.16 A Structural Survey report prepared by Renaissance (March 2021) confirmed that none of the buildings are timber framed but are comprised of load bearing masonry walls with timber floors.
- 4.17 A series of later extensions and alterations have been made as follows:
- A small, pitched roof extension has been added to the southern pitch of the second extension;
 - A single storey flat roof brick extension has been added, connecting the original building and third extension;
 - A linear building adjacent to the western boundary of the Site is evident on the 1848 OS Map. This appears to have been completely re-built and enlarged, in two phases;
 - Chimney stacks have been replaced or truncated and capped across the second and third extensions. Chimney stacks have been removed from the original building;
 - The southern gable wall of the original building has been re-built according to the survey work undertaken by Renaissance;
 - All three phases have been finished in cement render;
 - It is likely that hoodmoulds of the third extension are original but these have been retrospectively replicated on the second extension in timber and are now damaged and partially missing;
 - Windows are lost, boarded up or replaced;
 - The original building had a porch according to historic maps. This was removed and a replacement doorcase, stylistically discordant with the building, has been crudely added; and
 - The original building has been re-roofed.

4.18 It is recorded as follows on the Greater Manchester HER:

“Present on 1840s map (1) as a cottage/farmhouse set in its own grounds. Possibly timber framed with a steep pitched roof. Window sizes vary with very small windows at front to large on side with border to top and sides. Rendered with various extensions to right including wing with projecting bays, possibly original. Slate roof. Later addition wooden porch to front. Original land now sold off for modern flats.”

4.19 The building was independently constructed (possibly as a farmhouse) and pre-dates the estate laid out by Samuel Brooks in the 19th century. In this respect, the building contrasts with the prevailing 19th century character of the conservation area and the primary reason it was designated. It is however of some historic interest due to its age and legibility of phasing and has distinctiveness as a large dwelling set within a substantial plot. It is prominent in views from Withington Road and has a townscape presence, in combination with existing trees and boundary treatments. The building has however deteriorated. It is now in a very poor state of repair, is attracting vandalism and this diminishes the contribution it makes.

4.20 The existing mature trees and boundary treatments, although damaged, contribute to the conservation area.

Non-Designated Heritage Asset

4.21 As set out in Section 3 of this Statement, the existing building is recorded on the HER and could therefore be treated as a non-designated heritage asset. Consideration of the significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset, and with reference to Historic England guidance is provided below. There is a large degree of overlap with the assessment the building and Site makes to the conservation area and the two sections should be read in combination.

4.22 Historic England published guidance entitled ‘Conservation Principles’ in 2008⁵. Paragraph 33 of the guidance states that there are a range of inter-related heritage values that may be attached to a place. These include:

- **Evidential Value** – “evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity”.
- **Historical Value** – “historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative”.
- **Aesthetic Value** – “derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place”.
- **Communal Value** – “communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly

⁵ Historic England, Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance, April 2008

associative) and aesthetic values but tend to have additional and specific aspects”.

- 4.23 We have applied these values to the existing buildings at 136 Withington Road.
- 4.24 **Evidential Value** – The existing buildings provide evidential value of an earlier phase in the history and development of Whalley Range prior to the establishment of the affluent suburb and when it was predominantly a rural community. The earlier fabric of the building, although altered, and the legibility of its subsequent phases, provides a degree of local evidential value.
- 4.25 **Historical Value** – The existing buildings are of local historic value for their age, whilst recognising the alterations that have been made and the extent to which legibility of this historic interest has been compromised.
- 4.26 **Aesthetic Value** – The aesthetic value of the buildings is heavily compromised by later modifications, including the cement render finish, and their poor condition. However, there remains some legibility of the original historic character and vernacular qualities of the original range and later phases.
- 4.27 **Communal Value** – The existing buildings are currently vacant and in a deteriorated state. They are however valued by the local community as the former premises of the Nello James centre.



