PROPOSED WORKS AT 19 ELM ROAD, DIDSBURY

CITY OF MANCHESTER



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

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Providing heritage planning advice since 2002

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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.

THIS REPORT

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IMPORTANT LEGAL ADVISORY

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at number 19 Elm Road, Didsbury, in the City of Manchester. The property is a large detached house of circa 1900-1910 which is itself undesignated but stands within Blackburn Park Conservation Area.

Proposals are being submitted to Manchester City Council for various external works at the application property. An application for essentially similar works was approved in 2022 (planning reference 132001/FH/2021) but not implemented.

The heritage consideration arising is therefore the proposal's potential impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value to present and future generations) of the conservation area. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and assess how the proposal will affect it.

The significance of Blackburn Park Conservation Area derives from its character and appearance as a mid-status residential estate developed from the mid-19th to the early 20th century on land originally belonging to Charles Blackburn. It is characterised by detached and semi-detached Victorian and Edwardian houses set in large mature gardens along trees-lined roads. The significance of the conservation area is therefore embodied primarily in these houses and their relationship to each other within the streetscene.

Number 19 Elm Road on balance makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. It has however been subject to a degree of modern alteration which has reduced its degree of authenticity and hence it appears in public views as an early 20th century house whose interest and character have been diluted by later 20th century alteration.

The previous application was approved on the basis that it reversed unsympathetic additions to the property and had a positive effect on the building and conservation area. The present application is a resubmission with the following amendments:

- Proposed driveway of crushed gravel and not resin-bound gravel.
- Pedestrian gate removed and vehicular gate made wider
- Replacement windows and doors to match the existing items
- Privacy walls added to external seating area with a slatted pergola-type structure

Some internal alterations are also sought, but these have no bearing upon the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The majority of the amendments are minor items that will not affect the overall favourable nature of the scheme. While the replacement of the windows and doors represents more extensive work, as it is proposed to match the existing there will be no change to the appearance and character of the building along with its contribution to the conservation area. Cumulatively, the scheme is therefore as favourable as the one which earned the 2022 approval.

As with the previous application, the works will correct the unsympathetic treatment the building has received in the past and will enhance its appearance and contribution to the conservation area, whose character, appearance and significance will in turn be enhanced.

In doing so the proposal satisfies the requirements of both national and local planning policy and therefore merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application site is located in the Didsbury suburb of the city of Manchester. Number 19 Elm Road is located amid a late 19th/early 20th century suburban area northwest of Didsbury village centre and north of Barlow Moor Road that is centred on Linden, Elm and Pine Roads. This locality is characterised by detached houses in private gardens, of which the application property is one. It is situated on the west side of Elm Road, just north of its junction with Parkfield Road South.



Map 1.The application site



1. The proposal building, 19 Elm Road



2. Streetscene view of the building

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Proposed development

Proposals are being submitted to Manchester City Council for various external works at the application property. An application for essentially similar works was approved in 2022 (planning reference 132001/FH/2021) but not implemented.

Designations

The application property is itself undesignated, but stands within Blackburn Park Conservation Area.

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Heritage impact

The heritage consideration arising is therefore the proposal's potential impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value toi present and future generations) of the conservation area.

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 Decem,ber 2024) states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is to describe the significance of the conservation area and to assess the proposal's impact in the context of relevant heritage planning policies.

The report's level of detail is, in accordance with paragraph 207, proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is necessary to understand the proposal's impact.

The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the application.

