

Vacant Site, Boat Lane, Northenden
for
Yolo Estate Limited

New Build Development of Five Townhouses
Heritage Assessment

Revision	Revision By	Date
Planning Submission	Amy Greenwood (BTP)	17 th December 2025

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Introduction

This Heritage Assessment has been produced by BTP Architects in support of the Planning application (144507/FO/2025) made by Yolo Estate Limited to develop five, 3-storey four-bedroom terraced houses with off road parking on the former breakers yard on Boat Lane in Northenden.

This assessment is required as the development proposal requiring planning permission affects the setting of a designated heritage asset, as it is within the Northenden Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 7 February 2025) states under 'Proposals affecting heritage assets' paragraph 207 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.'

The assessment should consider sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood. It should be proportionate both to the significance of the historic asset, in this case the Northenden Conservation Area, and to the degree of change proposed.

The NPPF also states under 'Considering potential impact's' Paragraph 212:

'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 and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.'

We will start by exploring features of the asset nearby the site to understand its significance in order to evaluate the potential impact of the development. This report should be read in conjunction with the current set of planning drawings.

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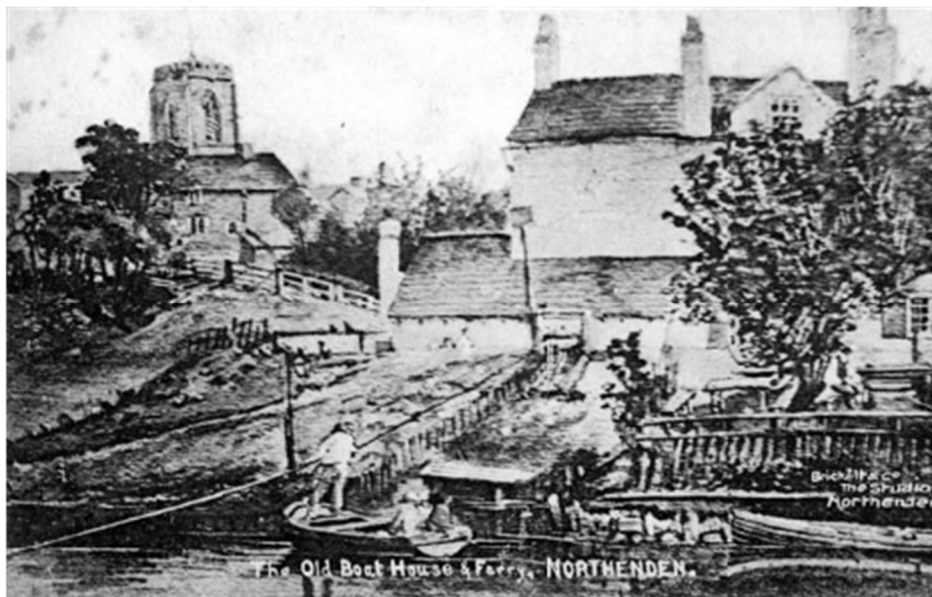
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Significance of Heritage Asset

Northenden conservation area is in the suburb of Northenden on the South bank of the River Mersey it covers just over seven hectares. It was designated by Manchester City Council in December 1981.

Northenden is believed to have Saxon origins as one of only a few disembarkation points on the River Mersey between Stockport and Stretford. In the early 17th century, a ferry boat crossing was deployed (1614) and later a ford (1642) was constructed linking the village with nearby Didsbury.



The ferry boat crossing 1904. (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)



First iron footbridge bridge over the Mersey built around 1863.

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At this node of activity on the banks of the river, the Tatton family of Wythenshawe Hall and Tatton Hall built another hall which was later purchased by Wilson's Brewery in 1898 and converted into a public house called The Boat House Inn. It later became The Tatton Arms Hotel and is noted as a significant visual and social contribution to the conservation area. Sadly, it is now vacant and semi derelict.



