

Heritage Statement

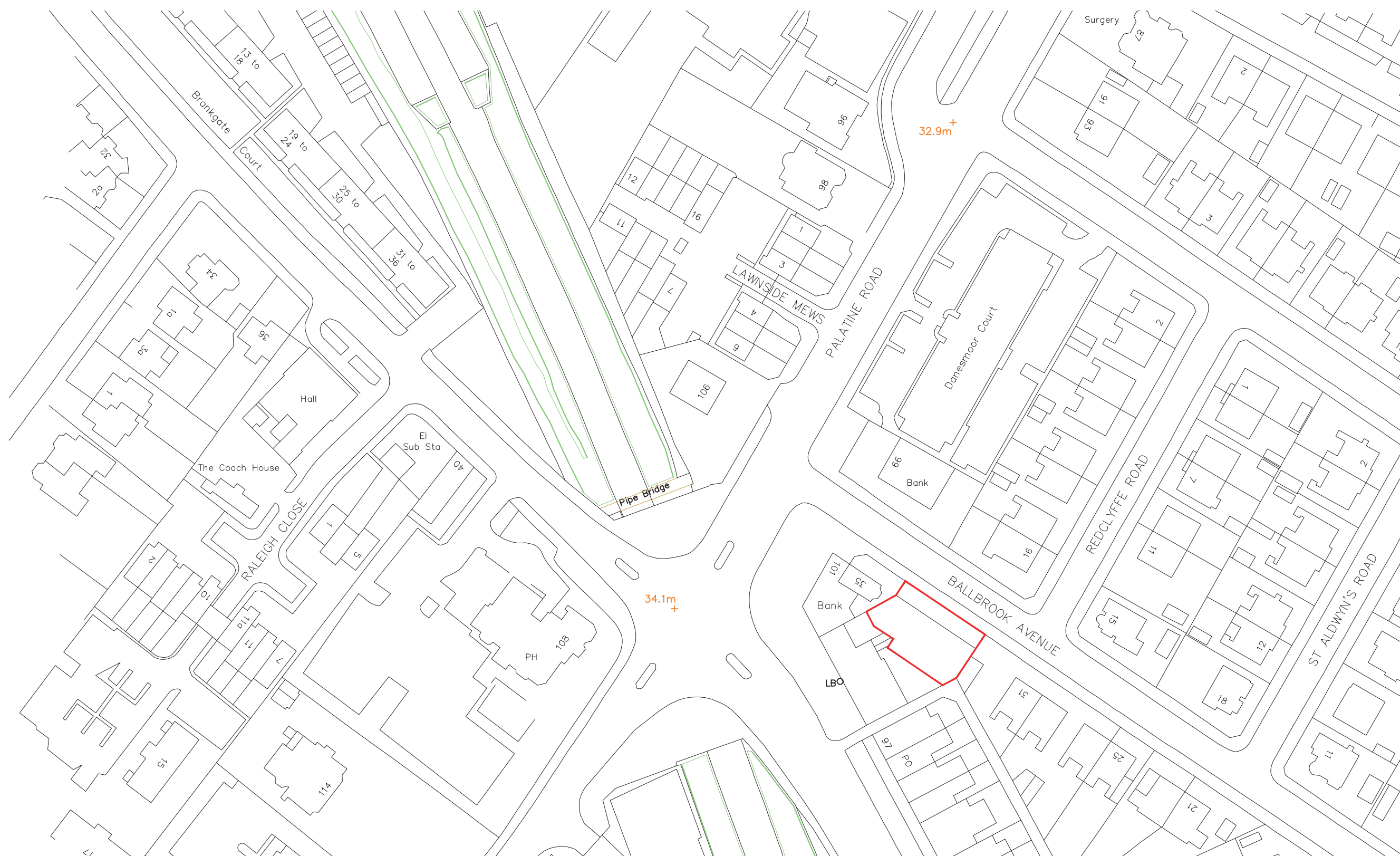
Craig House,
Ballbrook Avenue,
Didsbury

Client: M20 Offices 5 Ltd
Date: October 2023
Job: 2032
Revision:-



Atelier MB
Urban Architects





Location Plan- Site Edged Red

CONTENTS

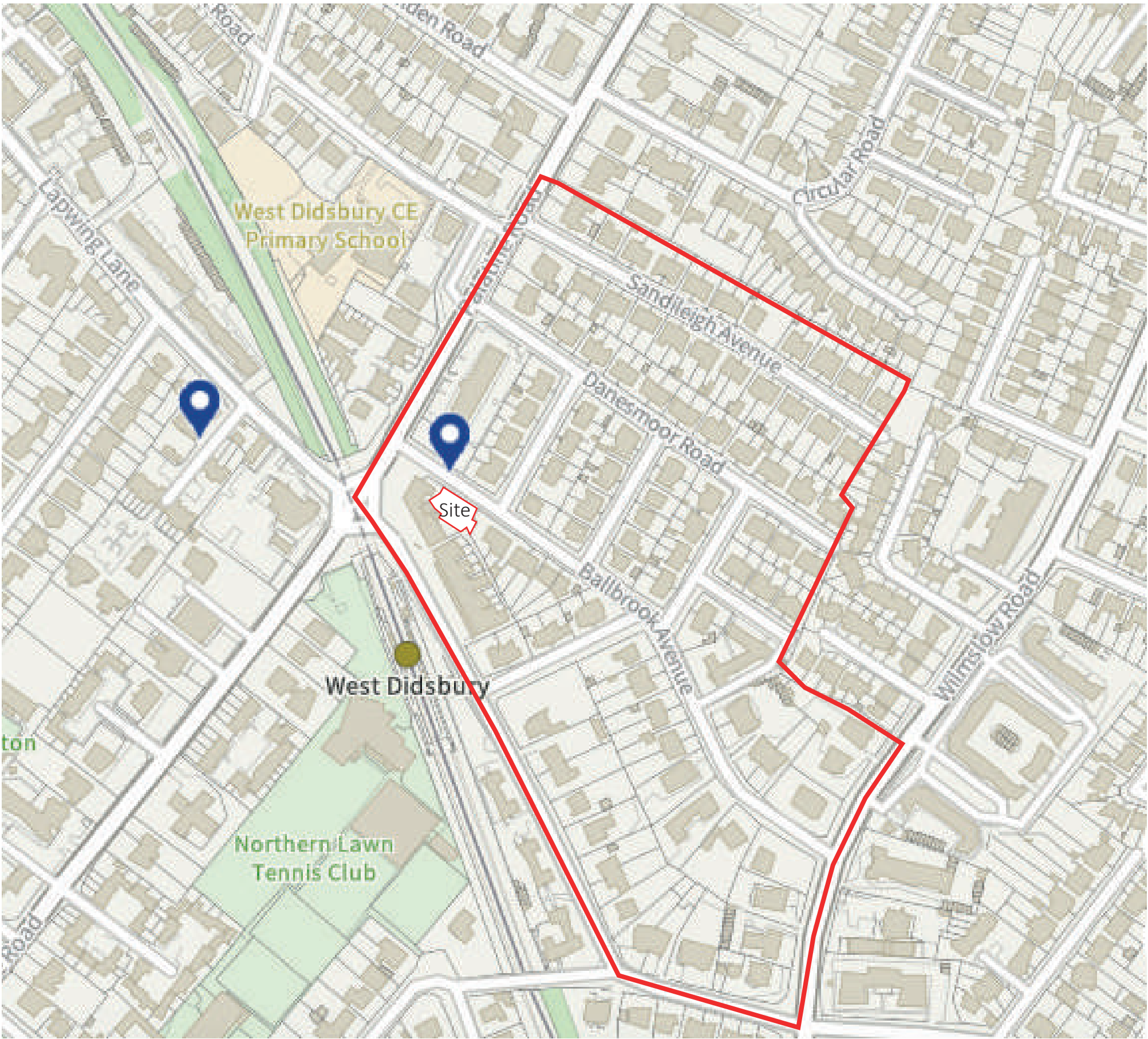
- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 SITE LOCATION and DESCRIPTION
- 3.0 HISTORY
- 4.0 PROPOSALS AND IMPACT
- 6.0 PLANNING CONTEXT
- 7.0 CONCLUSION



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement accompanies a formal application for Planning consent. The scheme proposes a single storey rooftop extension to Craig House, the former telephone exchange, Ballbrook Avenue, Didsbury. This building is located in the Ballbrook Conservation Area.

