PROPOSED WORKS AT 218 BURTON ROAD

WEST DIDSBURY, CITY OF MANCHESTER

v



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

PROPOSED WORKS AT 218 BURTON ROAD

WEST DIDSBURY, CITY OF MANCHESTER

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

FEBRUARY 2026

GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

[redacted]

Providing heritage planning advice since 2002

This report © Garry Miller 2026

GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage advisor, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as *'scholarship as its best'* by *Country Life* (June 2003), and *'well analysed and presented'* in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 Buildings of England volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

Date of issue: February 2026

Status: for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Photographic survey: Peter Miller

IMPORTANT LEGAL ADVISORY

This report is to be used solely by the applicant by whom it was commissioned and for the specific application to which it pertains.

Any use of the report, or alteration of its contents, by a third party and in any other circumstances (unless authorised in writing by Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy) will be considered a breach of copyright and render those responsible liable to civil action.

1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at 218 Burton Road, in the West Didsbury suburb of south Manchester. The property is one of a row of Edwardian shops that stands within Albert Park Conservation Area.

An application has been submitted to Manchester City Council for division of the property into two separate commercial units, along with associated works. The heritage consideration arising is the impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the conservation area, as regards the external works only. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and assess how it will be affected.

The significance of the conservation area extends to the city-wide context, and derives from its character and appearance as an extensive late Victorian residential suburb consisting largely of detached and semi-detached brick dwellings of middle class status, along with shops, churches and some notable public buildings. Within it, Burton Road, as the district's shopping centre, forms an area of distinct character that is embodied in its retail premises. The significance of the conservation area therefore stems from its buildings and their relationship to each other along the pattern of virtually parallel streets that forms its core.

The application property is significant in the local (i.e. West Didsbury) context not for its individual qualities but for its collective role as part of the row of Edwardian shops numbered 212-224 Burton Road. It makes a positive contribution to the conservation area on this basis, principally via its front elevation, which embodies its character and contribution to the row. The heritage value of the fabric that forms its modern shop front is however low.

The proposal building is currently one commercial unit. The proposal is to divide the building into two separate commercial units, with the ground floor and basement to be one and the first floor and loft the other. The external works are minimal, and are restricted to providing a new doorway in the existing lobby to serve the first floor/attic unit. The doorway will be created within what is now a wall and will be of aluminium and partially glazed. The existing door in the side of the lobby will continue to serve the unit in the ground floor and basement. The works therefore represent a minor alteration that accords with the modern appearance of the shopfront as a whole and will consequently have no detrimental effect upon the appearance of the building and its contribution to the row. The impact of the works will therefore be of a wholly positive nature, and furthermore the proposal will deliver the public benefit of securing the sustainable use of the premises along with their contribution to the local economy and the role of Burton Road as the district shopping centre.

For the reasons given above, it is concluded the proposal will entirely sustain the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area and the contribution and group value of the application property. The proposal therefore meets the requirements set down by both national planning guidance and the local development plan, and accordingly merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application property is located in the West Didsbury suburb of the City of Manchester. Number 218 Burton Road belongs to a row of Edwardian shops which stands on the west side of the street and forms part of the local shopping centre that exists along Burton Road. Its wider surroundings are the residential district of Albert Park, established in the later 19th century.



Location of the application property

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Designation

The application site stands within Albert Park Conservation Area.

Proposed development

An application has been submitted to Manchester City Council for division of the property into two separate commercial units, along with associated works.

Heritage impact

The heritage consideration arising is the proposal's impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the conservation area, in respect of the external works only.

Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 207 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised December 2024) states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the conservation area, along with the contribution made by the application site, and to evaluate how this will be affected by the proposal.

It is considered its level of detail is proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal, in accordance with paragraph 207.

This report should be read in conjunction with other documents submitted in support of the application.

Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A concise description of the special interest of the conservation area (Section 4)

2. A summary of the contribution made by the application property (Section 5)

3. Evaluation of the significance of the conservation area and application property (Section 6)

4. A summary of the relevant planning policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 7)

5. Evaluation within this policy context of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the conservation area (Section 8).

