

**Whitworth Park Mansions, Moss Lane East, Manchester  
Heritage Appraisal and Heritage Impact Statement**



**Prepared By Jerry Spencer Associates Ltd**

**In Association with Townscape**

**For Whitworth Park Limited**

**March 2015**



**Jerry Spencer Associates**  
Regeneration and Urban Design



## Contents

|                                                                                             |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....                                                                          | 1  |
| The policy context .....                                                                    | 2  |
| <i>The National Planning Policy Framework</i>                                               |    |
| <i>Manchester's Local Development Framework</i>                                             |    |
| Historical Context and Architectural Character .....                                        | 4  |
| Current condition of the buildings.....                                                     | 11 |
| Heritage significance of Whitworth Park Mansions .....                                      | 12 |
| The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance .....                           | 12 |
| Compliance with National and Local policy .....                                             | 15 |
| Conclusion .....                                                                            | 16 |
|                                                                                             |    |
| Appendix A: Contextual images around the site and its context.....                          | 17 |
| Appendix B: External and Internal Room by Room Condition Survey of Whitworth Park Mansions. |    |
| Appendix C: Proposed schedule of Heritage Works                                             |    |
| <i>Appendices B and C are provided as separate documents</i>                                |    |

## Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is fourfold:
  - To set out the history and architectural interest of Whitworth Park Mansions in order to assess the heritage significance of these assets in their context.
  - To assess the condition of the heritage of the buildings.
  - To assess the impact of the proposed building conversion and redevelopment of the site on this heritage.
  - To provide a schedule of works and make recommendations to ensure that the heritage of the buildings and their site context will be properly conserved and respected in the carrying out of the development.
2. This report has been prepared by Jerry Spencer Associates Limited in Association with Townscape, to support planning and listed building consent applications for the refurbishment and alteration of Whitworth Park Mansions, Moss Lane East, Manchester and for the proposed development housing with landscaping and parking to the rear. It should be read with the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by DLA Architecture Ltd, and with the other material accompanying the Planning and Listed Building Consent applications.



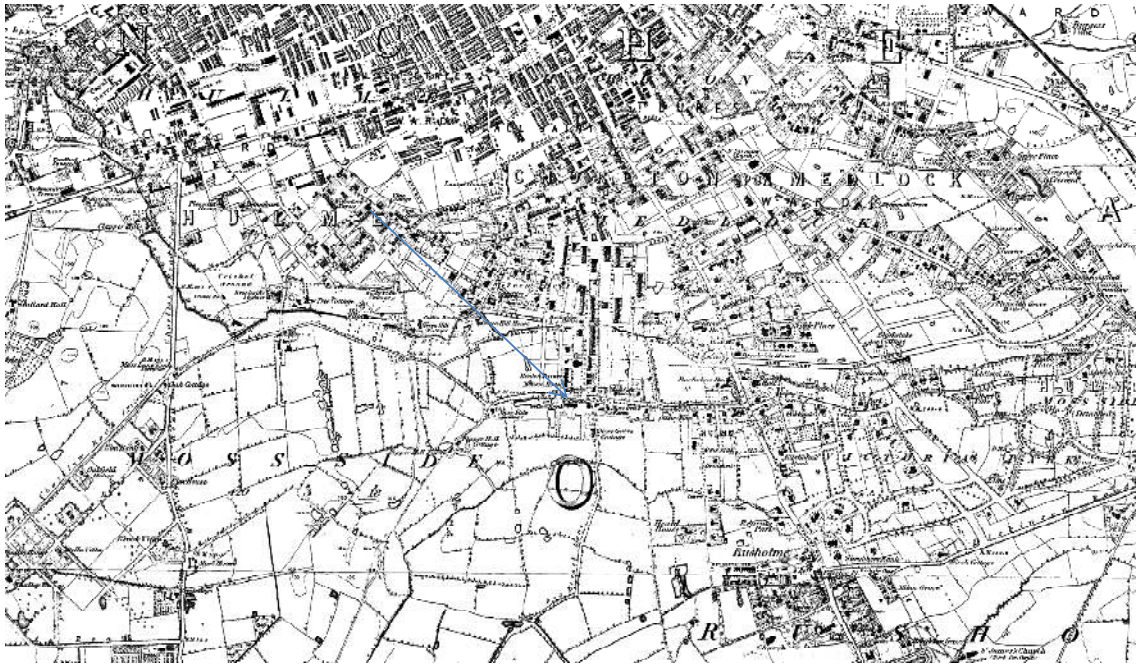
*Gate post on the right hand side of the site frontage*

