



HERITAGE STATEMENT

Incorporating Design & Access Statement

For

Listed Building Consent

At

Parrs Wood High School
Wilmslow Rd
Manchester
M20 5PG

For



AUGUST 2, 2024

PARRS WOOD HIGH SCHOOL
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1. Introduction

Parrs Wood House, a distinguished 18th-century Georgian villa, stands as a historical landmark in the Parrs Wood area of Didsbury, Manchester, England. Noted architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner described it as "a poorer man's Heaton Hall," a testament to its understated elegance and historical significance. This "white stucco mansion" features a square main block with two unequal service wings on the north side, creating a picturesque two-storey structure with three bays and a three-window service range to the left. Despite the architect remaining unknown, some speculate that a member of the Wyatt family might have designed it. On 25 February 1952, Parrs Wood House was deservedly designated as a Grade II* listed building.

In 1795, Richard Farrington purchased Parrs Wood House. His brother, Joseph Farrington, a noted diarist and artist, tragically died there in 1821 after an accident at the Church of St James, Didsbury. From 1825, the house became the residence of James Heald, a Tory MP and prominent philanthropist affiliated with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Elected as MP for Stockport in 1847 alongside Richard Cobden, Heald was remembered for his charitable contributions. Following his death, the construction of St Paul's Methodist Church in Didsbury commemorated his legacy. With no direct heirs, the estate passed to Heald's nephew and remained in the family until the 1920s.

In the 1920s, the Manchester Corporation acquired the estate, stipulating that it be used for educational purposes. Subsequently, the site evolved into Parrs Wood High School and Parrs Wood Rural Studies Centre. Initially serving as the music building, the mansion now functions as the sixth-form centre of Parrs Wood High School.

The turn of the millennium marked significant changes for Parrs Wood House. In 2000, much of the school land was sold to developers who established a large entertainment complex. This transformation altered the area from a semi-rural educational enclave to a bustling leisure hub. During this redevelopment phase, Parrs Wood House endured damage and theft, and the original stables were lost to fire.

Today, Parrs Wood House stands as a testament to the area's rich history, reflecting its architectural beauty and storied past within the context of a modern educational and entertainment landscape.

2. Property Description

2.1. Parrs Wood High School, Original School Building

Taken from the Listing entry.

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1254971

Date first listed: 25-Feb-1952

Statutory Address: Parrs Wood House, Wilmslow Road

Country house, now student hostel. Probably late C18; altered. Scored stucco, hipped slate roof. Square main block facing west with 2 unequal service wings on north side. Two storeys and 3 bays plus a 3-window service range to the left, with plinth, 1st-floor band, and cornice below eaves level, all carried round. The principal element is symmetrical, with a pedimented centre which has a prominent bowed porch at ground floor with engaged wooden Tuscan columns and antae, a triglyph frieze with oxen skull metopes, cornice with wrought-iron balustrade, a round-headed doorway with 9-panel door and plain fanlight, and curved sashed windows. These and all other sashed windows have margin panes. The ground floor has large tripartite sashes in segmental blank arches; the 1st floor has a sashed window in the centre flanked by coved niches, a similar window to the left and a blind window to the right. The service wing to the left, which breaks forward, has 3 similar sashes on each floor and a flat-roofed porch attached to the corner, with a round-headed doorway which has a fanlight with radiating glazing bars. Various ridge chimneys. The 5-window south front has a central 2-storey 3-window bow with a cast-iron balcony to 1st floor supported by very slender iron columns, and fenestration otherwise

matching the front. The east side, a 7+4 window range, has (inter alia) a single-storey 3-window bow at the south end, a pedimented centre to the front of the service wing at the north end, sashed windows like the others (and a C20 external corridor attached at ground floor). Interior: entrance vestibule with diamond-pattern marble paving, 2 mahogany panelled doors in each side, and a principal doorway with classical architrave; central staircase hall illuminated by a domed skylight and containing a flying imperial staircase with half-landings carried on Tuscan columns, Ionic screens to the landing with rosette frieze and dentilled cornice, doorways with architraves including relief panels depicting classical scenes of rural life; fine decoration in south and east rooms, including fireplaces (one with Ionic columns, the other with herms), moulded plaster friezes and modillioned cornices; elliptical room at 1st floor formerly similar to Cupola Room at Heaton Hall, but decoration recently collapsed. History: may have been designed by a member of the Wyatt family; was owned by Richard Farington, brother of the diarist Joseph Farington, a frequent visitor until his accidental death in Didsbury church in 1821.

3. Assessment of Significance

Parrs Wood House, an integral part of Didsbury's long history and future development, stands alongside the school as a significant landmark. Located on one of the back routes into Manchester and just off the major A34, the school occupies a prominent and well-known position.

The building's architectural style is traditional, featuring local materials such as white stucco finishes and slate roofs. The intricate and distinctive internal features of the building will remain unaffected by the proposed work. The primary objective of the project is to replace a deteriorated element, preventing further decay.

This proposal has been carefully considered, respecting the building's status, historical value, and purpose. The aim is to maintain the building as a fully operational school for many years, serving the public and fulfilling its original educational mission.

4. Design Principles & Appearance

The proposed works include:

The full replacement of the existing ceiling will be done in a detailed sequence:

1. **Preparation:** Strip the existing ceiling and remove all nails from the timbers.
2. **Lath Installation:** Install new chestnut split laths.
3. **Plaster Application:** Apply three coats of haired lime plaster, spaced over a period of three weeks to ensure proper curing.
4. **Final Decoration:** Decorate the ceiling to match the existing finish, ensuring a seamless integration with the current aesthetic.

5. Impact of the Proposal

The proposed ceiling works will be carried out to match the existing ceiling using traditional construction techniques. Internally, any minor repair work will be done with sensitivity to the original materials and design, ensuring a seamless integration with the building's aesthetic. The heritage asset, Parrs Wood House, will not be impacted or affected by the proposed ceiling works