



Heritage and Conservation Area Impact Assessment

Ref: DA25060 – Berkley Court

Site address: Berkeley Court, 150 Bury Old Road, Manchester, M7 4QZ

Date: 1st December 2025

Proposal: Upward extension to create 8 apartments; recladding and parking amendments

1. Introduction

This Heritage and Conservation Area Impact Assessment accompanies the planning application for Berkeley Court and establishes the heritage rationale for the proposed development. The purpose of the document is to clearly explain how the scheme interacts with the established character of the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area and to demonstrate, through structured analysis, that the development will preserve and enhance the qualities that give the area its special interest.

The assessment:

- Sets out the historical and architectural context of the Conservation Area.
- Evaluates Berkeley Court's existing contribution—recognising its limited heritage value and its visual weaknesses.
- Explains the heritage logic behind the proposed recladding and extension.
- Assesses the overall impact of the scheme in accordance with statutory and policy requirements.

In doing so, the document provides a balanced, proportionate and evidence-led basis for understanding how the development responds to its heritage setting.

The site occupies a prominent position along Bury Old Road and is visible from several local vantage points. Although it is not a historic building and does not embody the architectural qualities associated with the Conservation Area, its appearance nonetheless influences how the area is perceived on approach. This places a responsibility on any proposal to address existing detracting features and to reinforce, rather than weaken, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Although not a historic building, Berkeley Court forms part of the wider visual environment and its condition influences how the area is experienced.

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

A range of statutory duties and planning policies guide assessments of development within Conservation Areas.

2.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72 establishes the requirement for decision-makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. This does not preclude change but requires that change is sensitive, justified and contributes positively to the area.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023)

The NPPF sets out the national policy approach to heritage. Key principles include:



- Understanding the significance of a heritage asset before assessing impact.
- Giving great weight to the conservation of heritage significance.
- Ensuring that development proposals preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Areas.
- Identifying and addressing any potential harm, however minimal.

2.3 Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

Local planning policy reinforces national guidance:

- EN3 requires development to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas and respond positively to their established character.
- DM1 encourages high-quality, contextually sensitive design.

2.4 Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area Appraisal

The appraisal provides an essential reference for understanding local character. It identifies:

- The dominance of late Victorian and Edwardian architecture.
- Widespread use of red and buff brickwork.
- Traditional window patterns and simple detailing.
- Repetitive building rhythms and coherent street structures.
- Landscape features such as boundary walls and mature planting.

These features form the framework against which the proposal is assessed.

3. Character and Historic Development of the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area

The Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area is an established residential neighbourhood whose character has evolved over more than a century. Its special interest is not defined by grand civic buildings or landmark structures, but by the collective strength of its streetscape and the consistency of its architectural language. As one moves through the area, there is a clear sense of cohesion and historic continuity.

Most buildings within the Conservation Area date from the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. They typically display:

- Robust brick construction in red and buff tones.
- Simple, well-proportioned façades with traditional window patterns.
- Repetitive rhythms created by bays, chimneys and frontage lines.
- Modest building heights that contribute to a human-scale setting.
- Soft landscape features, including hedges, mature trees and garden boundaries, which soften the built form and create a pleasant residential environment.

The general townscape is one of order, rhythm and harmony. Even where there is variation in architectural detail, the use of consistent materials and proportions ensures the streets retain a coherent visual identity. This cumulative quality is fundamental to the Conservation Area's significance.



Historic Evolution of the Area

The area developed incrementally during Manchester's late Victorian suburban expansion, when improved transport links enabled residential growth beyond the city core. Development followed a structured grid of streets, with consistent house types built by local brickmakers and craftsmen. This period of steady, unified growth established the architectural character that defines the Conservation Area today. Subsequent 20th-century insertions, including Berkeley Court, diverged from this earlier pattern, reflecting changing construction methods and architectural trends.

Berkeley Court lies at the southern edge of the Conservation Area, where the historic grain becomes less uniform and later phases of development begin to appear. Although the building forms part of the visual approach into the Conservation Area, it does not reflect the architectural vocabulary of the historic streets. Its materials, proportions and detailing distinguish it from the surrounding townscape, positioning it as a peripheral rather than contributing component of the overall heritage character. Although it forms part of the visual approach to the area, it does not share the architectural language or materials of the historic buildings. As such, it occupies a peripheral position rather than contributing to the core character of the designation.

4. Significance of the Site and Its Contribution to the Conservation Area

Although Berkeley Court lies within the Conservation Area, its architectural character and period of construction set it apart from the historic development that defines the designation. A clear understanding of its significance requires assessing both its intrinsic qualities and the role it plays within the wider townscape.

4.1 Architectural Value

Berkeley Court reflects a later phase of residential development and bears little resemblance to the historic buildings that contribute to the Conservation Area's special interest. Its materials—including weathered timber panels and composite cladding—contrast sharply with the robust red and buff brickwork that characterises the area. The building's façade lacks hierarchy and rhythm, and the deterioration of its cladding has further diminished its architectural presence.

Rather than reinforcing the area's character, the building appears visually detached from the established vernacular. Its material failures and patchwork appearance draw attention not through architectural merit but through visible decline.