This document has been prepared by Atelier MB Urban Architects for our Client, M20 Offices 5 Ltd and must be read in conjunction with the full supporting information package, including our Design and Access Statement, and the Planning Statement by Ludlam Associates.



Location of Listed Buildings and the Ballbrook Conservation Area Boundary



2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The subject of the application is located on Ballbrook Avenue, just to the south east of the junction with Palatine Road, West Didsbury.

The site is Craig House, 33 Ballbrook Avenue. This is a side road which runs between Wilmslow and Palatine Roads, on which first diverges from, and then runs roughly parallel to, Lapwing Lane. Ballbrook Avenue has a cluster of former public/services buildings to the northern Palatine Road end, and the remainder is with residential properties. Houses are mixture of large red brick and rendered properties and smaller semi-detached dwellings, which are rendered. The majority date from the Edwardian period, with some larger Victorian properties.

The layout of the roads creates a triangular site to the north end of Ballbrook Avenue/Lapwing Lane and Palatine Road. To the east is the former post office building (now Pizza Express) and next to that, facing Palatine Road, is the former bank, now in mixed use as offices and apartments. To the rear of the post office building and next to the bank, is Craig House, the former telephone exchange.

To the North of the site on the opposite side of Ballbrook Road, is 99 Palatine Road. This is a grade II listed former bank which dates from 1914-15.



Ballbrook Avenue elevation of Craig House

Ballbrook Conservation Area

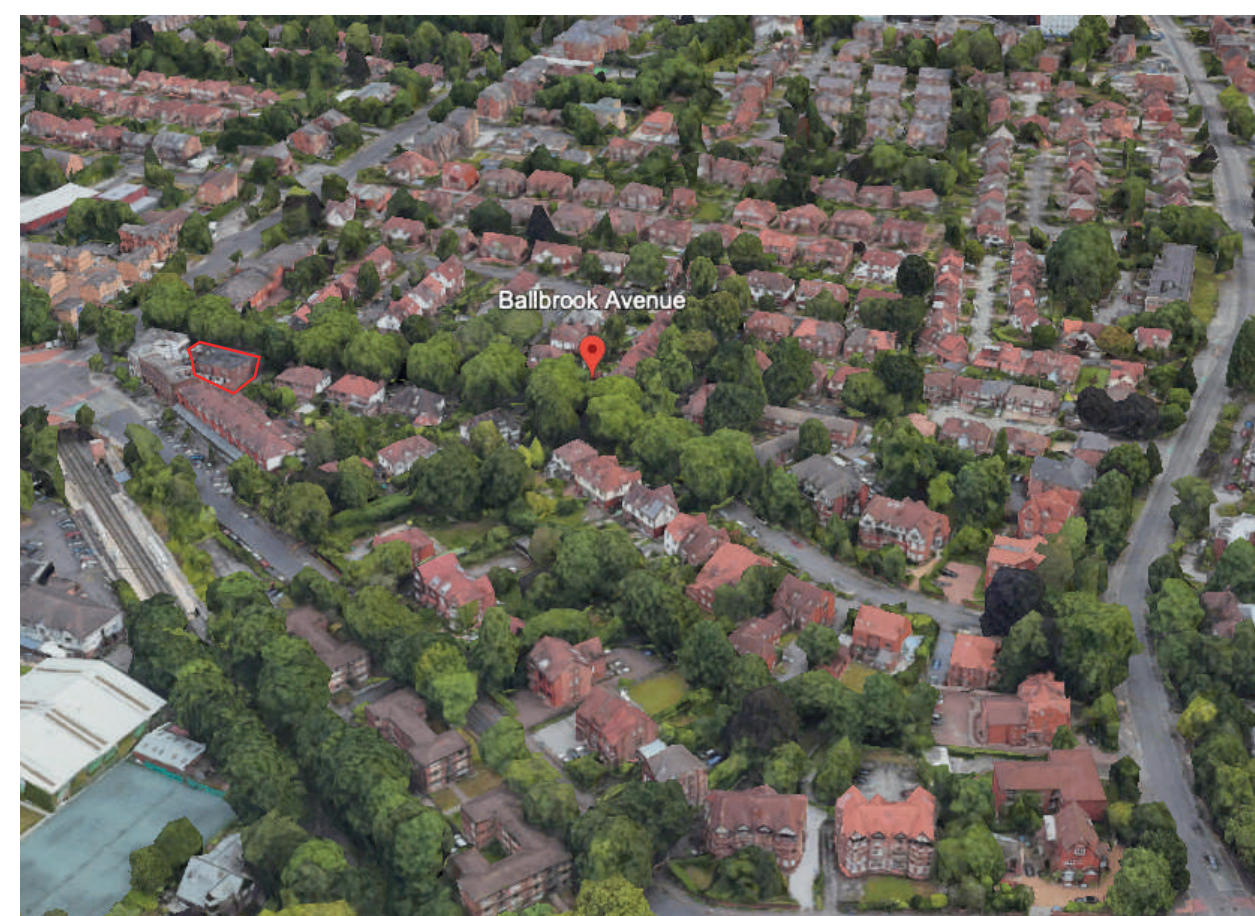
The core of the area is the Edwardian housing estate, formerly known as the Radcliffe Estate. This comprises Sandleigh Avenue, Danesmoor Road, Holmwood Road, Lyndhurst Road, St. Aldwyn's Road and Redclyffe Road, and consists of Edwardian housing built between 1910 and 1914. This was built mostly by the developers Booth & Britten, who employed the architect George Westcott. The same team also created the terrace of shops with a cast-iron and glass canopy on Lapwing Lane in 1913.

