

8th July 2022

Heritage Statement for works to the second and fifth floor levels of the Grade II Listed Fourways House, Hilton Street, Manchester.

Introduction

Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (SLHA) have been commissioned by XLB Property to prepare a Heritage Statement for minor refurbishment works to units on the second and fifth floor levels of the Grade II listed Fourways House (see Figures 2, 9 & 14). Reference should be made to the information and plans prepared by OMI architects.

Fourways House was constructed in 1906 as a packing warehouse and was designed by the architect James William Beaumont of Manchester. The building is an exemplar of this type and retains a large number of original features alongside a clearly legible original planform, including hoist locations, stair cores and former warehouse rooms designed to be used by multiple companies.

Note - A recent application relating to the refurbishment included the partial refurbishment of the second floor level as well as new entrance into the office suites via the now completed link bridge to the atrium, completed in 2020 (Planning ref: 122935/LO/2019 & 123242/FO/2019).

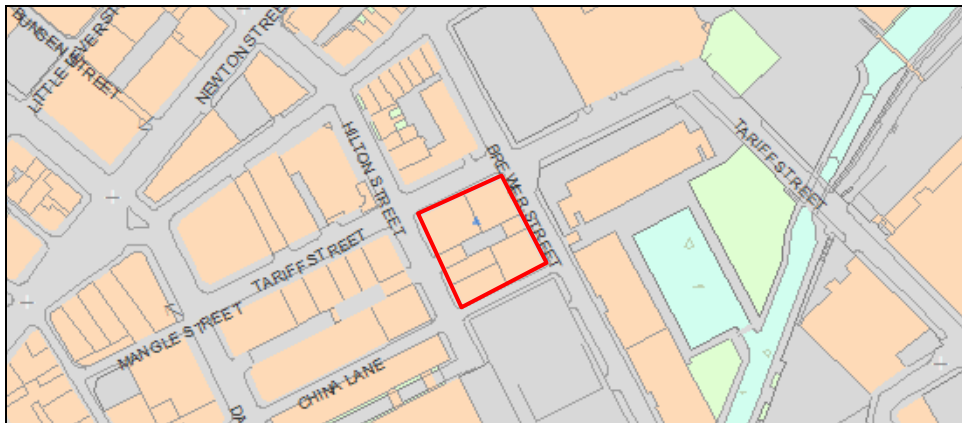


Figure 1: Map showing the location of Fourways House outlined red.

Statutory Designations

Fourways House was statutorily designated as Grade II Listed on the 1st June 2000, and subsequently amended on the 9th July 2002.

With regards to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 66 of the Act requires the Local Planning Authority to “*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” when considering whether to grant planning permission. Consequently, this Statement, and the preceding conservation advice to the project team, has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local heritage planning policy.

Consequently, this Statement, and the preceding conservation advice to the project team, has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local heritage planning policy.

Assessment of Significance

The purpose of the significance assessment is to use recognised criteria to assess the heritage significance and interest of the Site.

The assessment of significance accords with the requirements of the NPPF (2019) and uses Historic England’s methodology outlined in its 2019 document, “Statements of Heritage Significance”. Historic England’s “Conservation Principles. Policies and Guidance,” 2008, has also been utilised as part of the following assessment.

High significance relates to those parts or elements of the Site deemed to be of particularly special interest. These components are *fundamental* to the understanding of the building and its architectural design concept and play a major role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

Low significance relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of more modest interest. They provide a relatively *minor contribution* to the understanding of the architectural design concept and a modest role in revealing its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

No significance/Detrimental features and elements that do not contain any special interest. These can *detract from the significance* of the building and maybe evidence of modern or ad-hoc refurbishments, or poor craftsmanship.

Significance of the Second floor level

The second floor level was initially converted in the 1990s to form office accommodation with associated kitchen area and toilets, modern suspended ceilings, glass office partitions, and wood effect flooring. In 2019 the second floor level underwent a refurbishment scheme, which included renewal of existing heating, ventilation and lighting arrangements (Planning Ref: 122935/LO/2019 & 130337/LO/2021).