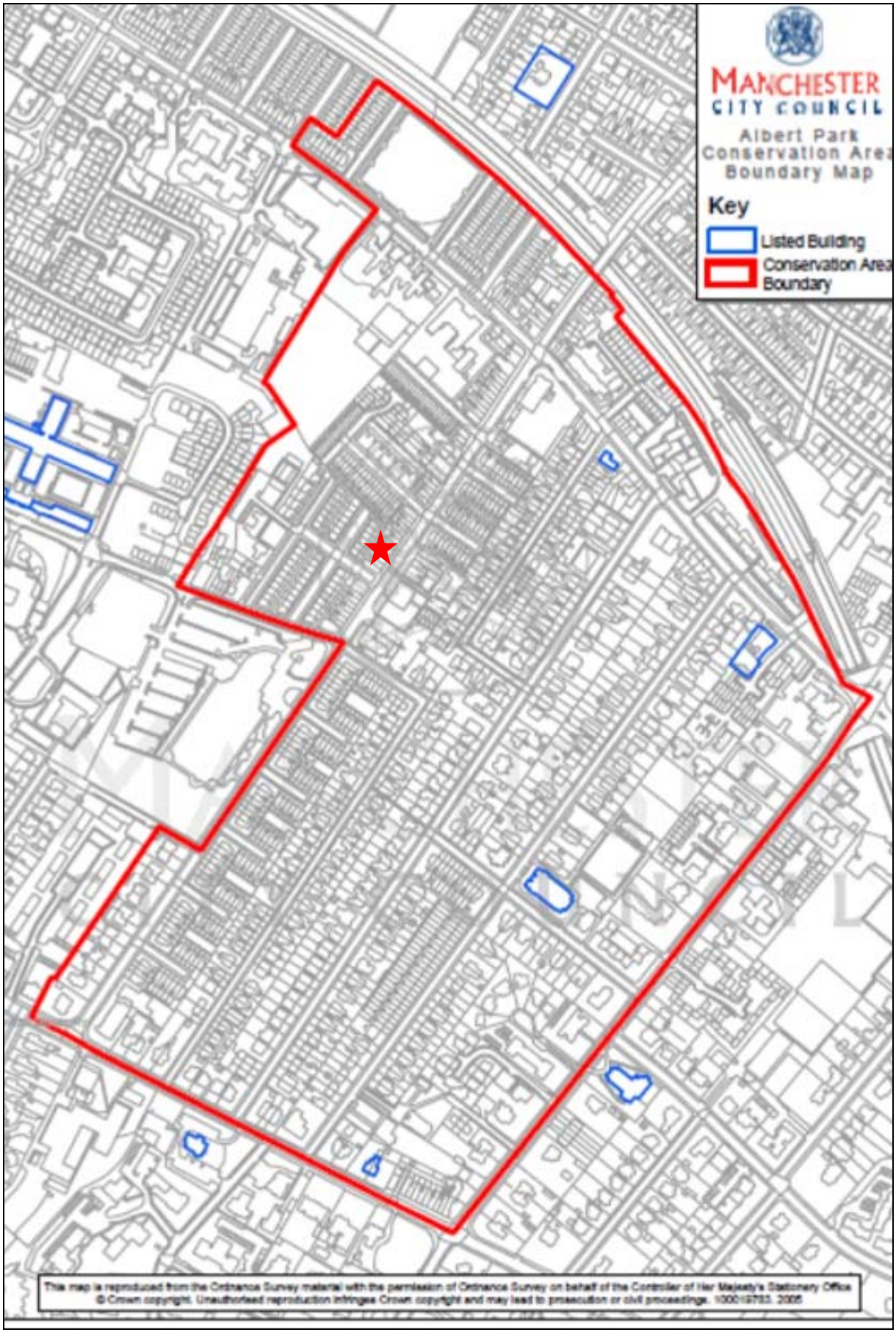
4: THE CONSERVATION AREA

Location

Albert Park Conservation Area is situated in the West Didsbury district of Manchester, approximately four miles south of the city centre, where it encompasses a residential district developed in the later 19th century. The boundaries are defined by Barlow Moor Road to the south, Withington Hospital and government buildings to the west, the disused Midland railway line to the north and Palatine Road to the east, the latter forming a common boundary with Blackburn Park Conservation Area. The proposal building stands in the northern portion of the conservation area (see map, following page).

Historical context

Albert Park is a residential middle-class suburb established in the second half of the 19th century amid what was previously an outlying rural area. Development began along Palatine Road after it was opened in 1862, and from then until the close of the century, the area between Palatine Road, Barlow Moor Road and Lapwing Lane was developed with housing. These consisted mainly of three-storey pairs of semi-detached properties, slightly less grand than those fronting Palatine Road. Development accelerated with the opening of the Midland Railway's Withington and Albert Park railway station in 1880, which was sited directly opposite numbers 22-24 Lapwing Lane. Further expansion took place in the early 20th century, with the post-war period characterised by infill development.