There are also pockets of Victorian houses within the eastern side of the area, such as along Lapwing Lane, Wilmslow Road, and the far end of Ballbrook Avenue.

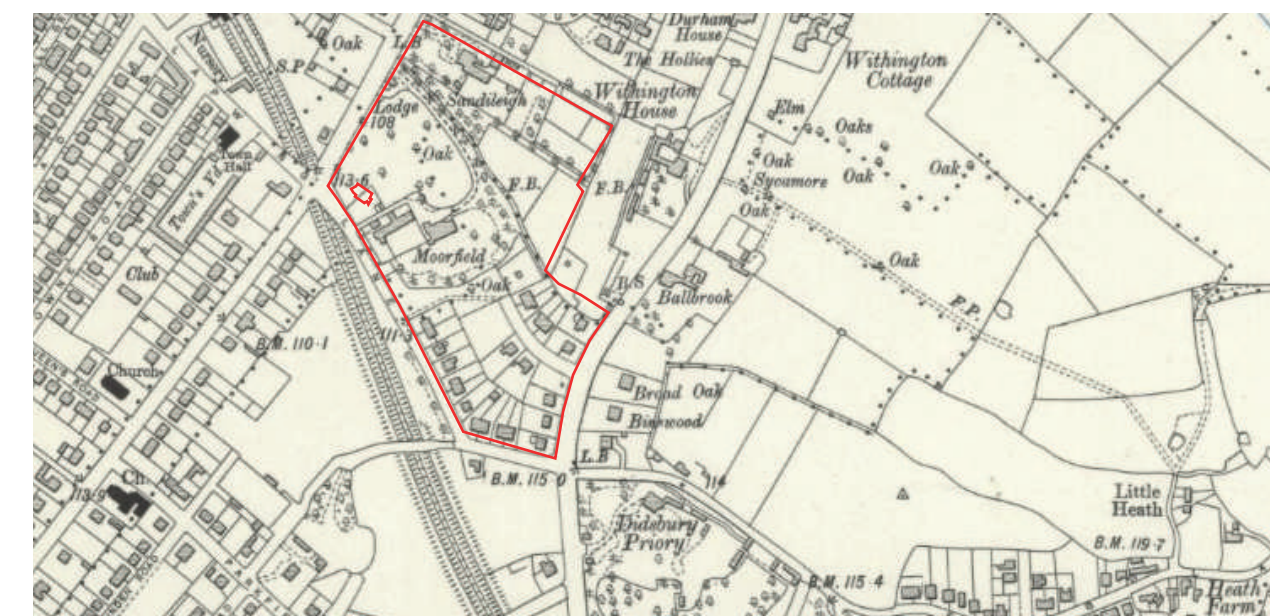
The bank, post office and telephone exchange group of buildings fronting Lapwing Lane, Palatine Road and Ballbrook Avenue are post-war developments. These have a character as a group which is distinct from the residential properties.

The only listed building in the immediate vicinity is the former District Bank at the corner of Lapwing Lane and Ballbrook Avenue (1915, designed by Barker, Ellis and Jones). This is a mock Tudor two storey property of brick and mock Tudor timber framing to the external faces and a half hipped slate roof.