## The Policy Context

3. The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as interpreted by the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The Act states that local planning authorities when making decisions must *'have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says at Paragraph 128 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.*
5. At Paragraph 131, the NPPF says that: *In determining planning applications, local 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.*
6. *Manchester's Local Development Framework*  
Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on 11th July 2012 and is the key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework (LDF). A number of Unitary Development Plan policies for the historic built environment have been saved and continue to be valid. Spatial Objective SO6 'Environment' seeks to *'Protect and enhance both the natural and built environment of the City and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, support biodiversity and wildlife, improve air, water and land quality, recreational opportunities and provide networks of high quality green infrastructure, ensuring that the City is inclusive and attractive to residents, workers, investors and visitors'*. Aspects of Spatial Objective SO1 'Spatial Principles' also refers to the aspiration to *'protect and enhance the built and natural environment'*.
7. Policy EN3 deals with 'Heritage' and says 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. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset'*.
8. Saved UDP Policy DC19.1 deals with listed buildings:  
*'The Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings...' and will (amongst other policies):*
  - *'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;*
  - *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;*

- *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.*
9. Saved Policy DC19.1 also addresses the setting of listed buildings, and is similarly worded: *'the Council will 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'.*
10. The Moss Side and Rusholme Local Plan is a non- statutory document produced by the City Council Regeneration team in 2008. This local document has informed development of policy within the Local Development Framework and is a material consideration in planning decision making. The plan identifies several brakes on regeneration in the locality, including:
- Relatively high crime and a poor level of community safety
  - Limited range of housing types with a concentration of short term letting
  - A poor environmental image, particularly along the Main Moss Lane East corridor
11. The local plan seeks to overcome these problems through high quality investment in new housing, public investment in improving the appearance of existing housing, environmental improvements and attention to community development

### Historical Context of Whitworth Park Mansions



*Figure 1 The area of South Manchester in 1848 with Whitworth Park Mansions indicated by the blue arrow at the very centre of the map.*

12. The development of four villas at this location took place sometime in the late 1830's or early 1840's as there is no evidence of them on maps prior to 1848. Originally the villas were known as Willow Bank. They were located in a semi- rural area close to Rusholme which was becoming a popular residential location for wealthy factory owners and

merchants beyond the fringes of the growing city of Manchester. It is thought that the houses in this area and were bought by German immigrants who traded overseas in the cotton produced in the city at that time. (1) The high status of these villas is indicated by an entry in the census of 1871 which shows the second villa was occupied by a Mr Thomas Carrick with his sister and three children and their three servants. (2) Overlooking the private gardens of what is now Whitworth Park stands another pair of listed villas which appear to have been constructed by the same architect as Whitworth Park Mansions as they were built around the same time and display many of the same features and details.



*Figure 2 The villas site in 1850 then known as Willow Bank and which is now known as Whitworth Park Mansions*

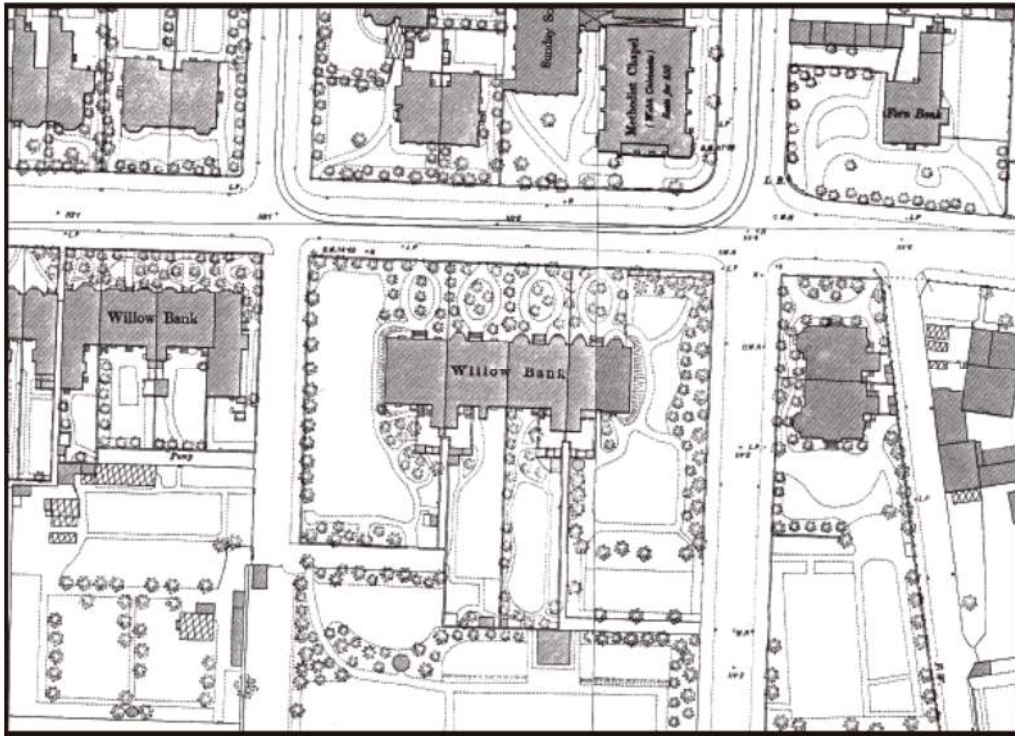
13. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century Manchester grew at a rapid rate and by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sprawling terraces occupied by poorer workers had spread out well beyond the Rusholme area engulfing formerly inaccessible and exclusive addresses such as Willow Bank. The outward expansion of the working class housing had been made possible by the introduction and spread of the Manchester tram network. The 1908 Ordnance Survey map shows that Moss Lane East not only had a tram line running east to west along it but that this intersected with another line running north to south along Upper Lloyd Street adjacent to the site, making Willow Bank a highly accessible place for all classes of residents.



