DICKINSON WAUGH

CONSERVATION

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

and

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed new inclusive access to an existing building situated within a Conservation Area

The Eagle
Richmond House
15 Bloom Street
Manchester
M1 3HZ

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This assessment has been carried out in order to determine the impact of proposed alterations to a building which is situated within a Conservation Area and within close proximity to both designated and non-designated heritage assets. The appraisal is concerned with the process of preserving or enhancing the distinctive character and appearance of the Conservation Area (designated heritage asset) and the special architectural and historic interest and setting of neighbouring statutorily Listed Buildings (designated heritage assets), locally listed buildings (non-designated heritage assets) and buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area (non-designated heritage assets).

1.2 This appraisal has been conducted in accordance with the general guidelines set out in British Standard 7913:2013 'Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' and Historic England publications 'Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning' notes GPA1 'The Historic Environment in Local Plans, GPA2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and GPA3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (Second Edition).

1.3 Significance has been assessed in accordance with guidance as set out in Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' and the former English Heritage document entitled 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'.

1.4 The author Daniel Waugh has over 30 years' experience working with historic buildings. He studied a Master of Science Degree in Architectural Conservation at the University of Central Lancashire and still has an active role in promoting the course. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists and a supporter member of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation in addition to being a member of The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain.

1.5 A site survey and visual inspection of the site and surrounding area was carried out in August 2022. Background research was conducted with reference to the Cheshire East interactive planning service, historic mapping databases, archived material, and through discussions held with the applicant. The assessment of the proposals will be conducted with reference to a range of texts, particularly the Historic England good practise guides and local authority's appraisal of the building.

1.6 The following drawing has been assessed in preparation of this report:
RCA Interiors.
PL01C Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations

2.0 RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATION

2.1 NATIONAL POLICY

2.1.1 Policy at national level comprises the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). In respect of information requirements, paragraph 194 sets out that:

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.

2.1.2 With respect to designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 sets out that:

great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

2.1.3 With respect to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 203 sets out that:

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.

2.1.4 With respect to Conservation Areas, paragraph 206 states:

Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and 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.

2.2 LOCAL POLICY

2.2.1 The Development Plans applicable to the site comprise Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (LDF) which was adopted in 2012 and extant saved policies within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

With respect to Heritage, Policy EN3 of the LDF sets out that:

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. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

With respect to Conservation Areas, DC18.1 of the UDP states that:

The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

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 of 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.*

With respect to Listed Buildings, DC19.1 of the UDP sets out that:

In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

a. *not grant Listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;*

b. *not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;*

c. *not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;*

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;*

e. *permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;*

f. *not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.*

3.0 LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

3.1 Richmond House (the building) is a late C19th former industrial warehouse now converted in to offices with a member's bar at ground floor level. The building is situated at national grid reference SJ 84381 97905.

3.2 This document is concerned with proposals relating to alterations to the exterior and partial interior of the member's bar at ground floor level.