33 Ballbrook Avenue sits within the Ballbrook Conservation Area, which is primarily an area of residential buildings, with several post war municipal buildings clustered around the junction with Palatine Road/Lapwing Lane.



Aerial View of the Conservation Area with the site in red



1907-08 OS Map



1915-16 OS Map



1938 OS Map



Atelier MB
Urban Architects

3.0 History



Craig House was built in 1927, designed by the architect Charles P. Wilkinson, an employee of the Office of Works who was responsible for a number of post office and telephone exchange buildings in the North-West of England, including the former post office site on Lapwing Lane which backs on to the site. These three former 'services' buildings form a group and are distinct in character to the housing which makes up the rest of Ballbrook Avenue.

The building is a two-storey flat roofed structure, with a parapet wall and a regular and symmetrical rhythm to the front elevation. The main elevation has regular multi-paned windows which are large to the ground floor and shorter to the first floor. The more ornate double door entrance with fan light, is in an adjoining single storey block to the right-hand side. End corners feature brick quoins and there is a restrained amount of decoration around the windows, which feature flat arches, and a line of dentilled brickwork picks out the high level cornice.



The significance of the Conservation Area is described in MCC documentation as focusing on the character of the residential properties. Whilst the terrace of shops on Lapwing Lane are given special mention, the character of this group of municipal buildings is not made reference to. However, they do undoubtedly have a distinct character to be maintained, which is informed by their scale, mass and materiality.

The MCC appraisal of the area states that the main aim of the designation is to ensure that the character and quality of both buildings and the spaces between them is retained.

“As with all Conservation Areas, attention must be paid to maintaining harmony with regard to building heights, the type and the colour of materials.”



View of the municipal building block from Lapwing Lane. Bank on the left.

Whilst the appraisal makes extensive reference to the materiality of the residential properties, it does not specifically refer to the character of the municipal buildings. These date from much later and as a result have a different palette of materials and design characteristics. The roof of the bank for example is blue-grey slate as opposed to red tiles as per the Edwardian and Victorian houses.



View of the municipal building block from the end of Ballbrook Avenue. Bank building to the right, Craig House to the left.

Description of works

This proposal is for a rooftop extension to the original brick built form.

The original architecture remains clearly legible. The setting back of the new extension ensures it is visually and physically subservient to the other buildings on the street and to original fabric. Furthermore, the angles of the roof ensure there is limited visual impact from ground level.

The new intervention is identifiable as a contemporary addition with a simple and restrained palette and design, retaining the emphasis on the original fabric and other buildings on the street. The use of slate finishes and grey window frames ensure the form recedes visually and focuses attention on the original brick façade.

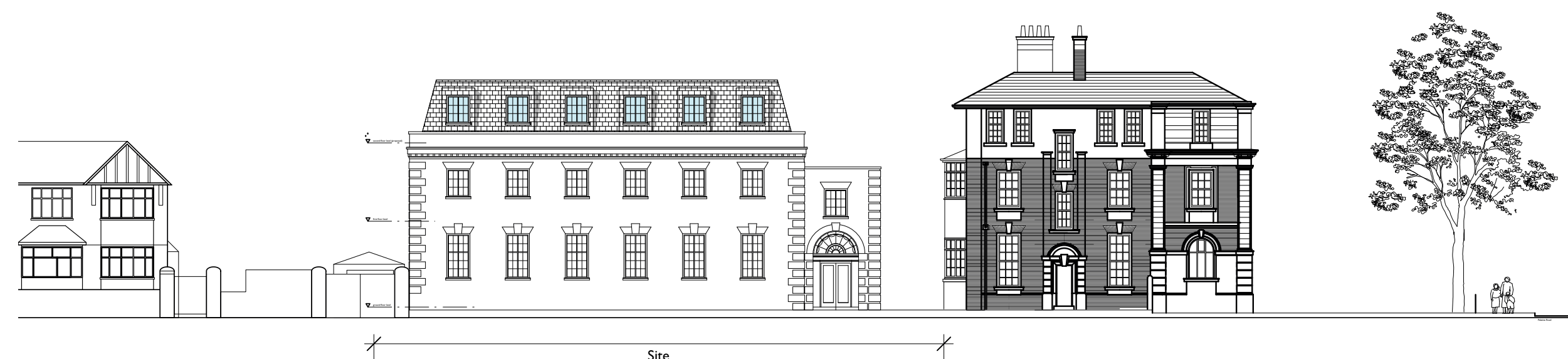
Design and Appearance

This is a proposal for a single storey rooftop extension. The extent of the proposal is limited to well within the roofplate of the main building, and does not extend onto the lower part of the building adjacent to the bank. A regular pattern of windows continue the existing fenestration grid, utilising the existing pane configuration. These will be painted to match the slate extension thus pushing them further into the background and allowing the historic facade composition to remain legible and dominant.