The extent of the second floor that is subject to the current proposals is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

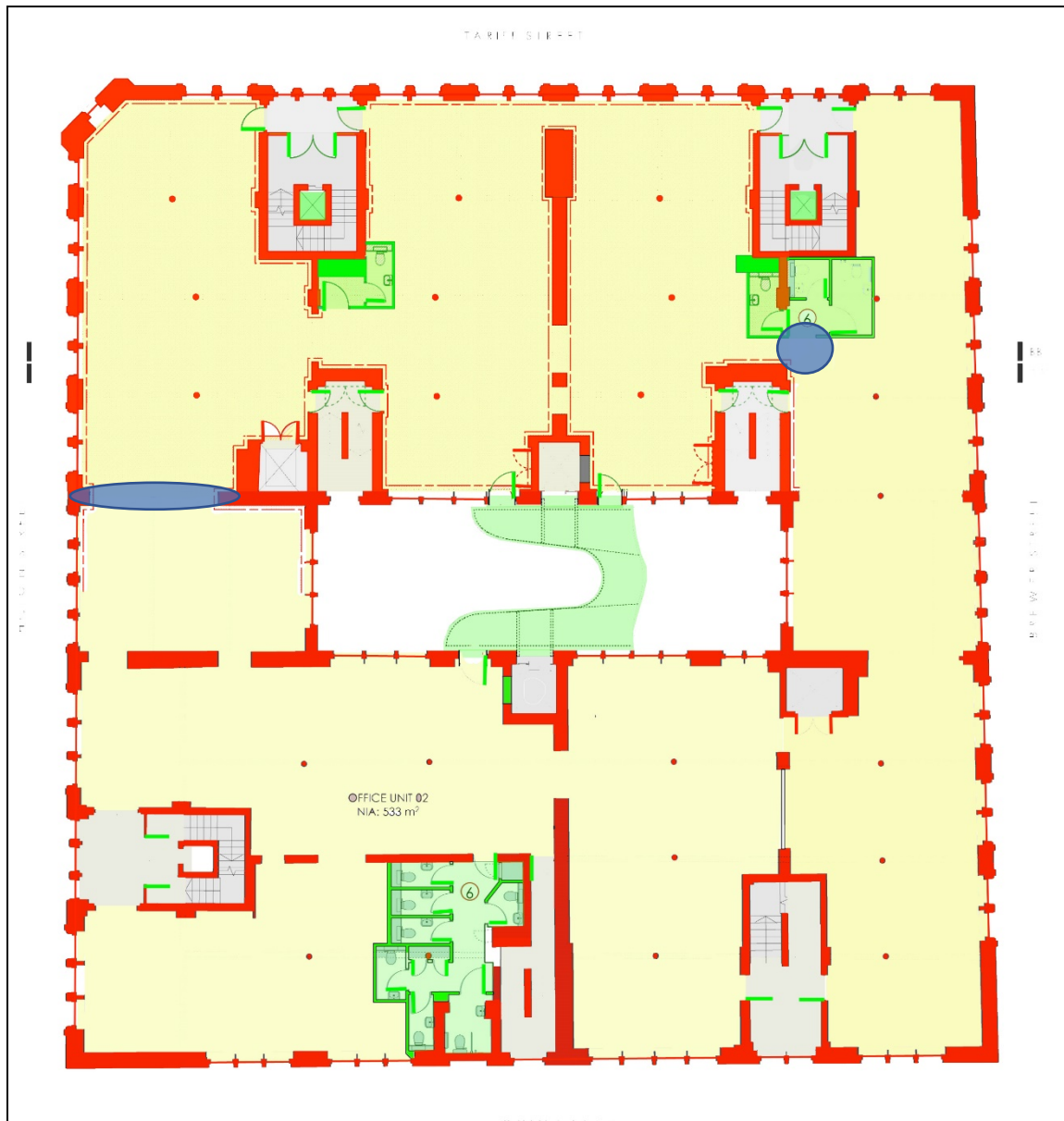


Figure 2: Existing second floor plan (looking north) showing the extent of the application site shaded yellow and the two areas affected by the proposed circled blue.

Elements of **high significance**, such as original walls, windows and doors are marked in red, whilst elements of **no significance**, such as modern interventions, are marked in green. Areas not part of this application are shaded grey.

Elements of **no significance** include all interventions completed as part of the consented 2019 refurbishment works, including modern partitioned toilets and toilet suites/decorative scheme, and modern flush doors, modern radiators and skirting trunking, all lighting and M&E, recently completed link bridge over central lightwell.

Elements of **high significance** include the original cast iron columns and original metal hoist doors, remaining original exposed timber floorboards, original stairwells (outside of this application)

The below images illustrate the second floor level as it appears today following the completion of the recent refurbishment scheme.



Figure 3: Looking west across Unit 02.