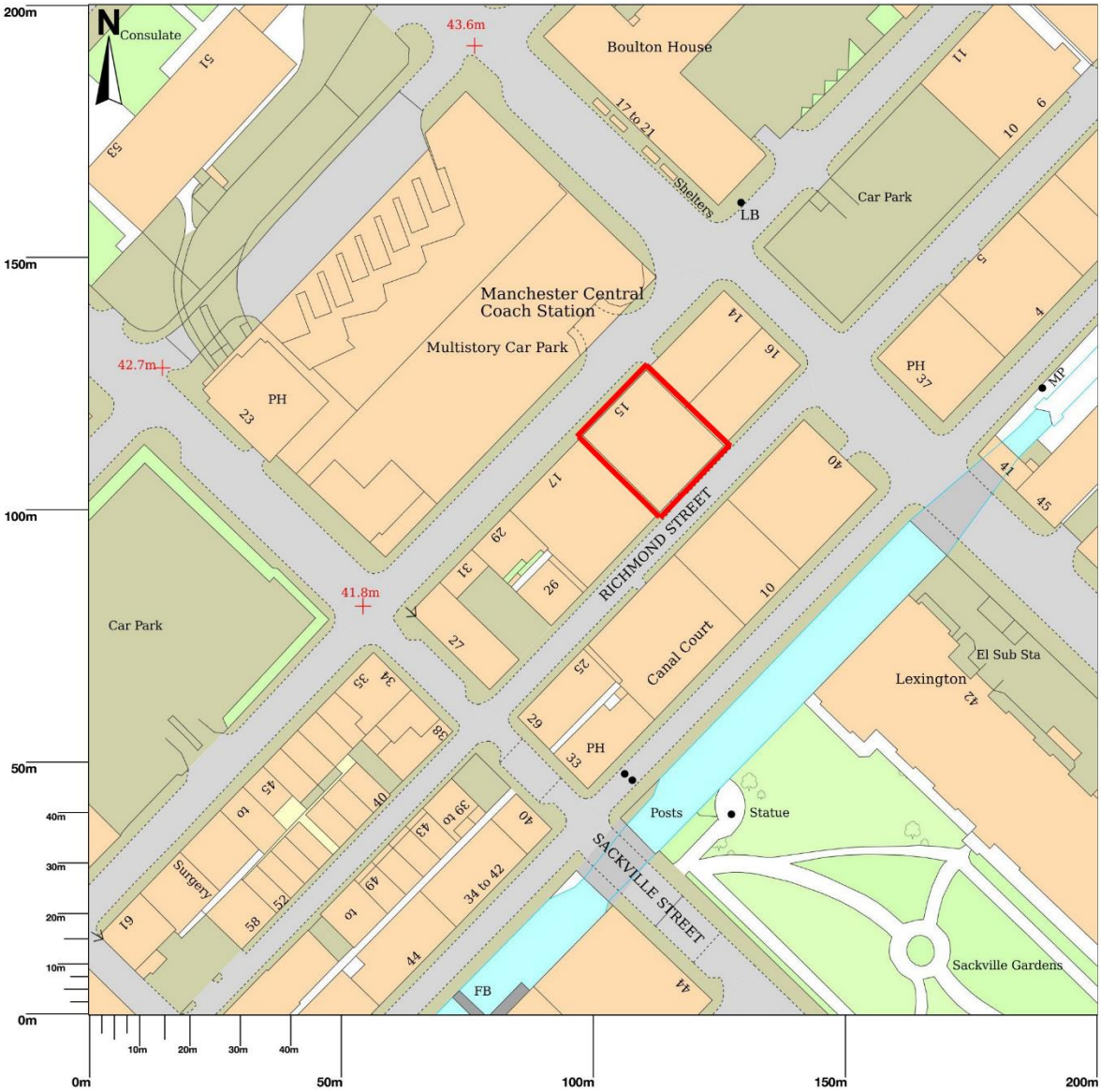

Figure 1. Site Location Plan – no scale

4.0 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

4.1 CONSERVATION AREAS

4.1.1 The building lies along the northern boundary of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area of Manchester as designated and under the authority of Manchester City Council.

4.1.2 Whitworth Street Conservation Area is acknowledged as containing many of Manchester's most important buildings and the prevailing character of the area is 'uniquely Mancunian' with the Victorian and Edwardian buildings erected between 1850 and 1920 being highly illustrative of the historical importance of the textile industry in the city.

4.1.3 The building lies within the Gay Village which is noted as being a vibrant area, with many cafe bars, public houses and restaurants bringing former vacant buildings back into active use. The building is certainly contributory in this regard.