*Figure 3 Manchester in 1908-09 with Whitworth Park Mansions indicated by the blue arrow at the centre of the map*

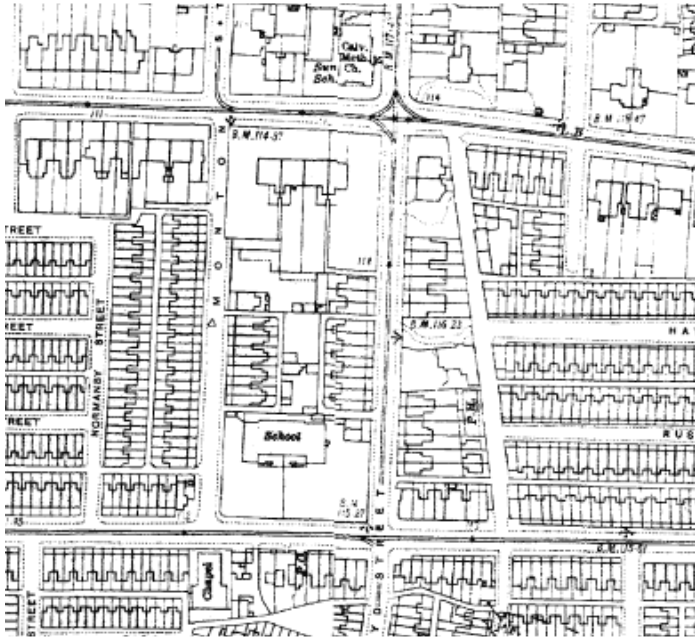
14. The expansion of the area brought some benefits for the new residents, and it was fortunate to benefit from the generosity of Sir Joseph Whitworth a successful local engineering magnate whose legacy provided the funding for Whitworth Institute and Park in 1890. When it opened the park boasted a large boating lake and was very popular with Manchester residents who flocked from miles around. The institute is now a listed building.
15. The area to the south of the villa gardens had originally remained landscaped and for a while was used as a bowling green. However under pressure for development, this gave way to terraced housing fronting the two side streets, with workshops occupying an enclosed area between the backs of the terraces. A large garage workshop was constructed immediately to the rear of Whitworth Park Mansions with its entrance directly onto Monton Street. It is clear from their small size and the absence of gardens of the terraced houses and the presence of these small industrial workshops that the area had very much lost its exclusive status by the end of the nineteenth century.
16. A school was built for the needs of the growing local population at the southern end of the street block to the rear of Whitworth Park Mansions: opened in 1896 built in red brick and with terracotta dressings, this handsome building is now listed and in use as Greenheys Adult Learning Centre.

## The changing fortunes of Whitworth Park Mansions.



*Figure 4 The four villas in 1891*

17. The villas themselves changed in appearance relatively early on. Figure 2 shows them with flat fronts presenting the simple restrained order of the late Georgian period when they were built, but by 1891 (Figure 4) bay windows had been added to the ground floors of three of the four villas. Significant alterations and additions also occurred to the rear of the properties: whereas the earliest map shows only two large outrigger extensions; by the mid Victorian period, two smaller rear extensions had been added.
18. The rear external appearance of the villas changed throughout the nineteenth century and there is a legacy of a wide range of window types. Some windows needed to be altered when the rear extensions were built partly covering the former openings. The symmetry of the smaller openings to the upper floor is broken towards the centre where the window has been extended upwards.



*Figure 5 Whitworth Park Mansions in 1908*

19. In 1914, part of all of Willow Bank was taken over as a Red Cross hospital to treat the wounds of returning soldiers. It may be surmised that by the time of the outbreak of the First World War, the fortunes of the block of four villas had turned.