Report structure

This is as follows:

1. Analysis of the conservation area (Section 4) along with the contribution made by the application property (Section 5)

2. Evaluation of the significance of the conservation area and the application building (Section 6)

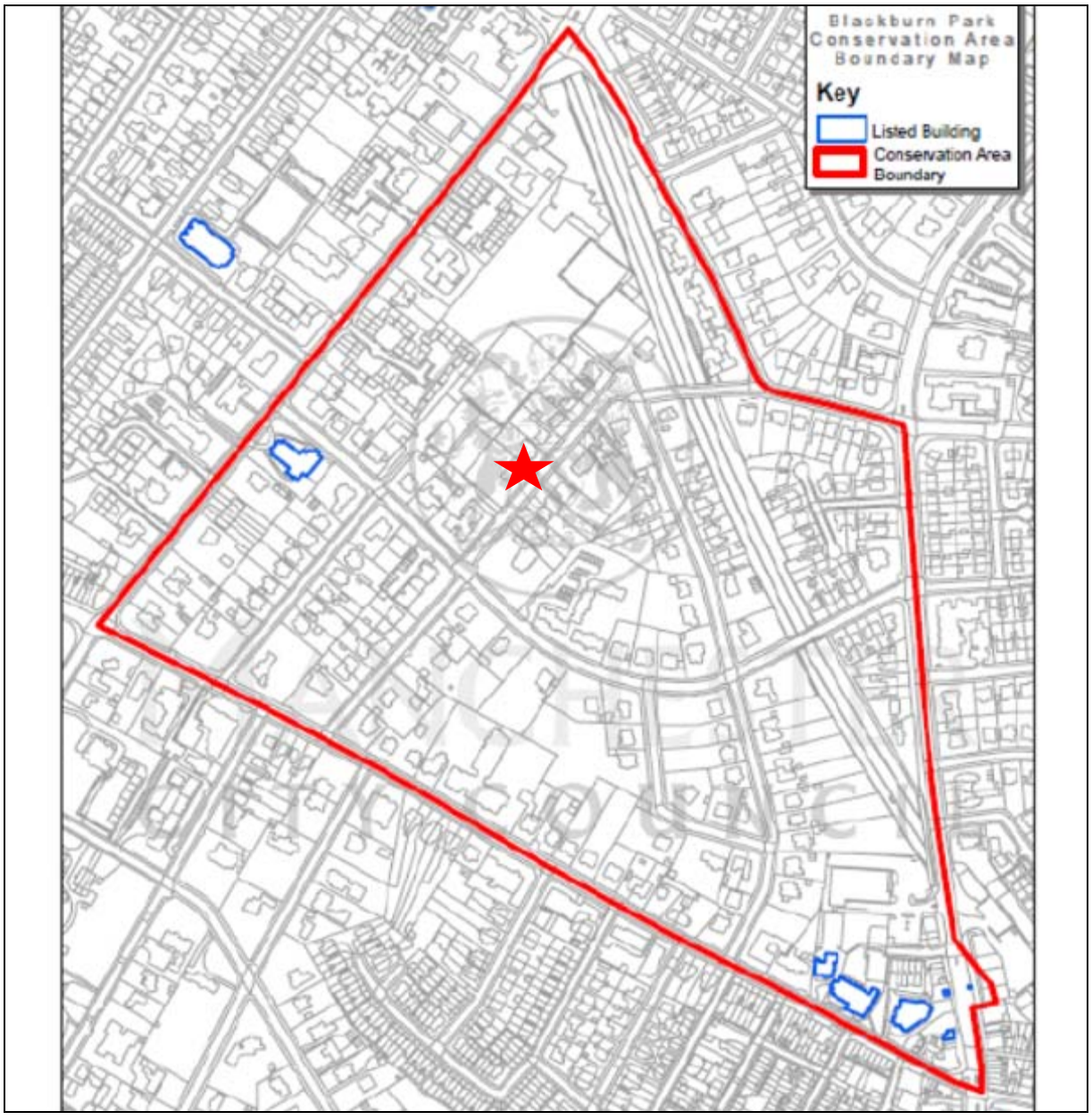
3. A summary of the relevant planning policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 7)

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

4: BLACKBURN PARK CONSERVATION AREA

Overview/boundaries

Blackburn Park Conservation Area was designated by Manchester City Council in December 1979, and is bounded by Barlow Moor Road, Palatine Road, Lapwing Lane and Wilmslow Road. Its boundaries are shown on Map 2 (below). It is principally an area of large mid-19th to early 20th century family houses with spacious gardens built along tree-lined roads.