Figure 4: Looking north from Unit 02 into Unit 01, showing the location of the proposed stud partition within to divide the two units.



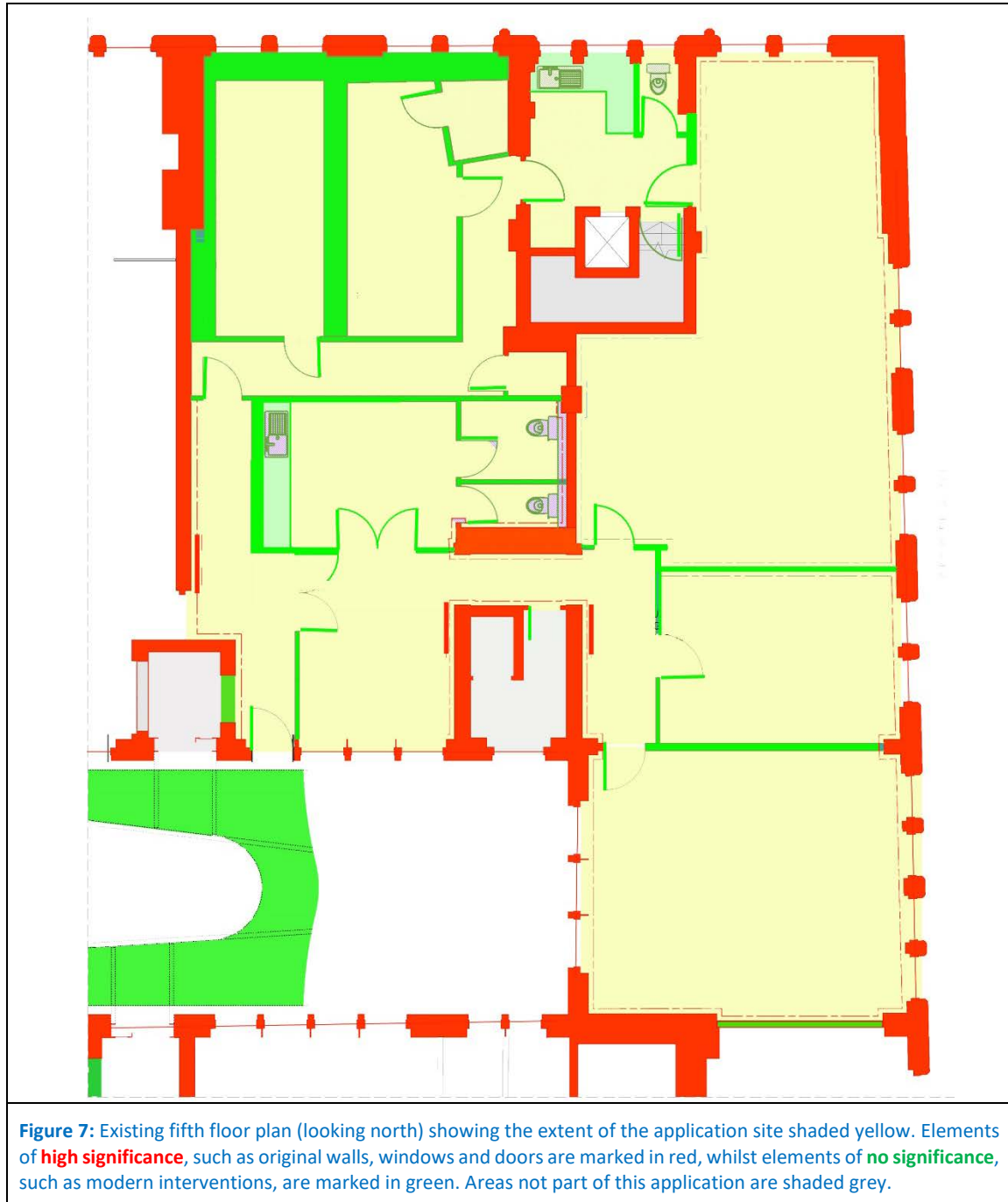
Figure 5: Looking south from Unit 01 into Unit 02 showing the location of the proposed stud partition to divide the two units.



Figure 6: One of the new entrances into Unit 01 from the central lightwell.

Significance of the Fifth-floor level

The extent of the fifth floor subject to the current proposals is illustrated in Figure 7. The area that forms part of the application site is currently subdivided into two separate units., with an office use to the eastern side, and a recording studio use to the western side.