*A medal presented to volunteers at Willow Bank Red Cross Hospital at what is now Whitworth Park Mansions*

20. Whatever happened to the wealthy families that once lived here, it is highly likely that they never returned after the war. Later maps record the current name of Whitworth Park Mansions. The name clearly benefitted from the hugely attraction of the park whilst the term 'Mansions' was commonly used from the late Victorian period onward to denote a large building with many apartments.
21. There is evidence from the blocked up staircases visible in each of the cellars that the kitchens would originally have been directly above the cellars within the main body of the houses. The repositioning of the cellar staircases would most likely have taken place at the

time the houses were converted into apartments, thus allowing communal or landlord access to the basement instead of access being internalised within one of the flats.



Figure 6 Whitworth Park Mansions in 1955-56

22. By the mid 1950's two blocks of garages had been constructed in the garden ground of the two end villas. These appear to have backed on to the adjacent streets with vehicular access taken from within the grounds of the villas. Figure 6 indicates what appears to be a large central building or enclosure in the centre of the gardens area. Its outline is unrelated to the pre-existing western garden boundary line.
23. At some point the chimneys were removed from the blocks and this must have taken place after 1962 which is the date of the first available photograph of the buildings.
24. Today, the terraced houses and the intervening workshops remain, however the garage blocks have been removed: the concrete bases are all the evidence of these former structures. The garden ground is a communal space which is maintained as a simple lawned area with maturing trees grouped asymmetrically towards the west side. This area of uneven ground is not securely fenced off and seems to be little used. Washing is hung out by ground floor residents in lines strung between the outriggers within close view of the windows.



*Figure 7 Whitworth Park Mansions in 1962*

25. The character of the surrounding area has altered considerably in recent decades, as the traditional two storey houses have been demolished and replaced with large blocks of student housing now interspersed with car parks and open ground along this section of Moss Lane East. To the south of the street block, a large development of social housing has recently been built in a striking contemporary style.
26. More recent changes to the buildings have included the replacement of some of the sliding sash and case windows with pivoting windows or fixed lights. The rear of the property is clustered with a number of satellite dishes.



*Figure 8 aerial view of the site today*

27. Figure 8 shows an aerial view of the site today. The encroachment of terraced housing and industrial uses into the area formerly occupied by part of the back gardens and at one time

by a bowling green can clearly be seen, together with two areas of hard standing which mark out the areas formerly built on with garage blocks and their internal access roads. The central part of the garden is slightly elevated and this could be an indication that infill buildings were present on this part of the garden at some time, as appears to be borne out by the subdivision of the rear area shown on the 1955 -56 plan (figure 6 above). The intervening industrial buildings prevent any meaningful visual linkage between Whitworth Park and spire of the school building at the southern end of the street block.

28. Also visible is an area of the garden on the west side of the rear gardens which has at some point been excluded from the private curtilage of the property. This area is grassed but appears to have no clear purpose other than as the location for a charity collection bin. (See appendix 1 picture 3)
29. The current perimeter walls around the front and sides of the site are likely to be commensurate with the date when the houses were converted to apartments, as the new name of Whitworth Park Mansions is embossed on one of the gate posts. The four individual pedestrian gateways have been lost, replaced by two vehicular entrances; one at either side of the frontage. One of these has since been closed off. It is highly likely that the original frontages would have had more substantial enclosures employing walls topped with ornate railings along the frontage and high wall to the rear sides.

### **Current Condition of Whitworth Park Mansions**

30. The listing description reads as follows:

*‘Terrace of 4 town houses, now flats. c.1840, altered. White-painted stucco on brick, hipped slate roof. Double-depth plan, each house double-fronted, with 2 back extensions. Three storeys and cellars, 3+3+3+3 bays, mostly symmetrical, with sill-bands and moulded wood eaves. Each house has slightly projected outer bays and a central recessed porch with Roman Doric columns distyle in antis, entablature with paterae on the frieze, and a panelled inner door with pilastered surround and side lights under a rectangular overlight. At ground floor the 2 houses to the left both have canted bay windows flanking the entrance, the 3rd has a similar bay window to the right and a 15-pane sash to the left with moulded architrave, and the 4th has two similar 15-pane sashes. All have 12-pane sashes at 1st floor and low 6-pane sashes at 2nd floor, all these with moulded architraves. Roof now lacking chimneys. The 4-bay return walls have windows with similar moulded architraves, those in the outer bays all blind. Rear: two 2-storey lean-to back extensions; altered windows. Interior not inspected’.*

31. The term ‘distyle in antis’ refers to the paired columns set within a larger porch which itself has projecting pilasters on either side. All of the above mentioned features are still extant on the building 40 years after its listing.