Map 2. The conservation area, with the application building indicated

History

Blackburn Park was developed as a mid-status residential estate from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. It takes its name from landowner Charles Blackburn, who was principally responsible for the development and sold off limited portions of land, each plot large enough to accommodate only three or four houses. The first stage followed the opening of Palatine Road in 1862, and is represented by large villas built along its length during the two subsequent decades. The second phase followed the opening of the Midland Railway's Manchester South District line in 1880, with its nearby stations at Didsbury and Albert Park. Between then and 1905 occurred the largest phase of development, with Blackburn offering two-thirds of his estate for sale. The final phase followed Blackburn's death, when the remainder of his estate was sold.

Character/townscape/buildings

The qualities of the conservation area townscape are described thus in Manchester City Council's internet pages devoted to Blackburn Park:

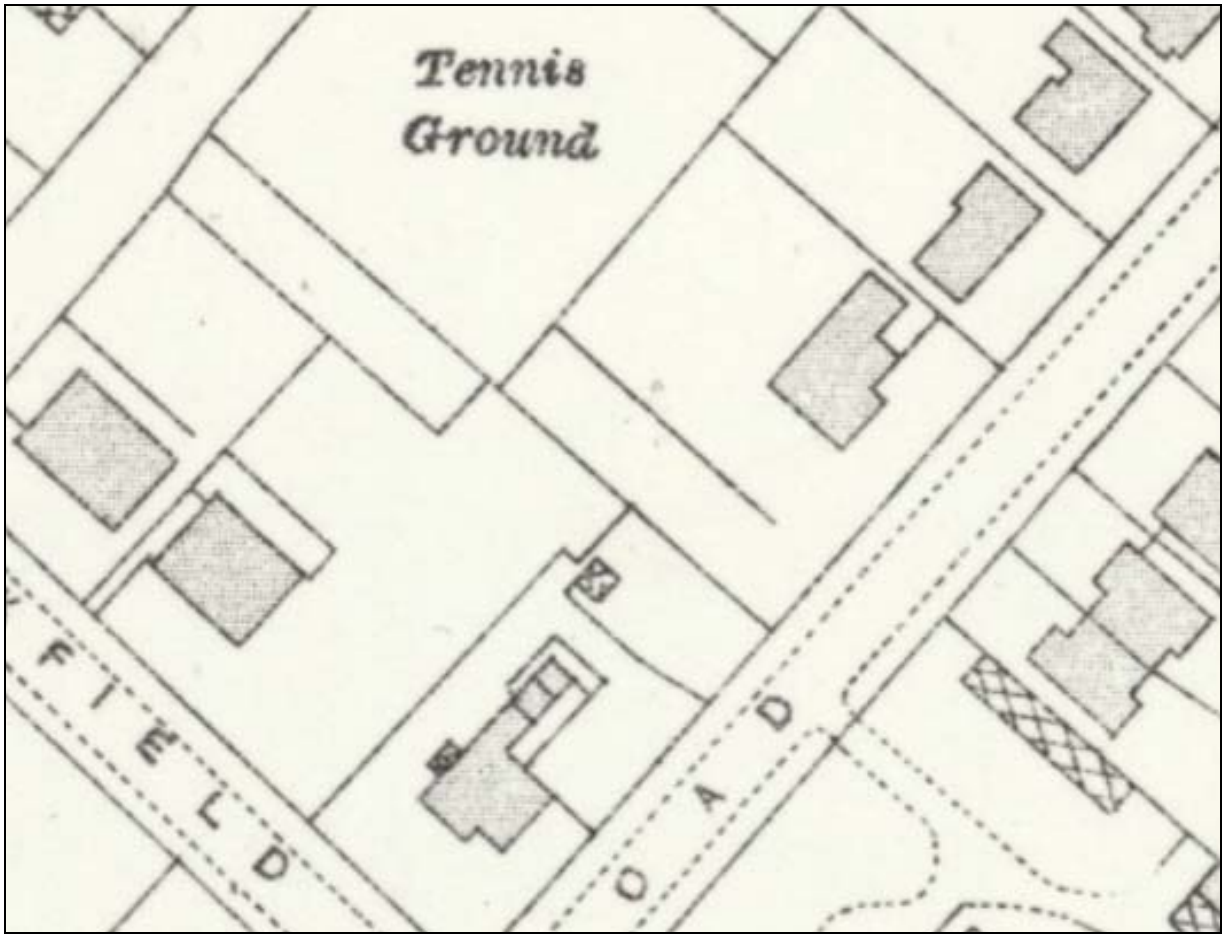
- Building materials and styles are very varied. Older houses generally have textured light red or buff brick walls with blue slate roofs, and sometimes brick or stone dressings in contrasting colours. The later houses are predominantly smooth red brick, though render, half-timbering and decorative tile fringing are extensively used. Red tile and occasionally green slate are used for roofs and vertical cladding
- Windows are even more varied, some being subdivided by glazing bars, some leaded and a great many having Art Nouveau stained glass. Bay windows, bow windows and oriel windows are to be found in profusion
- Entrance doors are varied with combinations of fielded timber panels and stained glass panels, and they always open on to a covered porch
- Chimney stacks are a notable feature of some of houses, being tall and decorated with projecting strings and corbelled brickwork
- Walls are mainly of brick with moulded terracotta copings, and occasionally the wall is divided into fielded panels with a plinth below and corbelled brickwork above. Sometimes brickwork is bonded in a darker red or in other colours
- Gardens at both front and rear of houses are large by most standards, and their boundaries to public highways are marked by walls, some of stone, and/or privet hedges. Few garden gates remain intact, but those that do are typically of timber and as carefully detailed as the houses to which they belong, some of which have decorative gateposts