The fifth floor level was initially converted in the 1990s to form office accommodation with associated kitchen area and toilets and was subsequently refurbished during the 2000s. The western part of the area was purposely fitted-out to form recording studio, in the c1990s/2000s, which involved the construction of independent, sound-insulated studios within the shell of that unit.

Areas of **no significance** include all modern partitioning, mezzanine level, kitchenette and toilets, the modern studio enclosures, flush doors, floor coverings, M&E and lighting, faux timber-framed walls with brick infill.

The images below illustrate the current arrangement of the two units that form the application site on the fifth floor level.

	
Figure 8: The c2000s kitchenette space.	Figure 9: Looking into one of the modern, c1990s studios, showing the internal sound-insulated room.
	
Figure 10: One of the two c1990s modern studio spaces.	Figure 11: An example of the c1990s toilets.



Figure 12: Looking west along the modern, sound-insulated studio corridor.



Figure 13: Looking into one of the two former sound-insulated studios, showing the independent internal lining of the studio and the two modern openings looking into the original windows behind.



Figure 14: The modern kitchenette.



Figure 15: The modern toilet enclosures.



Figure 16: An example of one of two original surviving pitch pine roller fire doors to the top of the former landing.



Figure 17: The south of the unit.



Figure 18: An example of a meeting room to the centre of the unit, showing the modern faux-timber-framing and brickwork beneath the original exposed roof structure.



Figure 19: Modern, metal-frame effect partitioning.



Figure 20: The northern half of the unit, showing the exposed original floorboards and roof structure.



Figure 21: An example of the original exposed roof structure and modern brick and timber-framing insertion beneath.



Figure 22: The lobby as seen from the recently completed link bridge, showing the modern, faux-timber framing forming a partitioned corridor.



Figure 23: The lobby as seen looking towards the recently completed link bridge.

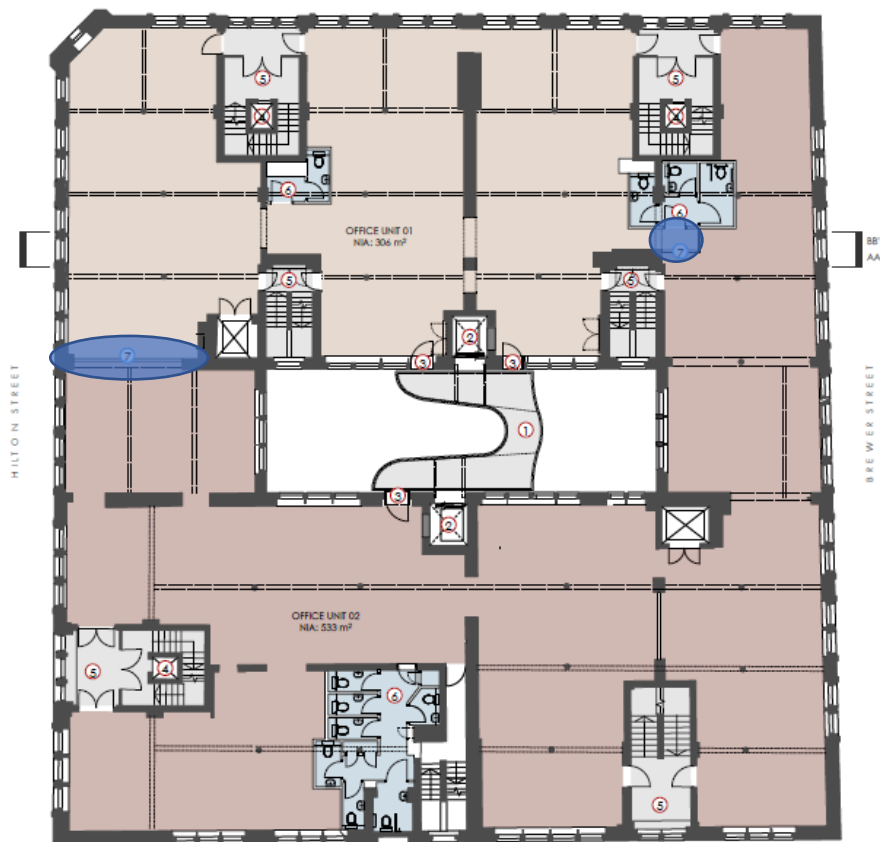
Proposals

The light touch proposals concentrate on the minor subdivision of the single office unit that currently forms the entire second floor level into two units, and the combining of two smaller units on the fifth floor level to form one unit, including general refurbishment and upgrading of facilities.