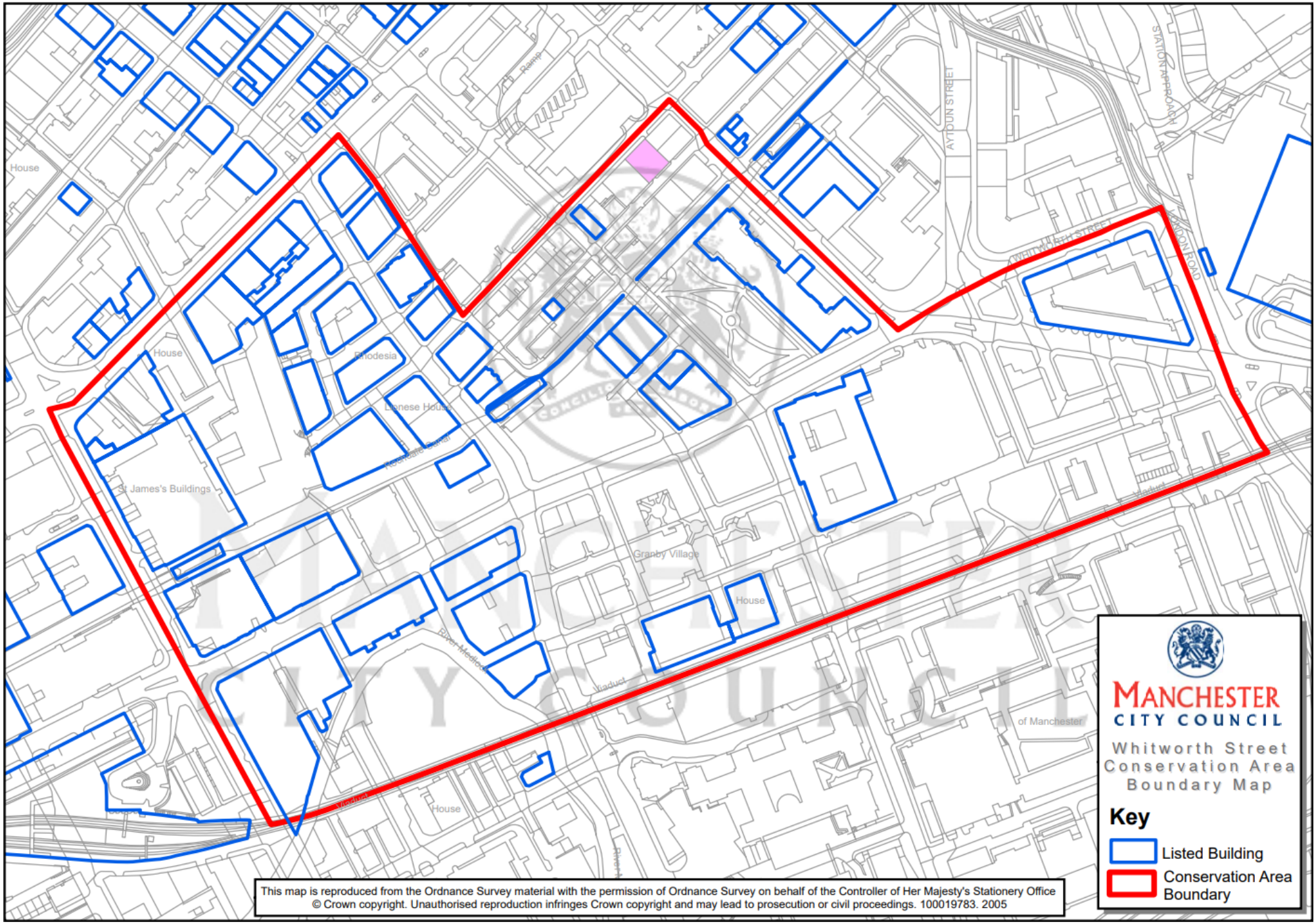

Figure 2. Conservation Area Boundary. Richmond House shaded magenta.

4.2 LISTED BUILDINGS (Designated)

4.2.1 There are a number of statutorily Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area (refer to Figure 2). 27 Sackville Street (List Entry 1247607) is a Grade II Listed Building and former textile warehouse which lies within close proximity to Richmond House. Other Listed Buildings within the area are not considered to be close enough for either their architectural interest or setting to be affected by minor changes to the building.

4.3 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

4.3.1 The building is a late C19th former Victorian Warehouse in the Italianate style an is undoubtedly one of the buildings which hold illustrative historic value contributing to the distinctive historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The building is therefore considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

4.3.2 The immediate neighbouring buildings to the north east and south west, being 14 Chorlton Street and 17 Bloom Street are also considered to be non-designated heritage assets for the similar contribution they make.