However it also should be noted that the conservation area also includes a considerable amount of new development, where modern buildings of late 20th century date – and others of very recent construction – sit alongside its Victorian and Edwardian houses.

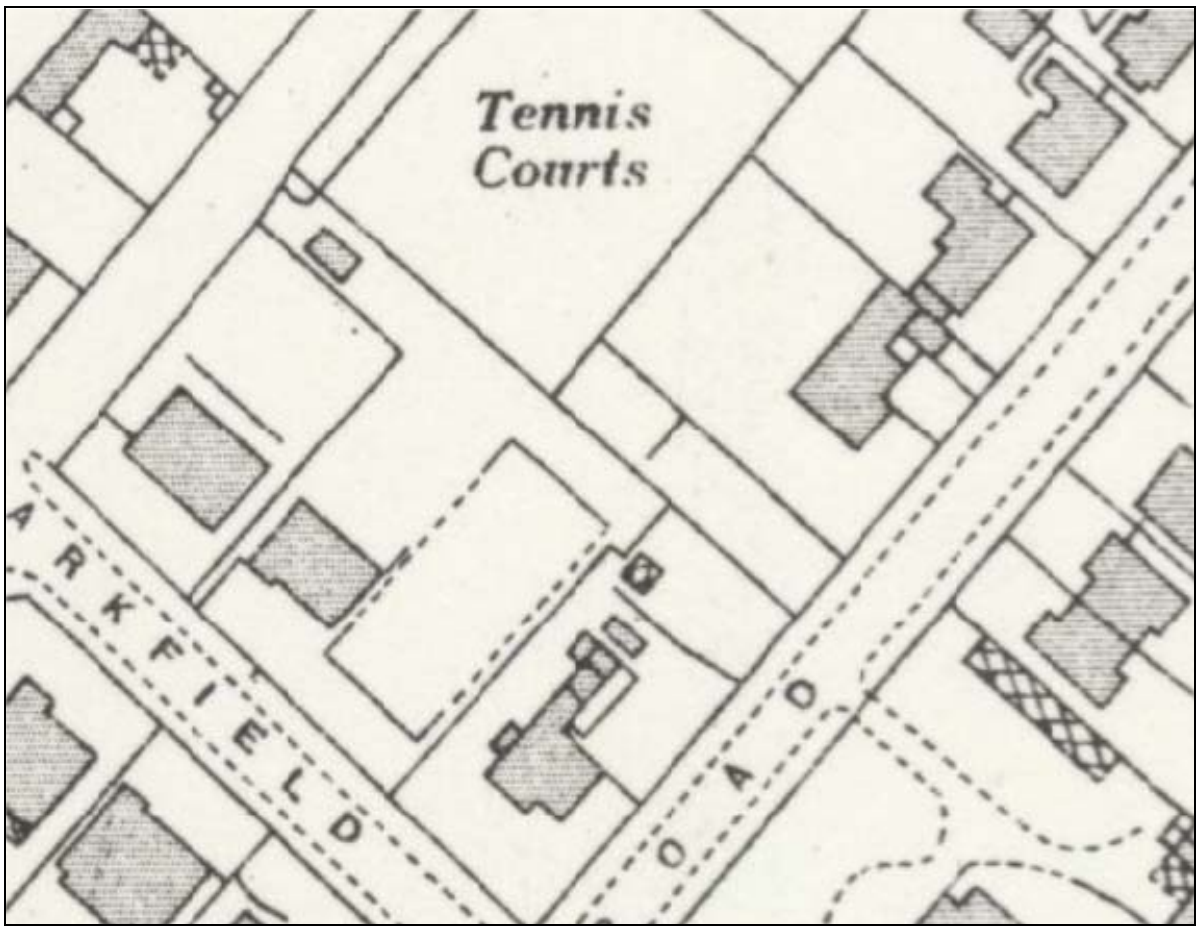
5: THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

Historical summary

The application property forms part of the late 19th/early 20th century suburban development north of Barlow Moor Road, centred upon Linden, Elm and Pine roads and which is characterised by detached houses in large gardens. Number 19 Elm Road dates probably from 1900-1910 and is first shown upon the OS map of 1916 (Map 3, below). At that time it displayed a staggered L-shaped footprint. By 1936, it had been extended to the front in what appears to have been a garage, now demolished. Subsequent large extensions, probably late 20th century, have been made to the rear.



Map 3. The property as depicted on the OS map of 1916



Map 4. The 1936 edition records an extension, most likely a garage, to the front

Appearance

The building is a substantial structure set back from Elm Road behind a paved driveway fronted by a wide, open vehicle entrance. This is out of character with the wider streetscene, where houses are generally set behind firmly-defined front garden boundaries defined by walls and hedges. The property is loosely of Arts and Crafts appearance, but is much altered, with roughcast render throughout – it may have only been partially rendered originally – modern (in some cases enlarged) small-pane windows and a probably late 20th century pastiche Neoclassical porch with Ionic columns. On the far right is a secondary front entrance, which was probably originally the access from the house to the now-demolished garage shown on the 1936 map. The roof is of red clay tile and features a projecting gable treated as a broken pediment along with a hipped section over the main block and an especially tall chimney at the junction. In the gable pediment is a cartouche with RH monogram, but no date. The rear, which is entirely hidden from public view, has altered windows and a large wing with paired gabled pediments copying those of the front, and which is probably late 20th century.