Tatton Arms, 1971 (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)



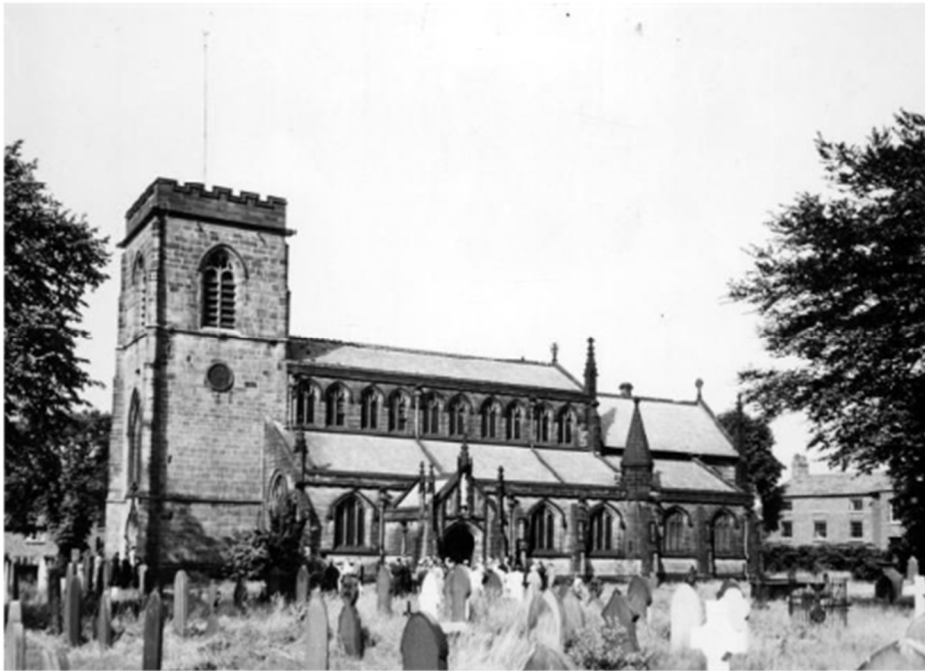
Tatton Arms, 2025 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)

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The ferry boat and the ford were the only routes to the city of Manchester until 1862 when Palatine Road was opened with a bridge crossing the Mersey. The two initial modes of crossing the river gave name to the two connecting highways, Boat Lane and Ford Lane. At the heart of the conservation area where the lanes intersect stands the prominent 15th century parish church of St Wilfrid (listed Grade II*) (village). The tower is the only remaining medieval part of the building following a complete rebuilding programme by architect J. S. Crowther in the early 1870s. A church has possibly been located on or around this site since Saxon times as mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086.



St Wilfrid's Church, 1955 (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)



St Wilfrid's Church, 2025 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)

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By the 1940s Northenden's rural character had gone, along with the modernisation of shopping and commercial uses on Palatine Road a slum clearance programme had cleared many of the older buildings and rows of cottages around the church. Only the bones of the original village remain with two storey cottages dotted around. Ford Lane is home to a few listed buildings the former rectory (listed Grade II) neighbouring the church is a substantial Georgian three-storey brick property built around 1740 and extended in 1835.



The Rectory, 1942 (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)



The Rectory, 2025 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)

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Opposite the church tight to the back of pavement stands Grade II Listed Northen House a Georgian two-storey brick house with original stone pilasters and pediment to the front entrance and an adjoining older two-storey cottage.



Northen House (Right), 1904 (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)



Northen House, 2025 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)



Northen House (Right) and adjoining cottage (Left), 2025 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)

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Site Context

Around the corner from Northern House and the adjoining cottage there is another two-storey cottage set back from the street backing onto the develop site. The oldest map we have obtained for the site from 1836 outlines the property (Pink) and another building within the development site (Grey). It appears from this extract of an ariel view from 1926 that it was originally a shop with accommodation above.



Extract from Northenden Village Map 1836



Extract from Ariel view, 1926

On the opposite side of the junction to Boat Lane the Crown Inn appears to have been built in the early to mid-twentieth century and is one of few remaining public houses still in operation.



View down Boat Lane from the Crown Inn and the cottage on Ford Lane, 2025
(Image courtesy of Google Maps)

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Extract from Northenden Village Map 1904



Crown Inn, 1959 (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)

On the above map from 1904 the site appears to have had two detached buildings on it their purpose is unknown. Its most recent use as a breakers yard appears to have been in operation since the early 1960s onwards up to approx. 2019 by D. Race & Sons, Metals.



Same view in 1971 (Image courtesy of Manchester Libraries)



View down Boat Lane towards the development site (Right), 2022 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)

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Proposed Development

Bernard Taylor Partnership Limited (BTP) have submitted a planning application for the applicant based on the design of the previously approved residential scheme on the site. Quite apart from the need to comply with the NPPF, the applicant appreciates this assessment forms an important practical tool to guide them in developing their proposals. The applicant purchased the site with the knowledge that it had gained planning approval for a terrace of five 2.5 storey dwelling houses with associated car parking, which had elapsed in November 2023 (124890/FO/2019).