Figure 4.1: 136 Withington Road occupied by British Red Cross Society (1961)



Figure 4.2: 136 Withington Road occupied by British Red Cross Society (1961)



Figure 4.3: 136 and 138 Withington Road (1961)



Figure 4.4: Outbuildings to No 138 (1961)

5. Impact Assessment

Introduction

- 5.1 Under s72(1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, MCC, in determining the submitted planning application, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Whalley Range Conservation Area.
- 5.2 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.3 Paragraph 205 requires when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. 'Conservation' is defined by the NPPF as 'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.'
- 5.4 Paragraphs 206 and 207 differentiate between 'substantial' and 'less than substantial harm' and provide a framework for the consideration of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, where it arises, bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duties of the 1990 Act.
- 5.5 Paragraph 212 requires that local planning authorities look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. It states that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 5.6 Paragraph 209 requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset is taken into account. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect 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.
- 5.7 The relevant heritage legislation, policy and guidance context for consideration of the Proposed Development is also set out at **Appendix 1**.

The Proposed Development

- 5.8 The revised Proposed Development has been informed by ongoing discussions with MCC. A modern extension to the rear of the site will be removed and the site perimeter excavated to create a development platform that integrates with the retained facades of the building complex.

- 5.9 New built development will be created by extending the existing buildings to the north, south and west, whilst retaining an area of garden space. A detached row of Mews houses are proposed to the north. The new built development ranges in height and steps down to the north west. A mix of one and two bed apartments will be created (two bed apartments will be created within the new structure behind the retained facades of the existing building), together with two and three bed mews houses.
- 5.10 Large arched windows and roof dormers are proposed and it is intended that the new extensions and detached mews houses would be of red brick construction. The design of the scheme has evolved through discussions with MCC and what is now proposed is stylistically different to neighbouring development and seeks to reference the rural origins of 136 Withington Road.
- 5.11 Existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements are maintained. Car parking is proposed to the site perimeter, in combination with a resident's lawn and retained mature trees.
- 5.12 The details of the proposed approach are to be developed once a more thorough understanding of the condition of the existing buildings has been obtained and a method statement developed, however planning permission is sought to retain the facades of the existing building due to the poor condition of the interiors and roof. A schedule of repairs for the retained facades can be provided, including replacement window and door specifications. It is intended that the existing cement render would be removed from all elevations and replacement timber framed windows installed. Existing hoodmoulds can be repaired and reinstated or replaced. The existing boundary walls and gate piers to Withington Road will be retained and repaired.
- 5.13 Additional information on scheme development and the approach to the design of the Proposed Development is included within the planning application drawings and a Design and Access Statement, prepared by Ollier Smurthwaite Architects.

Impact on the Whalley Range Conservation Area

- 5.14 The Proposed Development enables the re-use of an existing site that has been vacant and deteriorating for a number of years.
- 5.15 Due to the poor condition of the building complex, removal of what is remaining of the interior is proposed and replacement of the roof, however the primary elevations will be retained and can be enhanced through agreed repairs, renewed render finish and installation of replacement windows and doors of a suitable specification.
- 5.16 The proposed new build development has been designed to respond to both prevailing building heights within this part of the Whalley Range Conservation and the retained and converted building complex. Variation is provided with a mix of building heights that diminish towards the northern boundary. Although taller than the existing building, the southern extension sits lower than the adjacent Victorian semi-detached properties and it is not considered that it would be out of scale.
- 5.17 In red brick construction, the proposed extensions are designed to be contemporary buildings. They are intended to differentiate from the refreshed render finish of the

retained buildings yet resonate with the prevailing and characteristic use of red brick throughout the conservation area. Timber framed windows, also characteristic of the conservation area, are proposed throughout the new build elements.