The proposals will follow the similar and already completed schemes for a number of other floors and units throughout the building, focusing on any new partitions being reversible and minimally fixed, the retention of all historic features, such as original steel and timber doors, and with any concealed original brickwork being removed or modern boarded etc to carefully expose the brickwork.

The proposals for the second floor are as follows:

- The subdivision of the small unit into two separate office spaces by means of closing off two parts of the floorplate with stud partitioning.



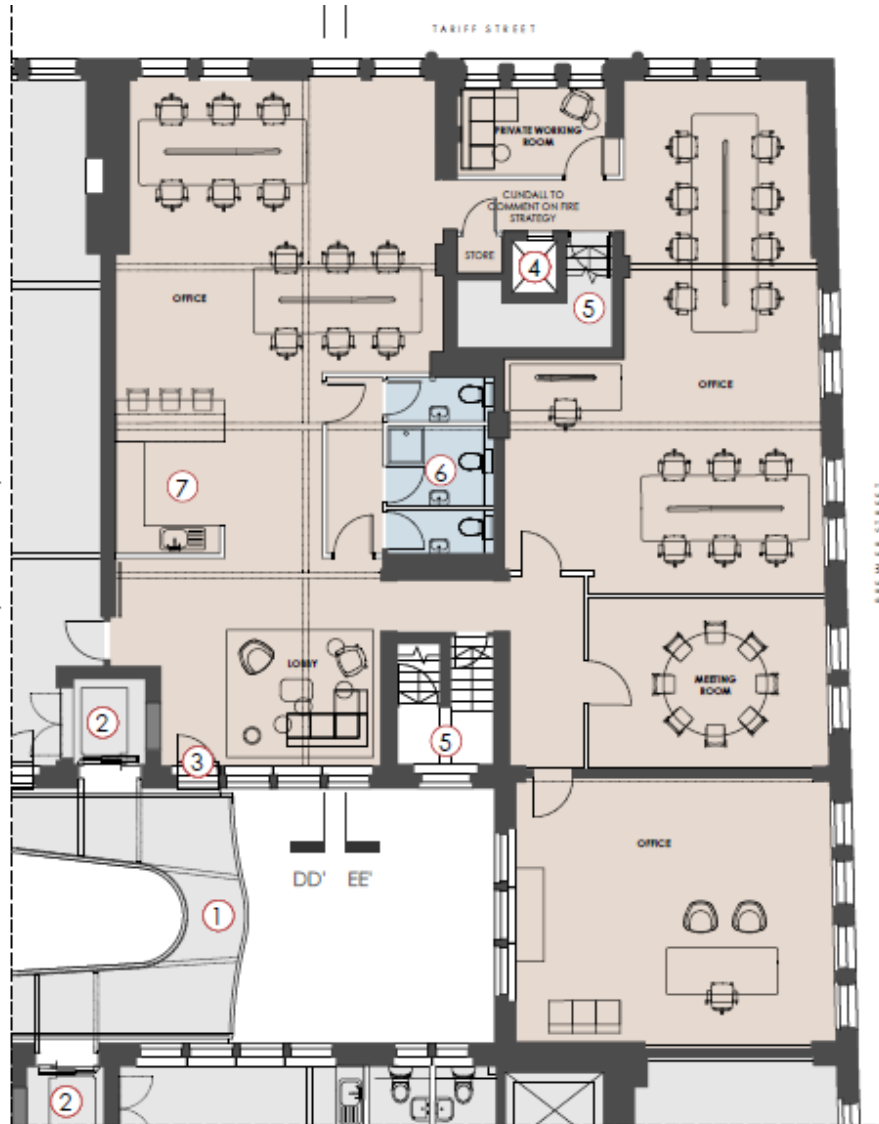
Proposed second floor plan, showing the two small areas of studwork wall to be constructed to the east and west sides in order to create two separate office units.

–

The proposals for the fifth floor are as follows:

- The removal of modern partitions and modern fixed furniture
- Relocation of existing kitchenette
- Creating better circulation through former kitchenette space to staircase lobby (north-east)
- Fit-out of existing WC's with the addition of one cubicle in place of a cupboard
- Removal of modern partitions to lobby area to form larger, open-plan office space
- Removal of c1990s sound-insulated rooms to form open-plan office space
- Revarnishing existing stripped original timber floors to match existing finish

- Changes to the existing heating, lighting and ventilation installations, including ventilation to the new WC's being via an existing duct that rises up through a redundant goods lift, and which terminates at roof level.
- Installation of M&E, which will comprise exposed services (ductwork and lighting) at high level (as consented on the second floor level) in order to accord with the listed building's original industrial use and character and to also allow for the open spatial quality to be maintained. Floor standing air conditioning units will also be installed.
- A powder-coated skirting trunking will be installed around the perimeter of the space in order to provide power services to all parts of the space without individual electric points and conduits, as already consented on the second floor level.