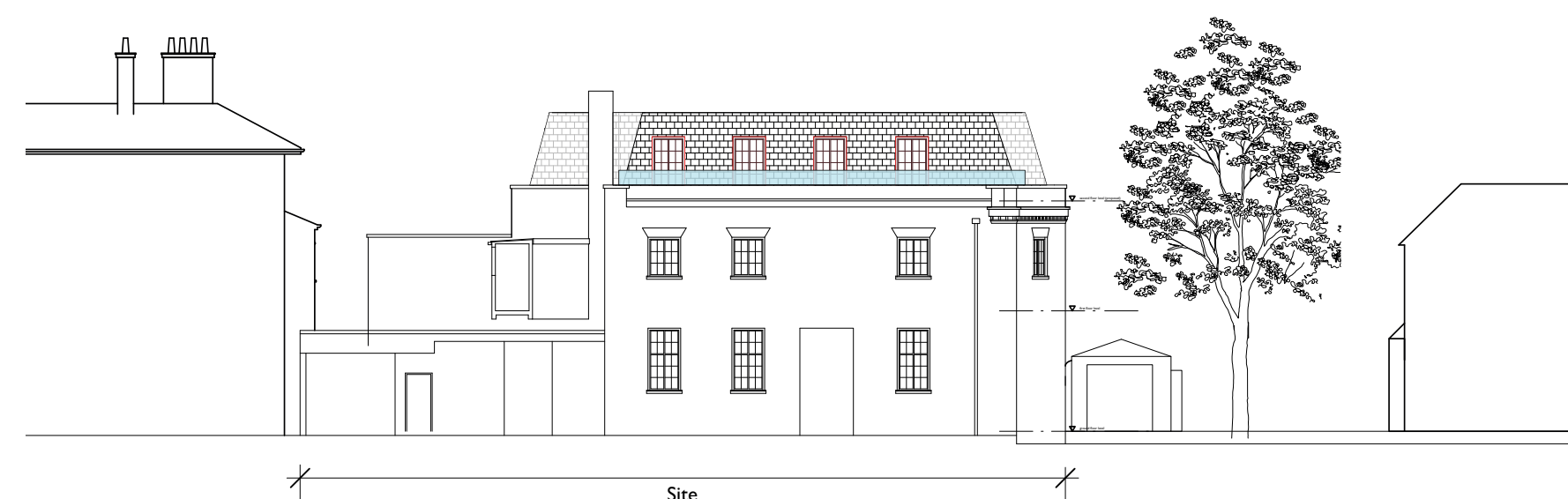
Form

There is a desire to create additional office space within the footprint of the building. Extensions to either of the sides, on vacant land, are not considered to be appropriate within the context of the street and wider views. The roof has therefore been identified as a potential location for expansion.

The extension has been designed as a mansard roof, diminishing as it gets higher and with glass balustraded balconies to the rear, keeping animation and outdoor use away from the principal frontage. The raked sides ensure the visual impact recedes as it gets higher. Retaining the original existing parapet wall preserves some of the historic fabric, A mansard appears less bulky and dominant, minimising the visual impact of the scheme



Ballbrook Avenue Elevation



Rear Elevation

The new structure has been set back from the perimeter parapet with a gap formed by a new gutter. This creates a visual buffer and ensures the view of the extension is partly restricted from street and in front of building level.

The symmetry of the main elevation has been taken into consideration and the roof designed as a symmetrical addition when viewed from the front.

Scale and Mass

The proposed extension adds an additional storey to a two storey building. The proposed maximum height is now approximately 2.5 storeys to the bank's 3 no. storeys (to the NW of the site). It therefore does not dominate or significantly alter the relationship between these two buildings. Craig House remains subservient in scale and mass.