### **Subdivision and uses**

32. Each apartment has been formed into four rooms comprising two bedrooms: one to the front and one to the rear; with a bathroom in the centre and for the ground and first floor flats with a rear extension, a kitchen to the rear. For all other flats, the kitchen is a second usually windowless room in the interior of the building. The principal rooms are and always would have been those to the front. Because of the need to subdivide larger rooms to provide for kitchens and bathrooms, the larger rooms have almost all been reduced in depth as can be identified by the absence of complex cornices and skirtings from the internal sides of most principal rooms.

33. The majority of the original fireplaces have been removed and the chimney breasts plastered over. Similarly ornate ceiling roses have been lost and there are only a few apartments in which the wooden shutters remain to close over the bay windows to the front. Almost all original doors have been removed and replaced with plain plywood fronted fire doors. The door openings to the apartments have been reduced in size to create conventional proportions for the entrances opening out onto the stair wells. Within the flats, replacement internal doors are set into the altered subdivisions of the spaces generally leaving no evidence of either the doors or the original door openings.
34. The stairwell windows have been replaced relatively recently with non-opening lights which none the less replicate the character of the former slender arched windows. One interesting area of retained heritage is the staircases which were boxed in at some point and remain largely intact beneath chip board panels to the ground and first floors. Our inspection revealed heavy stick balusters with fluted incisions, topped with a fine curved banister rail which terminates in at least one of the four stairwells in a scrolled topped newel post. The banisters to the second floors have all been altered.
35. The portico's with their Roman Doric columns, entablature with paterae (disc shapes) on the frieze all remain, as do the panelled front doors with pilastered surrounds and side lights under rectangular overlights with lozenge shaped glazing subdivisions.
36. The vulnerability of the site is indicated by the large amount of graffiti including some on the building itself. (See appendix 1 picture 4). This vulnerability is exacerbated by the absence of a proper means of enclosure to the site whilst the transient nature of the residents including many students currently living there reduces the sense of ownership of the space around the buildings. There is clearly little sense of propriety over the garden ground which is maintained by a management company and is used very little by the residents. Although there are young children living in some of the flats, they seem to be allowed to play in the stairwells but generally not outside.

#### **Heritage significance of Whitworth Park Mansions and their context.**

37. The listed buildings mentioned above are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF 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'. 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.
38. **Historical value** is described as being illustrative or associative. What happened to these older buildings, the historic urban grain and the area generally tells us about the transformation of the older city the expansion of Manchester into new suburbs during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and about social change and lifestyles in various periods.
39. The Mansions are significant in the context that they are evidence of the changing pattern of development that swept through the outer fringes of Manchester over the past 200 years. They were the original commuter homes at a time commuting was in its infancy and they became engulfed in the rapid expansion of Manchester during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The change in urban form of the area has been matched by significant changes in its social composition from predominantly high earning merchant homes to small working class terraces and now to a zone of transition in which newly arrived immigrants mix with students from the much expanded nearby university of Manchester.

40. In terms of English Heritage's 'Conservation Principles' the buildings provide us with 'evidence about past human activity' and, by means of their fabric, design and appearance and notwithstanding the changes that have occurred, communicate information about their past.' Subsequent alteration has allowed the frontages to continue to do this, though the rear of the buildings is too heavily altered to convey the sense of wealth and status of their former importance. The significance of the interiors has been considerably lessened by the changes that occurred in their conversion to flats.
41. **The architectural** interest of the villas lies in their simple and elegant late Georgian style, in which the flat fronts and repetitive elements of the composition created a whole which was greater than the sum of its parts: the impression of a grand country house perhaps through the combination of four frontages under a common architectural discipline. Also of interest is the manner by which the frontages were subsequently altered by introduction of gables to most of the ground floor flats, as Georgian restraint gave way to signs of Victorian exuberance.
42. This architectural interest lies principally, in the main façade and the side elevations. The rear parts of the terrace are much plainer and more generic in design and, with the original gardens long since having been removed, do not retain any heritage landscape interest. Indeed it may be argued that the rear of the properties, in being far more visible than ever intended, somewhat diminishes the impression of grandeur created by the facades by presenting a far less polite and disciplined elevation to public scrutiny than the architect would ever have intended. At some point, high walls and planting which would originally have obscured this view have been removed and the result is a loss of visual focus towards the front and side facades and a diminution of the apparent architectural quality of the overall composition.
43. Pevsner's guide to the buildings of Lancashire, Manchester and the South east (3) refers to the Mansions in passing as 'being of note', though the edition in question was written prior to the listing of the buildings.