- 5.18 As previously stated, the existing building complex was independently constructed (possibly as a farmhouse) and pre-dates the estate laid out by Samuel Brooks in the 19th century. In this respect it contrasts with the prevailing 19th century character of the conservation area. The revised proposals seek to accentuate that differentiation and are influenced by the likely rural origins of the existing complex, as a cottage or farmhouse. The revised proposals are less aligned with the characteristics of the conservation area, defined by the 19th century estate, but adopt a more bespoke and contemporary style, tailored towards the origins, history and development of this Site. There is greater contrast between the retained and proposed buildings and legibility of old and new through the revised approach.
- 5.19 Existing trees that contribute to the maturity and verdancy of the conservation area are to be retained and the existing boundary walls and gate piers will be retained and enhanced through partial rebuilding where there they have collapsed, and repairs.
- 5.20 Due to the extent of proposed alterations to the existing building complex and removal of historic fabric, the local historic interest of the building and the contribution it makes to the conservation area would be reduced. However, enhancements will also be made through the repair and reinstatement of the principal elevations and features. Legibility of the existing building phases would be diminished to a degree; however, the design and materials of the extensions is such that the retained building facades can retain distinction and differentiation and this is accentuated in the revised proposals.

Impact on Non-Designated Heritage Asset

- 5.21 The Proposed Development would result in some loss of evidential and historic value of the existing building complex due to the extent of fabric removal proposed and the expected reduction in legibility of the building phases. However, the aesthetic value of the retained facades, their historic character, vernacular qualities and the stylistic differences across the phases could be enhanced through a suitable scheme of repairs and reinstatement. With reference to the communal value of the complex, the existing building is vacant and has been so for a number of years. The work of the former charity is now undertaken from different premises.

Legislation and National Planning Policy

- 5.22 The Proposed Development enables the re-use of an existing site that has been vacant and deteriorating for a number of years and will provide a viable use for the retained elements of 136 Withington Road. A development is proposed that is contextual in its response to this Site and can contribute to local character and distinctiveness, in accordance with Paragraph 203 of the NPPF.
- 5.23 Overall, it is considered that there would be some harm to the significance of Whalley Range Conservation Area due to the loss of historic fabric proposed and the associated reduction in legibility of the existing building complex. The level of harm is considered

to be less than substantial and at a low level within that scale. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF is therefore engaged with states the following:

“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.”

- 5.24 PPG confirms that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the NPPF.
- 5.25 The identified harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the Proposed Development in the accompanying Planning Statement prepared by Avison Young, bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This includes the potential enhancement of the retained facades through an agreed schedule of repairs and improvements to the overall site condition and boundaries to Withington Road.
- 5.26 Paragraph 209 requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset is taken into account. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect 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.
- 5.27 The significance of the building complex as a non-designated heritage asset would be reduced, principally due to loss of historic fabric and legibility, however enhancements can also be made. The identified impact of the Proposed development on a building of low to moderate local significance and in a deteriorated state should be taken into account as an additional material consideration and proportionately addressed in the planning balance.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of VIEWS Holdings in connection with a full planning application for the conversion of existing buildings and residential development (the 'Proposed Development') at 136 Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester (the 'Application Site').
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 The Proposed Development enables the re-use of an existing site that has been vacant and deteriorating for a number of years and will provide a viable use for the retained elements of 136 Withington Road. A contextual development is proposed that can contribute to local character and distinctiveness, in accordance with Paragraph 203 of the NPPF.
- 6.4 Overall, it is considered that there would be some harm to the significance of Whalley Range Conservation Area due to the loss of historic fabric proposed and the associated reduction in legibility of the existing building complex. The level of harm is considered to be less than substantial and at a low level within that scale. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF is therefore engaged with states the following:
- "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."*
- 6.5 The identified harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the Proposed Development in the accompanying Planning Statement prepared by Avison Young. This includes the potential enhancement of the retained facades through an agreed schedule of repairs and improvements to the overall site condition and boundaries to Withington Road.
- 6.6 The significance of the existing building complex as a non-designated heritage asset would be reduced, principally due to loss of historic fabric and legibility, however enhancements can also be made. The identified impact of the Proposed Development on a building of low to moderate local significance and in a deteriorated state should be taken into account as an additional material consideration and proportionately addressed in the planning balance.