5.0 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 To follow is a detailed critical analysis of the proposals. The purpose of this analysis is to manage the change using methodology as advocated by Historic England (2008) with consideration given to:

Proposal
Brief description of the proposal together with an assessment to establish whether there is enough information to comprehensively understand the impact of the proposals on the character and historic significance of the building

Impact:
Consideration of the effects of the proposal on authenticity and integrity of the heritage values attributed to the heritage assets and the character and appearance of the wider area.

Reversibility:
Whilst the quality of the architecture and intended specification of materials is intended to last the test of time, this is not always a given. Should the proposal not perform as expected, consideration is given to the ease of reversibility so as not to prejudice alternative future solutions.

Mitigation:
Consideration of the necessity mitigate the impact of loss of any element of historic significance resulting from the proposals.

Compensation:
Consideration of any consequential conservation-based benefits resulting from the proposal.

5.2 The proposals comprise alterations to the building in order to provide an inclusive access to the ground floor of the building from the Bloom Street entrance. The purpose of the proposals originates from Condition 5 of previously approved application ref: 102783/FO/2013/C2 which states that:

Within 6 months of the granting of this consent or within a timescale as otherwise agreed in writing by the City Council details of a scheme to provided full disabled access to the ground floor of the building from the entrance from Bloom shall be submitted, approved in writing and fully implemented. The approved access shall thereafter remain operational for the period of operation of the uses hereby approved.

Reason
The access provided from Richmond Street is not of an acceptable standard due to the existence of 2 steps that need to be overcome before getting to the chairlift, would not provide full disabled access to the building throughout the operating hours and that with physical alteration an alternative fully accessible access could be provided from Bloom Street where there is existing level access at the threshold to the building, pursuant to Core Strategy policies DM1 and SP1.

5.3 The proposals essentially seek to provide a new entrance to the premises which comprise removal of the all but the arched head of the existing windows, metal grills and ashlar band and installation of new steel framed glass windows and doors to allow for a level access.

Figure 3. Image of the ground floor façade. The proposals create a new entrance to the right hand bay.

5.4 The proposals are acknowledged as being invasive and therefore alternative solutions were considered (refer to accompanying supporting statement) to ensure that the proposals are the most appropriate method of achieving the objective without causing more harm.

5.5 The proposals remove existing windows and stone which are considered to hold some historic value and also contribute to the building's architectural interest albeit not its setting. The

proposals are therefore considered to be causative of minor (less than substantial) harm to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.

5.6 The proposals also impact on the aesthetics of a building that contributes to a conservation area, however, the proposals include to replace the existing modern entrance, which is of poor quality both in design and execution as it's cumbersome and has not aged well, with new high quality slender steel framed glazing and doors. Any perceived harm is therefore considered to be offset by the benefit of the proposals and therefore, on balance the proposals are considered to preserve the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area.

5.7 The proposals do not impact on the architectural interest or setting of the neighbouring designated and non-designated heritage assets.

5.8 With regards to designated heritage assets (conservation areas), paragraph 202 of the NPPF 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.

5.9 With regards to non-designated heritage assets (the building), paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that:

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 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.

5.10 Policy EN3 of the LDF sets out that developments must preserve accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The proposals comprise external and internal alterations to a building which is situated within a Conservation Area and contributes to the area's distinctive character and appearance and is therefore defined as a non-designated heritage asset.

6.2 The building also neighbours and is within close proximity to a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

6.3 The proposals have the potential to impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting and heritage values attributed to the building. This document has been prepared to demonstrate and assess the impact.

6.4 This document contends that the proposals are causative of minor harm to both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area but any harm is offset by the replacement of the existing modern low quality works.

6.5 The proposals improve public access to a heritage asset which is of considerable public benefit and are therefore considered to be consistent with the objectives as set out in both the Local Development Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.6 It is therefore recommended that the application is permitted subject to conditions set out in accordance with Paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework ensuring that they are:

a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
b) directly related to the development; and
c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

SOURCES

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