#### **Impact of the Proposed Development** **Policy considerations**

44. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF advises local planning authorities 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting'.*
45. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF advises local planning authorities to  
*'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 or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably'.*
46. The NPPF incorporates many of the essential concepts in Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'. PPS5 was accompanied by a 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide', published by English Heritage 'to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it'. The 'Guide' gives a number of 'potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;
- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;
- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

### **The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance**

The conservation of the listed buildings

47. It is proposed to refurbish Whitworth Park Mansions to bring them up to a higher standard of accommodation. In so doing, the works will retain all existing heritage features of note as identified in our survey (attached as a separate document Appendix B). The proposed scheme will have a positive effect on the listed terrace, resulting in the repair and refurbishment of the fabric of the listed buildings and reversing previous inappropriate alterations to windows where replacement can be justified by their condition. Internal features and fabric of any notable heritage value at all levels including the basements will be retained and incorporated into the scheme where possible.
48. Appendix C provides a proposed schedule of works which are necessary to secure the continued life of the buildings in a sound condition which respects the particular building technology of their construction period and reverses some damaging interventions. In summary, measures to ensure the proper conservation of the building should be undertaken in the following ways:
  49. Windows
 

Most of the windows are in a good condition and need only to be refurbished to free the opening movement, replace some sash cords and re balance weights. Some will also need areas of wet rot to be removed and new timber spliced in. In undertaking the refurbishment works, all opening windows will be fitted with proprietary brush seals to improve thermal efficiency and prevent them from rattling. The schedule of works has identified some windows which harm the heritage value of the properties because they do not relate to the original pattern and form. Where these windows have been found to be in need of substantial work, they will be replaced with new windows to replicate the late Georgian form of the original windows.
  50. Internal Architectural detailing
 

All extant original or early cornices, picture rails, window shutters and fireplaces have been recorded and will be retained and where necessary repaired or refurbished in situ. For example, shutters that no longer open will be freed to ensure they can once again be used for their original function. Any new partitions will be cut around the cornices to ensure that they are not damaged.
  51. The Common Areas
 

The Staircases will be opened up to reveal the incised balusters and rolled handrails that have long been enclosed within chip board panels. To provide fire safety and to protect the balusters, the sides will be re enclosed behind glass panels on the side adjacent to the stairs, all subject to Building Regulations approval. The cellars will be left largely as they are found

once asbestos has been removed. Original features such as stone and brick larder shelving shall be retained.

52. Listed building exterior.

The use of hard cement mortar will not be permitted but instead new areas of re pointing required shall be undertaken using a hydraulic lime mixed with sand mortar.

Areas of broken guttering and downpipes will be replaced using cast metal painted to match existing.

The exterior of the building will be redecorated to remove the peeling plastic based paint and apply a mineral based paint such as that made by Keim. Subject to agreement with the local planning authority the building might be repainted in the original ivory colour which has been uncovered as the base layer of paint on the building.

The Timber cornice will be repaired to match existing.

Subject to prior grant of planning permission, all private satellite dishes could be removed from the building walls and provision made for a common satellite dish to be located in an unobtrusive position, possibly on the roof between the two wings.

The new buildings

53. The proposed new building elements are considered necessary in order to make the scheme of refurbishment economically viable and to re-create an attractive and safe setting for the listed buildings. The proposal is to create a terrace to either side of the rear of the villas. A mews development of two flats over parking courts was originally proposed to the rear of the site however this was objected to by the City Council conservation team because it reduced the extant garden area and furthermore did not address a public street frontage. That mews development has been dropped from the final proposals.

54. The scale of the proposed terraced houses on Monton Street and Upper Lloyd Street marries in with the form of the early Twentieth Century terraces on these streets. The depth, width and height of the terraces will align closely with that of the traditional terraces whilst the roof pitches will follow through at a similar steep angle to that of these neighbouring roofs. The frontages will align with the existing front building line, allowing each of the houses to have a small enclosed front garden again in keeping with the character of neighbouring properties. The area of ground covered by the buildings will generally be no greater than that which is currently occupied by the overgrown hardstanding of former garage blocks and their access road (see figure 8 above). The proposed height to eaves level is half that of the listed building as viewed from Upper Lloyd Street and a little less than half the corresponding height on Monton Street, although the receding sloping roofs would still be visible above that line.

55. In appearance, the massing of the terraces has been broken down with a combination of projecting bays and alternating materials to create a similar rhythm to that of the adjacent Victorian terraces adjacent on both streets. Like that of the neighbouring older properties and the listed villas themselves, the general orientation of windows and elements is vertical and the introduction of bays recalls the bay windows on the ground floor front elevation of the villas. An interplay between render and brickwork on the front elevations of the new build terraces bridges between the brick elevations of the terraces and the rendered and brick elevations of the listed buildings.