3. The original property has been subject to much alteration



4. RH monogram on front elevation gable pediment



5. The wide un-gated driveway entrance



6. Its openness is at odds with the clearly defined boundaries of the streetscene



7. The secondary entrance at right end of front elevation



8. Rear altered, with large twin-gabled probably late 20th century extension

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 Blackburn Park Conservation Area derives from its character and appearance as an affluent residential suburb developed from the mid-19th to the early 20th century on land originally belonging to Charles Blackburn. It is characterised by detached and semi-detached Victorian and Edwardian houses set in large mature gardens along trees-lined roads, mostly built of brick but with occasional render or timber-framed decoration. The significance of the conservation area is therefore embodied primarily in these houses and their relationship to each other amid the streetscene. Modern infill and redevelopment has however a notable presence, and hence has become embedded in the character of the conservation area.

The application property

Number 19 Elm Road on balance makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. It has however been subject to a degree of modern alteration which has reduced its degree of authenticity. Hence it appears in public views as an early 20th century house whose interest and character have been diluted by later 20th century alteration.

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 nd appearance of a conservation area.

Relevant polices

Chapter 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.

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.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

Previous consent

The 2022 approval involved a series of external works comprising:

- Replacement of porch canopy over the main entrance
- Additional canopy over the secondary entrance
- New canopy extension to the rear elevation
- Replacement of existing rotten timber windows and replacement of existing window sills on the front elevation
- Alterations to rear elevation, with associated landscaping works
- Re-rendering of all elevations
- Resurfacing of driveway and installation of automated gate with brick posts

Consent was granted in February 2022 but the works were not implemented, hence the present submission.

Effect of the approved works/present submission

The effect of the works involved in the 2022 approval was summarised as follows in the supporting Heritage Assessment:

- ***Porch canopy/secondary entrance canopy.*** *The present pastiche Neoclassical canopy detracts from the Arts and Crafts character of the original building. What is proposed, a simple structure with clay tile roof, is entirely in accordance with this character and will enhance the building and its contribution to the conservation area. The secondary canopy is similarly appropriate.*
- ***Re-rendering.*** *The present roughcast is not sympathetic and hence the appearance of the building will be improved.*
- ***Replacement of rotten timber windows/existing window sills on the front elevation.*** *These works will also enhance the appearance and contribution of the building.*
- ***Alterations to rear elevation/new canopy extension.*** *As the rear is enclosed and entirely private, there will be no impact upon the public views which establish the character and appearance of the conservation area*
- ***Driveway/installation of automated gate with brick posts.*** *The present open driveway is at odds with the streetscene, which is characterised by enclosed front gardens. The proposal therefore reinstates the physically-defined boundary which would originally have existed and therefore enhances the appearance and character of the conservation area.*

Accordingly, the works were approved on the basis that they had a positive effect, with the officer report concluding:

> *The proposals are considered to preserve and enhance the significance of the Conservation Area by reversing unsympathetic additions to the property and installing more authentic features. This raises the legibility of the dwelling as an historic building and thus forms a more acceptable and coherent relationship with the other historic and new buildings in this section of Elm Road.*
>
> *This is considered to have wider public benefits for understanding the Conservation Area and thus complies with national and local planning policies for the management of heritage assets as set out in the Development Plan.*

The present submission seeks approval for the items that have been previously consented, with the following amendments:

- Proposed driveway of crushed gravel and not resin-bound gravel.
- Pedestrian gate removed and vehicular gate made wider
- Replacement windows and doors to match the existing items
- Privacy walls added to external seating area with a slatted pergola-type structure



Figure 1. Elevations as proposed (Creative Architecture)

Some internal alterations are also sought, but these have no bearing upon the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The majority of the amendments are minor items that will not affect the overall favourable nature of the scheme. While the replacement of the windows and doors represents more extensive work, as it is proposed to match the existing there will be no change to the appearance and character of the building along with its contribution to the conservation area. Cumulatively, the scheme is therefore as positive as the one which earned the 2022 approval.

Conclusion

As with the 2022 scheme, the proposed works will correct the unsympathetic treatment the building has received in the past and will enhance its appearance and contribution to the conservation area, whose character, appearance and significance will in turn be enhanced.

In doing so the proposal satisfies the requirements of both national and local planning policy and therefore merits approval without delay.