The proposed extension is set inbound of the original footprint, and does not build upon the lower side element of the original building- the entrance. The result therefore maintains the original spacing between this building and the bank.

Impact

Conservation Areas are assessed in terms of architectural and historical interest.

The Ballbrook Conservation Area, as outlined on the MCC website, is predominantly valued for its architectural interest, with significant reference made to the existing character, form and materials palette of the location. Details are given with regards to the housing which forms the majority of the area.

"This group of houses remains virtually intact and displays the townscape qualities of an Edwardian suburban housing estate"

In terms of individual properties, only the retail parade fronting Lapwing Lane, and 87 Palatine Rd are mentioned, each with their own unique character and materials palette.

Key elements in defining the special interest of this area, and the impact of the proposals are assessed below:

Value Characteristic: Evidential Value.

The potential of a place to yield evidence about past. Effects of the areas historical development on plan form, character, style, historical associations.

Impact:

Neutral. These proposals remain within the footprint of the existing building, and although the roof-line is raised, this does not impact the plan form of the area, which is characterised by the residential estate. Whilst a deviation from the existing roof massing style, these proposals use the existing material palette, and are deferential to the existing fabric. They do not significantly detract from the existing character and style of the setting.

Value Characteristic: Aesthetic value:

The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Architectural quality and built form, particular architectural interest resulting from a past use.

Impact:

Minor harm. These proposals slightly impact the existing architectural qualities of the existing property and wider area., by altering the roof-line. However, whilst the rooftop extension will be visible from the street view, this is at high level and will not be a significant feature in the overall composition of the urban character.

The character of the setting is predominantly derived from the domestic properties. These proposals utilise the existing

material palette of the other municipal buildings with which they form a group. The scale and mass is not significant and therefore does not alter the sense of place.

Value Characteristic: Communal value:

The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. How the places within it are experienced by the people who live and work there and visitors to the area.

Impact:

Neutral. These proposals are for a rooftop extension to 1 no. property. The overall height of the property remains below that of the adjacent bank with which it forms a group. From ground level the extension will have limited visual impact. These proposals do not alter the layout of the area, and are generally in keeping with the character of the existing properties.

Value Characteristic: Historic Value.

The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Impact:

Neutral. The proposals are relatively modest in scale and will not significantly alter the way the buildings are appreciated as part of the Conservation Area. This extension cannot readily be seen in the context of no. 99 Palatine Road (former bank), which is set back on the opposite side of the road.

Revised Design

Our client has received feedback from the Planning Officer with regards to the originally proposed scheme. The scheme has now been revised, but we can respond to each point in terms of heritage impact:

I can advise you that the above planning application is not supported due to the design, appearance and form of the -Impact to the street-scene

Whilst the previous proposals offered an overly dominant extension built directly onto the parapet wall, the scheme now presented is clearly set back from these boundary walls. The walls have now been inclined so that they further reduce their visual and physical mass. The two masonry sides proposed previously have been removed and replaced with slate. These changes now revert the balance of the composition such that the extension is subservient and visually much reduced in impact.

-Character of the conservation area.

The character of the Conservation Area is predominantly one of domestic scale and Edwardian detailing provided by the housing estate. Craig house sits at the end of this area as a distinct typology and character which forms a municipal group with the other two buildings that form the corner. Whilst this proposal raises the roof-line of Craig house, this is still below that of the adjacent bank building. There is a relatively large space between Craig House and the adjacent residential dwelling, which itself has an entirely distinct character and materials palette.

The building under consideration has a parapet line that broadly aligns with the ridges of the dwelling houses on Ballbrook Avenue, which create an attractive and consistent

skyline. Its height, mass and location also tie the building to the core of the conservation area and allow the neighbouring Bank Chambers building to be read as the local landmark in its immediate context and as a building distinct from the host, former Telephone Exchange and the dwelling houses that otherwise dominate the conservation area.

Whilst Craig House has a similar parapet line to the adjacent dwelling, it was constructed much later, of a very different style and purpose. There is a significant gap between Craig House and the dwelling, whilst there is a much smaller gap with the bank. The spatial arrangement coupled with the character and materiality, place Crag House in the municipal group which sits distinctly from the housing estate.

-The increase in building height involving the addition of a mansard roof would disrupt the relationship of the buildings in this part of the conservation area and appear overly dominant, to the detriment of the local townscape.