56. The terraces will largely conceal the rear of the villas from public view and create a more secure and sheltered courtyard garden for new and existing residents. It is considered that the resulting arrangement of buildings will create an attractive sense of enclosure of the garden spaces and afford a high degree of natural surveillance. As a result, it is considered that whilst they do not attempt to mimic the period style of the listed buildings, the massing

and design of the new properties is suitably subordinate to, and in keeping with the heritage context and that it would enhance that context.

#### Landscape

57. The development will be accompanied by a landscaping scheme for the site. This will include the creation of small low walled enclosed spaces to the rear of each of the ground floor villa apartments in order to allow some privacy and a sense of ownership of the spaces. The new build terraced houses will each have a small enclosed rear garden. The main rear communal open space will be transformed from an area of little used grass and tarmac hardstanding into a sequence of well-defined and useable sub spaces. A tree survey will identify for retention where possible, all those trees which are in a sound condition and which do not pose a threat to the integrity of the listed building structure. The space will be crossed with curving landscaped pathways demarcating passive resting spaces and an equipped children's play area. The unsightly rear wall of the garden which backs onto an industrial area will be screened with a new hedge and possibly a trellis of climbing plants.
58. The existing perimeter wall will be repaired and cleaned of graffiti. To the frontages of the new terraced houses the walls will be topped with low ornate railings in a Victorian style which should lend a sense of ownership of the small front gardens. The area to the front of the listed villa blocks will be landscaped around a more efficiently laid out car parking area. A formal pattern of tree planting along the perimeter will enhance the setting of the listed buildings by reintroducing a leafy and sylvan foil to the built frontage. That character might be further enhanced by the introduction of a low hedge such as box, or railings appropriate to the period of the villas as was present in earlier times (see figure 7). These linear features would most likely be located to run parallel with and immediately to the rear of the front boundary wall. It is considered that the landscape interventions as a whole will enhance the character of the setting of the listed buildings.

#### **Compliance with policy: The National Planning Policy Framework**

59. As outlined above, the NPPF identifies two levels of potential 'harm' that might be caused to a designated heritage asset by a development: 'substantial or 'less than substantial' harm. In our view, the proposed development does not in fact give rise to any harm to the listed buildings or to their setting. The proposal clearly affects the setting of the listed buildings, but does so in a carefully considered way that balances the surviving significance of the site with the need for physical intervention to provide it with a sustainable future. While it alters the setting of the listed buildings, the proposed scheme does so in way that preserves and indeed enhances their special architectural and historic interest.
60. The historical evidence clearly shows that the development was originally facing a country road and all attention in its design was thrust towards the front and side elevations of the villas. The rear gardens would originally have faced open countryside and would have been walled for security and to create a sense of privacy from nearby agricultural activity. In the early Twentieth century, the site was engulfed by the expansion of the city of Manchester; the open area to the south was partly built upon and the buildings were converted into relatively small flats. It is clear that from the early Twentieth century onward, the purpose of the gardens as private gardens for a small number of residents had ceased. The resulting open area does not appear to have been properly planned or set out as a communal space. Later in the century, some of the former garden areas to the sides were built on with garages and hard-standings and part appears to have been occupied with another large structure. The rear of the villas which had never been intended as a public view would have become even less attractive than originally designed, with the various ad hoc extensions; re arrangement of windows and the clutter of washing lines and television aerials. The view of

two rows of garages would certainly have changed the setting of the listed buildings with their diminutive scale and purely functional form.

61. The current proposal to build terraces of town houses to the rear sides of the grounds will enhance the setting of the listed buildings by largely concealing the unattractive rear view of the properties and by consolidating the unplanned 'no-man's land' of open green space into a useable and attractive landscaped courtyard with an area for children's play. The current unenclosed and insecure nature of the rear grounds, evidenced by areas of graffiti on some of the listed building walls, is an obstacle to reinvestment which must be overcome.
62. The proposed scheme will recover the heritage significance of the site while providing new homes of high architectural quality. The significant change to the character of the setting was clearly done a century ago when the high status of the area was challenged by the arrival of working class terraced housing and by the conversion of the houses into small flats. The present scheme provides considerable benefits in terms of additional housing and, possibly for the first time in a century, consolidation of the grounds to provide useful, enclosed, well overlooked and attractive spaces for present and future residents.
63. In respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the scheme can certainly be described as 'sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'. It secures the 'positive contribution' that Whitworth Park Mansions makes to the historic built environment in general and the area in particular, and conserves its surviving special interest as a listed building.
64. The proposed scheme complies with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF for the reasons given in detail earlier in this report – the scheme cannot be considered to harm listed building, but rather brings about the repair of the listed building and consolidation of its grounds in a sensitive and considered fashion that has a positive effect on overall heritage significance.