Appendix 1: Legislation and National Planning Policy

Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

In relation to land or buildings within conservation areas, s.72(1) of the Act states that:

“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

Case law has established that this is a matter to be given *“considerable importance and weight”*.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the full statement of Government planning policies. Chapter 16 outlines the Government’s guidance regarding the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF outlines the information required to support planning applications affecting heritage assets, stating that applicants should 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.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 205 states that 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. Conservation is defined as:

“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”

Paragraph 206 confirms that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 207 states that 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:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 208 states that 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.

Paragraph 212 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, Paragraph 209 of the NPPF states that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Local Planning Policy

Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027)

Manchester Local Plan

The Manchester Local Plan is formed of the Core Strategy 2012-2027 and Proposals Map, the extant Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies and relevant Development Plan Documents (DPDs).

Policy EN 2 of the Core Strategy relates to tall buildings, which are defined as ‘buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbourhoods and/or which significantly change the skyline’. It further states that proposals for tall buildings will be supported where it is demonstrated that they:

- “Are of excellent design quality,
- Are appropriately located,
- Contribute positively to sustainability,
- Contribute positively to place making, for example as a landmark, terminating a view, or by signposting a facility of significance, and
- Will bring significant regeneration benefits.”

Policy EN 3 (Heritage) of the Core Strategy 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...’

Policy DC18.1 confirms that the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas. It states the following:

“a) The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;

ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;

iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);

iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;

v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.

b) The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c) Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area.

d) Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e) Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.”

Policy DC19 of the UDP relates to the determination of planning applications for development which involve or have an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. It states that the Council will have regard to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

“d) seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features...”

Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance

Whilst not planning policy the Planning Practice Guidance provides a clear indication of the Government's approach to the application of national policy contained in the NPPF. Where there is conflict between the guidance in the PPG and earlier documents the PPG will take precedence.

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)

GPA Note 2 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy in the Framework and the related guidance given in the NPPG. These include; assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.

Guidance: Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) (December 2017) 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'

Historic England has published guidance relating to the setting and views of heritage assets. The document gives general advice on understanding setting and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets. It also provides advice on how views play a part in setting. It suggests a staged approach to taking decisions on the level of the contribution which setting and related views make to the significance of heritage assets.

The guidance clarifies that there can be a distinction between views that are valued for reasons other than their contribution to heritage significance such as reasons of landscape character or visual amenity.

It states 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. It also clarifies that the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting.

Paragraph 9 of the guidance states that setting is not itself a heritage asset. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.

The guidance highlights a series of other considerations that can be relevant to the assessing the impact of development such as 'change over time', 'cumulative change', 'access and setting', 'buried assets and setting', 'designed settings', 'setting and urban design', and 'setting and economic viability'.

It is identified within the guidance that views which contribute more to understanding the significance of a heritage asset include the following:

- Those where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset.
- Those where town- or village-scape reveals views with unplanned or unintended beauty.
- Those with historical associations.
- Those with cultural associations.
- Those where relationships between the asset and other heritage assets or natural features or phenomena are particularly relevant.

As set out above, a staged approach to assessment is advocated involving identification of the assets that may be affected, assessing the degree to which setting makes a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset or allows significance to be appreciated, assessing the effects of the proposed development and exploring ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

In assessing the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets or allow significance to be appreciated, the key attributes of the heritage asset should be addressed and then the following considered:

- The physical surroundings of the asset and its relationship with other assets;
- The asset's intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use;
- The contribution made by noise, smells etc to significance; and
- The way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated.

The Step 2 Checklist provides a list of potential setting attributes that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance under the headings 'The asset's physical surroundings' and 'Experience of the asset'. The Step 3 Checklist provides a list of potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset including the 'Location and siting of development', the 'Form and appearance of development', 'Wider effects of the development' and 'Permanence of the development'.

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