Understandably they have opted to retain the general layout and elevational treatment of the previously approved scheme and resubmitted a modified version of the proposal for this application. There have been some minor design alterations at the rear of the properties. More compact spiral staircases to access the roof terraces and bi-fold doors instead of sliding doors to the ground floor living spaces. The design overall has remained true to the original approved design.

The following design considerations appear to have been made by the proposal:

Massing

Building heights vary moderately within the conservation area. The restricted depth of the site and footprint of the properties has understandably prompted a third storey of accommodation to give occupants more space. Technically the development is two and a half stories with the second floor set within the roof void as stated on the previously approved scheme.

The modern brick-built blocks and projecting balconies of the Boat Lane Court retirement complex opposite the site are taller with three full stories and a roof. The land to the back of the site is raised and retained at approximately 1.8 metres high. As the existing two storey properties at the rear are elevated by half a storey their ridge lines are closely align with that of the new development.

Form

The narrow-fronted character of many of the older buildings in the conservation area is retained in the new development. In the design guidance for improvements and enhancement it encourages the use of windows that are vertically proportioned, i.e. taller than they are wide which the proposal delivers. The applicant will also set the windows back from the wall faces as is the council's preference to create deep modelling on the facades.

The sites immediate neighbours on three sides are contemporary developments which also need consideration. Although they are not significant buildings to the heritage asset it is still important that the development relates to them to create cohesion at street level. The front boundaries, recessed parking bays and small front gardens have been designed to continues the rhythm created by the neighbouring modern houses.

Materials

Most of the retained heritage properties within the conservation area are built using a variety of materials such as slate, brick, stone, and brick with stone dressings. The materials used in the construction of the nearby listed buildings were deemed as significant in their contribution to the character of the conservation area. A close match of red multi brick and natural slate will be selected for the development. These solid, traditional materials will help the new properties relate to those existing retained high-quality buildings and complement their character.

However modern materials have been favoured over tradition where they offer enhanced performance such as the UPVC windows and doors offering durability, increased security, thermal efficiency and reduced maintenance.

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Style

As well as its materials the development pays attention to the special architectural, historical and visual style of the local vernacular. We believe the original designer intended them to not be identical in style to the period properties but within a common framework which enables them to sit comfortably within the village scene. Their simplistic contemporary aesthetic appears to have sufficient characteristics in common whilst avoiding becoming a pastiche which would make no positive contribution to the character of the area.

Assessment of Impact

When assessing the schemes potential impact it's also important to consider the vacant sites present state. It currently poses an eyesore that is getting increasingly overgrown and vulnerable to trespassing and fly tipping, a negative impact which understandably the applicant wishes to rectify. The site has had an industrial past as a breakers yard since at least the 1960s which will have generated noise pollution and light freight traffic to and from it for several decades. Since the last business ceased trading the site has remained vacant for several years with only the remnants of its makeshift cabins, canopies and remaining scrap. The site will benefit from development with any possible contamination caused by its former use being identified and remediated as part of the site investigation.



Site 2022 (Image courtesy of Google Maps)

Although this assessment would have been beneficial alongside the design of the original scheme, it still has value. It has identified that the previous designer of the approved scheme considered the heritage asset when formulating their proposal. They have created an acceptable balance of massing with the neighbouring contemporary buildings. As previously stated, although the height of the proposed development does not follow its immediate neighbours, it does not exceed the height of its surroundings. It keeps within the limits of those building both opposite and behind the site. The specification of the main facing materials reflects the historic context which will minimise their visual impact. The slate roofs and red multi brick external walls will complement the neighbouring cottage and nearby Northern house and its adjoining cottage.

We believe overall that the proposed scheme will have a low impact on the heritage asset transforming a pocket of disused land with good quality homes. The applicant understands the contribution they must make to conserve the heritage asset. They also understand the significance of its economic vitality, with homes in conservation areas generally selling for a premium. They wish to maintain its desirability, enhancing the attractiveness of the site with a quality development that will make a positive contribution to its distinctiveness. The applicant wishes to minimise any impact to the local character or setting of the conservation area to ensure it can continue to be enjoyed by existing and future generations of residents and visitors. They are open to receive and act upon any associated feedback from Manchester City Council and the local conservation officer.