As outlined above, the design has been changed now, and the new proposals are not considered overly dominant of the existing elevation composition, or massing of the building. The new mansard roof is inclined on all sides and recedes visually and physically from the main elevation.



Previous scheme

The proposed front dormers and blank brick gables emerging above the existing parapet would exacerbate the visual impact and prominence of the proposed new extension, which would appear uncharacteristic and out of keeping with the distinctive character of this part of the conservation area.

The blank brick gables have now been omitted. The dormer windows will be painted out to match the slate and will therefore recede from the elevation composition.

It is also noted that submitted information on materials and finishes is not consistent. The D&A Statement notes that terracotta colour pantiles are proposed, with the proposed elevations indicating natural slates. No information on the dormer and window construction and proposed finishes has been submitted.

The report and drawings have been revised to clarify that the proposed finish is slate- to match the roof of the bank.



National Policy

Section 72 of the Listed Building Act expects applications within Conservation Areas to be determined with special attention to the desirability or preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

The proposals seek to provide additional accomodation with minimal visual impact on the Conservation Area, and have been located at high level on the existing footprint to achieve this. These proposals are considered to maintain the character and appearance of the area.

National Policy in relation to heritage can be found in NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework), updated 2021. Of particular relevance is section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Paragraph 197 highlights the need for local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets.

Paragraph 199 states that, irrespective of the level of potential harm of proposals, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation and that the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be.

Paragraph 202 highlights the need to balance any instances of less than substantial harm against the public benefit of the proposal.

These proposals seek to update the property and increase the floor area to enable the sustainable growth of an existing local business, and the creation of further local jobs.

Manchester City Council Core Strategy Policy EN3 (Heritage)

states that development will be encourages where it takes advantage of distinct historic and heritage features and that new development must preserve, or where possible, enhance the historic environment, setting, character and accessibility. The proposals are not considered to constitute harm and seek to ensure long-term use and viability through a carefully considered extension. The proposals are considered to be in accordance with local policy.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF)

The NPPF recognises that sympathetic changes to heritage assets are necessary to ensure their viable ongoing use, but that alterations must be justified and their impact upon significance assessed.

NPPF, paragraph 197 states;

‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.’*

When considering potential impacts of proposed development on an asset’s significance, NPPF states that

‘great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation..... this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm’.

NPPF, para. 199.

and that

‘where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm....this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.’

NPPF, para. 202.

The building, although not listed itself, is part of the Ballbrook Conservation Area, which is designated as a heritage asset. 99 Palatine road- opposite the site, is listed as grade II. Craig House is considered to be a positive contributor to the special architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area. The above policy therefore applies to the building and its role within the wider heritage asset.

The proposals are not considered to cause significant harm. They will cause some minor harm but this is outweighed by the benefits of increasing the commercial accomodation in a sensitive manner to the setting.

Local policy

The Core Strategy Development Plan (2012-17)
 This sets out strategic planning policy for Manchester. There are wider considerations for any proposals, but the relevant sections specific to these proposals are listed below:

Policy SP1- Spatial Principles
*“Development in all parts of the City should:-
 Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including creating well designed places that enhance or create character.
 Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.”*
 By reusing and extending an existing commercial premises to provide additional office space and thus employment opportunities, the proposal is considered to support this policy.
 Policy DM 1- Development Management. This policy covers issues relating to all developments, such as consideration of design in terms of the existing setting, and provision of amenity.
 These proposals have been carefully designed so as to not detract from existing amenity. They produce additional external amenity provision at roof level for office tenants.

Policy EN 3- Heritage. The council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features.
 Whilst providing additional accommodation, these proposals do not detract from the existing historic character of the setting.

Policy EC 2
 Existing Employment Space. The Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites.

This scheme will retain and enhance the existing office provision.



Atelier MB
Urban Architects

6.0 Conclusion





The proposals have been designed to achieve additional much needed commercial accommodation for the existing tenant. This is an area which does not offer many other options for a growing local company to expand into.

The proposals are considered justified and proportionate. There is no significant harm to the Conservation Area, and these proposals do not alter the relationship between the existing properties.



ateliermb



0161 236 0051



ateliermbarchitects



atelier mb architects



info@ateliermb.co.uk



Atelier MB Ltd. Suite 2A, Amazon House, Brazil Street, Manchester, M1 3PJ