#### **Compliance with Policy: The Local Development Framework**

65. The proposed scheme clearly helps 'protect' and 'enhance' the built environment of Manchester as sought by Spatial Objective SO6 – it helps secure the economic future of the building and thus its continued presence as part of Manchester's heritage. In respect of saved Unitary Development Plan policies, the proposed scheme is consistent with Saved UDP Policy DC19.1. It does not involve 'a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building' – the proposed scheme is a considered and careful response to the listed building while providing new residential accommodation.
66. There is no 'detrimental effect' caused by the scheme. For the reasons given in respect of the NPPF, the scheme does not involve an 'adverse effect on its architectural or historic character' – that character is preserved. The scheme certainly does *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'.
67. The proposed scheme will not have any harmful effect on the character of the area or the setting of other listed buildings – the character of the area is preserved and indeed enhanced by providing vacant parts of the site with a new use. The scheme brings new life and activity to the area and improves the sense of overlooking and community safety on neighbouring streets. For the reasons given here and in the previous section, the scheme complies with the Council's Policies DC18.1 and DC19.1.

### **Compliance with Moss Side and Rusholme Local Plan**

68. The proposal will help to achieve a number of specific objectives of the Local Plan including the following:
- Diversify the housing stock away from short term lets and provide more permanent homes
  - Uplift the facades of the listed buildings to create a better impression of the area along the important Moss Lane East approach
  - Create better overlooking and enclosure of the garden area and better overlooking of the two adjacent open spaces to help improve natural surveillance and community safety
  - Create a better street frontage to both Monton Street and Upper Lloyd Street

### **Conclusion**

69. The proposed scheme is a carefully considered and sensitive intervention in the listed terrace at Whitworth Park Mansions. The scheme will preserve and enhance the listed building by repairing it, enhancing its accommodation and helping to sustain it for the long term. The proposed scheme is demonstrably better than the existing situation, and thus enhancement provided by the scheme is clear. The effect of the repair and conservation of the buildings and creation of two subordinate new terraces overlooking a consolidated area of communal grounds will be positive. For that reason it does not cause any harm to the heritage assets in its surroundings.
70. It is our view that none of the individual interventions that make up the overall set of proposals can reasonably be considered to cause harm to the listed building. The interventions - individually and taken as a whole – help secure the ‘optimum viable use’ of the listed building and its site.
71. The proposed scheme will preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Whitworth Park Mansions as listed buildings, and will enhance the overall character and appearance of the Area. The proposed scheme fully satisfies the national and local policy and guidance regarding listed buildings and we commend it for approval.



**Jerry Spencer Associates**  
Regeneration and Urban Design

**Jerry Spencer** M.A. (Hons.); M.A. (U.D.); Dip T.P.; M.R.T.P.I.; I.H.B.C.

Prior to entering consultancy; Jerry was Head of Design for the Northwest Development Agency and his former roles include Head of Planning for Gloucester City Council and Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council. He is a member of the Yorkshire and North Staffordshire Design Preview panels. He currently works part time as the Conservation and Design officer for Flintshire County Council and is an Advocate in Practice for the Design Commission for Wales.



**Jason Kennedy**

Townscape is led by Jason Kennedy who has over 20 years direct heritage experience having worked in a number of Local Authorities as Conservation &

Design manager and formed Townscape in 2010 to become the successful consultancy it is today. We have strong links with most NW based Local Authority Conservation Officers and staff at English Heritage. Townscape are full members of the Institute of Historic Building conservation (IHBC) and Institute for Archaeology (IFA) associate members of RTPI and CIOB.

## References

1. Evidence provided in The Rusholme and Victoria Park Archives: [www.rusholmearchive.org](http://www.rusholmearchive.org)
2. The Manchester Guardian 29<sup>th</sup> May 1873
3. 'Manchester, Lancashire and the South East' Hartwell, Hyde and Pevsner 1969 The University Press
4. Manchester City Council Local Development Framework, Manchester City Council 2012
5. Moss Side and Rusholme Local Plan 2008 South Manchester Regeneration Team, Manchester City Council

All maps are copyright. Permission to use extracts of historic Ordnance Survey maps was given by oldmaps.co.uk.

## Appendix A Contextual images of the building and its context



1. Rear garden views looking south



2. Industrial development to the south



3 The excluded area of land



4 Exposed rear of the properties



5 Distant view of the nearby listed school



6 Factory in former garden grounds



7 Terraced housing on Monton Street



8 Infill development south of the gardens