4.2 Townscape Contribution

From a townscape perspective, Berkeley Court disrupts the otherwise cohesive rhythm along Bury Old Road. The prevailing streetscape is framed by traditional brick properties that share consistent proportions, materials and detailing. In contrast, Berkeley Court introduces a markedly different palette and form.

The visual discord created by its materials and proportions results in a building that reads as an anomaly. It sits awkwardly within long views and contributes little to the legibility or harmony of the Conservation Area. Its condition exacerbates this effect, making its presence more noticeable for the wrong reasons.



4.3 Summary of Significance

In heritage terms, Berkeley Court is of limited value. It is not a historic building, does not embody the architectural qualities that underpin the Conservation Area's significance, and in several respects detracts from the character and coherence that the Conservation Area designation seeks to protect. Its contribution is therefore assessed as neutral at best, and often negative.

The existing building has limited architectural merit and does not enhance the Conservation Area. In several respects, it weakens the visual qualities that the designation seeks to protect.

5. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposals respond directly to the shortcomings of the existing building and the wider expectations of the Conservation Area. Berkeley Court currently appears tired, visually fragmented and materially inconsistent. The proposed scheme therefore focuses on restoring coherence, improving architectural integrity and reinforcing a more sympathetic relationship with the surrounding townscape.

At the heart of the proposal is the comprehensive recladding of the building in high-quality brickwork. This is a significant shift from the existing palette of weathered timber panels and composite cladding, and it reconnects the building with the robust, long-lasting and visually harmonious materials that define the Conservation Area. Brick provides texture, depth and colour variation that helps the building sit more comfortably within its context.

The additional storey is designed as a recessive element, stepping back subtly from the main façade. This helps to maintain a balanced relationship with neighbouring buildings and prevents the extension from dominating long views. Its form and detailing are deliberately kept simple so that the primary architectural language remains focused on the improved brick elevations.

The proposal also rationalises the window arrangement, improving alignment and establishing a clearer vertical and horizontal rhythm. These refinements contribute to a more ordered architectural expression, which is a key feature of the Conservation Area. Landscape enhancements—including new hedging and structured planting—soften the building's edges and improve its immediate setting.

6. Assessment of Impact on the Conservation Area

6.1 Architectural Character

The proposed recladding results in a building that is materially and visually more consistent with the Conservation Area. The use of brickwork represents a strong contextual response, replacing materials that currently detract from the area with a palette that reinforces its historic identity. The improved façade composition introduces clarity and order, qualities that are characteristic of the wider streetscape.

6.2 Townscape and Views

From Bury Old Road and surrounding vantage points, the building will appear more settled and unified. The upward extension, being modest and recessive, does not compete with the main building or disrupt the broader roofscape. Instead, it forms a coherent and proportionate addition that



aligns with the scale of the surrounding residential development. Views previously dominated by deteriorated cladding will now benefit from a more refined and enduring architectural presence.

6.3 Setting

The improved appearance of the building and its enhanced landscape setting contribute to a more positive relationship with adjacent plots. The introduction of brick, coupled with structured planting, strengthens the site's contribution to the Conservation Area. These interventions help the building transition more gently into the surrounding streetscape, reinforcing the area's characteristic sense of order.

6.4 Overall Impact

The scheme addresses the elements of Berkeley Court that currently undermine the Conservation Area's character. By improving material quality, architectural coherence and landscape integration, the proposal enhances the appearance of the building and the wider townscape. No harm arises; the development delivers a net benefit to the Conservation Area in line with national and local heritage policy.

7. Level of Harm (NPPF Assessment)

Level of Harm (NPPF Assessment) The proposals do not introduce harm to the Conservation Area. Instead:

- Deteriorated and visually discordant materials are removed.
- The overall architectural coherence of the building is improved.
- The development strengthens the character and appearance of the area rather than diminishing it.

As no harm is identified, the heritage balance does not trigger any requirement for public benefit justification.

8. Materials, Detailing and Mitigation

Material choice and detailing are integral to the proposal's success. The use of traditional brickwork aligns with the Conservation Area's established palette and ensures the building sits more comfortably within its surroundings. The upward extension incorporates lighter detailing to maintain a respectful hierarchy.

Landscape enhancements provide additional structure and soften the building's presence, contributing positively to the area's visual and environmental quality.

9. Conclusion

The proposals for Berkeley Court represent a meaningful opportunity to enhance this part of the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area. The existing building contributes little to the area's architectural or historic character and, in its current deteriorated condition, detracts from the coherence and visual quality that define the significance of the Conservation Area.

The introduction of high-quality brickwork restores a sense of material consistency and aligns the building with the wider architectural vernacular of the area. Improvements to façade composition,



proportionality and detailing provide clarity and coherence, addressing long-standing visual weaknesses. The upward extension is sensitively handled, maintaining a recessive presence that sits comfortably within the surrounding townscape. Landscape enhancements further support these improvements by softening the site's edges and reinforcing established spatial patterns.

Taken together, the proposals do more than avoid harm—they deliver an enhancement to both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The scheme aligns with statutory expectations under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and meets the requirements of national and local heritage policy.

In summary, the development presents a clear public benefit in the form of architectural, townscape and environmental improvement. The proposals preserve and enhance the Conservation Area, and planning permission should therefore be granted.