Proposed fifth floor plan

Impact Assessment

Table 1 below defines the terms used to describe the physical (direct) impact of the Proposals on the character and fabric components of the Grade II listed building and the degree of heritage impact which would result from the Proposals.

Table 1: Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact		
Definition of magnitude and nature of heritage impact.	Direct heritage impacts (physical alteration or change to the site's character)	Indirect heritage impact (visual change to the experience or setting of the site and its context).
Major adverse Impact. <i>Substantial harm of this nature, which results in total loss of significance or fundamentally affects the significance of defined heritage assets, should normally be avoided.</i>	Development resulting in demolition of a significant historic fabric component which results in total loss of significance, or fundamental compromises the setting of a designated heritage asset.	Substantially harmful change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development severely erodes the heritage interest of the identified heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values and thus results in total loss of significance.
Moderate Adverse Impact. <i>Less-than-substantial harm will need to be demonstrably mitigated and justified by clear public benefits.</i>	Development resulting in extensive harmful alterations (but not total demolition) of a designated heritage asset or its setting.	Less than substantial harm to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Minor Adverse Impact. <i>The negative impact on the setting or overall character will need to be clearly balanced by appropriate mitigation.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a designated heritage asset which result in minor compromise of its fabric or erosion of its character.	Minor compromise to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a minor extent the heritage interest of the assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Negligible adverse impact. <i>This does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical</i>	Development resulting in negligible direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor, original fabric component, but avoids diminishing its character and its	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would alter, but not diminish, the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the

<i>fabric, their settings or significance to any appreciable degree.</i>	special architectural or historic interest.	buildings or the designated area to any appreciable degree.
Neutral Impact. <i>This does not necessarily mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference will be imperceptible or appropriately balanced.</i>	Development which comprises an imperceptible physical impact resulting in no apparent change or achieved by removing a component of no heritage value which detracts from the special interest of the building fabric.	Imperceptible change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. A neutral impact occurs when the development does not affect the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Negligible beneficial impact. <i>The resultant difference will be imperceptible but have a positive impact on the understanding or appreciation of the heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor non-original fabric component which is detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would imperceptibly enhance the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area.
Minor Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a demonstrable improvement to the overall character or setting of a heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset which deliver a minor beneficial physical impact or enhancement of the site's special interest.	Minor enhancement to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development enhances to a minor extent the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a considerable improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset with clear beneficial enhancement of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset resulting in moderate beneficial physical impact, or an enhancement of the site's character.	Evident improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Major beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in substantial improvement to the overall</i>	Development resulting in restoration or alterations to a designated heritage asset which comprises substantial restoration of its fabric and	Substantial improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in

<i>character and appreciation of a heritage asset, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics of its heritage interest.</i>	historic character and an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest.	a significant enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Substantial restoration or enhancement of the setting of the built heritage asset where the development will enhance to a fundamental extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
---	--	---

Conclusion

The proposed, minor internal works to the second and fifth floor levels of the Grade II Listed Fourways House aim to continue the style and quality of the previously completed refurbishment schemes found across the remaining units in within the building. The proposed scheme is in response to market demand and is necessary to ensure the sustainable use of the building as modern office spaces by upgrading the now outdated spaces to a high quality standard.

The addition of two small areas of stud partitioning to the second floor level is necessary in order to subdivide the whole, single floorplate into two separate office units in response to the current demands for office accommodation following Covid. The two small areas of stud wall will be minimally fixed and will be entirely reversable. The subdivision of the space will not impact on the special quality or character of the space.

The two, much smaller units at fifth floor level will be combined to form a single unit, which will see one of the last remaining c1990s/2000s inappropriate fit-outs of the building being refurbished in order to remove the current detrimental studio enclosures and corridors in order to continue the sensitive scheme found in the adjacent unit.

All historic features and surfaces will be retained, enhanced and in some cases exposed.

Consequently, it is considered that the current proposals will result in an overall minor beneficial impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Fourways House as a whole.