Location of the site within the conservation area

Character and appearance

The conservation area is primarily of late Victorian residential character, but also includes schools, public houses and churches, along with shops on Burton Road and also Barlow Moor Road. The core is represented by five nearly-parallel roads: Burton Road, Northen Grove and Cresswell Grove, Clyde Road, Old Lansdowne Road and Palatine Road. Their properties generally have walls of red or orange-red brick with dressings in stone, moulded brick or a brick of a contrasting colour. Heavily moulded and strongly contrasting colours in terracotta or faience are meanwhile reserved for public buildings, while trees make a considerable contribution to the character of the area, both in the pavements and more significantly in private gardens. Burton Road has in contrast a commercial character, with its rows of shops forming the shopping centre for the locality.



Burton Road is the shopping centre of the conservation area

5: THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The application property belongs to a two-storey row of red brick shops, with accommodation above, numbered 212-224 Burton Road. They date from circa 1900 and are depicted upon the OS map of 1916 (below). The row is characterised by a mixture of modern and traditional shop fronts, with either flush or recessed entrances and wide tripartite sash windows on the first floor, along with some modern replacements. The shops are separated by brick pilasters and there are low attic dormers. Number 218 lies in the centre of the row, and is one of those with a modern shop front – consisting of a three-panelled stall riser, large single pane window and modern signage above – and recessed entrance with doorway to the side. Its principal contribution to the conservation area is made by this front elevation.



The property depicted upon the 25-inch OS map surveyed 1916



The application property, with its modern shop front and recessed entrance



The row to which it belongs dates from around 1900

6: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rationale

Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary 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. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*

The conservation area

The significance of the conservation area extends to the city-wide context, and derives from its character and appearance as an extensive late Victorian residential suburb consisting largely of detached and semi-detached brick dwellings of middle class status, along with shops, churches and some notable public buildings. Within it, Burton Road, as the district's shopping centre, forms an area of distinct character, embodied in its retail premises. The significance of the conservation area is therefore embodied in its buildings and their relationship to each other along the pattern of virtually parallel streets that forms its core.

The application building

The application property is significant in the local (i.e. West Didsbury) context not for its individual qualities but for its collective role as part of the row of Edwardian shops numbered 212-224 Burton Road. It makes a positive contribution to the conservation area on this basis, principally via its front elevation, which embodies its character and contribution to the row. The heritage value of the fabric that forms its modern shop front is however low.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Statutory duty

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.

Relevant polices

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is to be put into practice. Paragraph 210 states that in determining 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*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 212 states that *'great weight'* should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; and that significance can be lost through development within its setting. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 220 recognises that not all elements of a conservation area will contribute to its significance.

The relevant local planning policy is JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022-2029, adopted March 21, 2024, which requires (inter alia) that the heritage significance of a site or area is considered in accordance with national policy in the planning and design process; and integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place.

Also relevant is Policy EN3 of the City Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy, adopted July 2012. This states that the council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, with new developments designed so as to support the council in preserving, or where possible, enhancing the historic environment.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

Summary of the scheme

The proposal building is currently one commercial unit. The proposal is to divide the building into two separate commercial units, with the ground floor and basement forming one unit and the first floor and loft the other. Please consult the submitted drawings for the full details of the proposal.

Effect upon the conservation area

To begin with, it is only the external works which have a potential effect upon the conservation area. The internal works are unseen in the public realm views which establish its character and appearance, and hence have no heritage implications.

Those external works are minimal. They are essentially restricted to providing a new doorway in the existing lobby to serve the first floor/attic unit. The doorway will be created within what is now a wall and will be of aluminium and partially glazed. The existing door in the side of the lobby will continue to serve the unit in the ground floor and basement. The works therefore represent a minor alteration (compare visualisations on the following page) that accords with the modern appearance of the shopfront as a whole, and will consequently have no detrimental effect upon the appearance of the building and its contribution to the row.

The impact of the works will therefore be of a wholly positive nature, and furthermore the proposal will deliver the public benefit of securing the sustainable use of the premises along with their contribution to the local economy and the role of Burton Road as the district shopping centre.



Existing and proposed appearance of the front elevation

Conclusion

For the reasons given above, it is concluded the proposal will entirely sustain the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area and the contribution and group value of the application property. The proposal therefore meets the requirements set down by both national planning guidance and the local development plan, and accordingly merits approval without delay.