



Heritage Impact Statement
07/2017
HIA/WD/607

31c Fitzroy Street
LONDON, W1T 6DT



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FOREWORD

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared to support a Listed Building Consent application for works to the interior of the subject property.

This document provides details of the works undertaken, the heritage context of both the host building and the apartment and information on the local and national planning policy and guidance which would be material to the proposed application.

We trust that this document provides sufficient information to assist officers in their considerations however should further detail or clarification of any point be required please do not hesitate to contact the author at the address below.

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1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject apartment, “C”, forms the 2nd Floor of 31 Fitzroy Street, a grade II (GV) listed building located within the Fitzrovia Conservation Area.

In form, the host building is one of a terrace of 4 residential buildings constructed in 1791 of dark gault brick masonry over rusticated and plain stucco ground floors.

All of the buildings within the character block are of “4 storeys plus basement” form with 2 windows to each level above ground floor. Entranceways to the host building and its neighbour at No.33 are arched with heads on keystones, panelled pilaster-jambs, fluted cornice-heads, radial patterned fanlights and panelled doors.

Large street frontage lightwells are separated from the pavement by cast-iron railings with spearhead finials and matching gates.

In respect to the subject property itself, Apartment C is one of 4 apartments within the building. The original plan form of the apartment is still in evidence although a contemporary plasterboard bathroom partition has been subject to minor re-alignment to improve the arrangement of space.

Works to the interior, both by the present owner and by previous owners and occupiers, have been undertaken and are the subject of this Pre-Application Enquiry.



2.0 SIGNIFICANCE and INTEREST

The National Planning Policy Framework defines significance 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.'* (NPPF, Annex 2, Glossary, 56) Understanding the interests or heritage values that contribute to an asset's significance, and how they relate to the fabric of the place, is vital to understanding the best means of conservation of the heritage asset.

Architectural and artistic interests

These are interests that stem from the design and general aesthetic values of a place. They can arise from conscious design, or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest lies in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest derives from other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic interest

An interest derived from past lives and events (including pre-historic), with which heritage assets can be associated, or which they illustrate. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but also can provide an emotional meaning for communities arising from their collective experience or memory of a place: they can also symbolise wider values, such as faith and cultural identity.

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

3.0 GRADING SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 The following grading system has been adopted to enable the relative weight of the interests or values contributing to the significance of the place and its setting to be compared, in accordance with the findings from the Hockley & Dawson survey:

A: Exceptional significance

Elements whose values are both unique to the place and relevant to our perception and understanding of architectural and social history in a national and international context. These are the qualities that, for buildings, warrant listing in grade I and II*.

B: Considerable significance

Elements whose values contribute to the heritage asset's status as a nationally important place. These are the qualities that justify statutory protection at national level.

C: Some significance

Elements whose values make a positive contribution to the way the place is understood and perceived, primarily in a local context.

D: Little significance

Elements whose values contribute to the way the place is perceived in a very limited, but positive, way.

N: Neutral significance

Elements which neither add to, nor detract from, the significance of the place.

INT: Intrusive

Elements of no historic interest, or aesthetic or architectural merit, that detract from the appearance of the place, or mask the understanding of significant elements.

As a grade II listed property, the building can be described as having Considerable Significance (B) and separately Some Significance (C) of architectural and artistic, and historic interest, as an example of traditional proportions, design and character, both in itself, as a group value and in the relation to the character and appearance of the conservation area of which it forms a part.

Evidence would appear to suggest that there is little potential for archaeological significance at the site and none within the subject apartment.

4.0 WORKS to the BUILDING

As with many properties of this age, the apartment has seen a degree of adaptation and amendment over time as successive owners have sought to meet their accommodation needs and repair and maintain interiors.

In this case, earlier amendments have been achieved with varying degrees of success and which have, to our mind, compromised the historic integrity to the interior to a significant degree.

The most recent refurbishment of the apartment has, it must be said, impacted on historic fabric and character however it would appear from available information that the majority of works relate to the renewing of previously altered or replacement elements.

A visual assessment has been made from photographic information provided and works to the building are detailed on the following pages together with narratives on initial conditions at the property.

4.1 Fireplace

The original fireplace to the now kitchen/reception/ dining room was, prior to acquisition by the client, infilled by rough brick masonry and areas of cement and hidden behind modern plasterwork.

It was however clearly evident that the surrounding structure was a chimney breast albeit that the original fireplace was missing, and so the initial aperture was formed so that the extent of the fireplace opening could be gauged by feel.

The blue tape indicates the area mapped out by the contractor and the outermost extent of rough masonry which removed to reopen the fireplace.



Above and Right : The exploratory aperture made and extent of the fireplace opening marked with blue tape. The rough masonry infill referred to in the text to to the left can be seen above



Above : Opening up works in progress



Above : The fireplace aperture post plastering

4.2 Ceilings

All ceilings and coving within the apartment were of modern construction and were replaced as part of the refurbishment works.

Construction of the previous modern ceilings were of 3 x 12.5mm plasterboard plus skim coat with stock ornamented coving throughout. As shown in the images opposite the modern ceiling was set well below the ceiling joists and its replacement, whilst modern, is now at the correct height and has improved the proportions of the room.



Above : The ceiling and coving prior to renewal works



Above : Modern insulation in situ



Above and left ; The previous contemporary ceiling was set approximately 300mm below the ceiling joists as evidenced by the early period wallpaper band.
The purpose of suspending the ceiling in this manner is unknown.

4.3 Bathroom Wall

At some point in the relatively recent past the bathroom to the apartment was formed by the construction of a stud partition wall and associated door. Forming the bathroom would have required the removal of the original dividing wall between the front and rear rooms of the property and evidence of the original line of the wall may be seen at ceiling height where a fire protected structural beam has been introduced.

It is difficult to accurately gauge when this partition was introduced however the plasterboard corner strip (shown top right) is of a form still sold today and so it is reasonable to assume that the partition is no more than 25 years old.

This wall was removed as part of the refurbishment of the apartment and a new wall, of similar construction, was introduced.



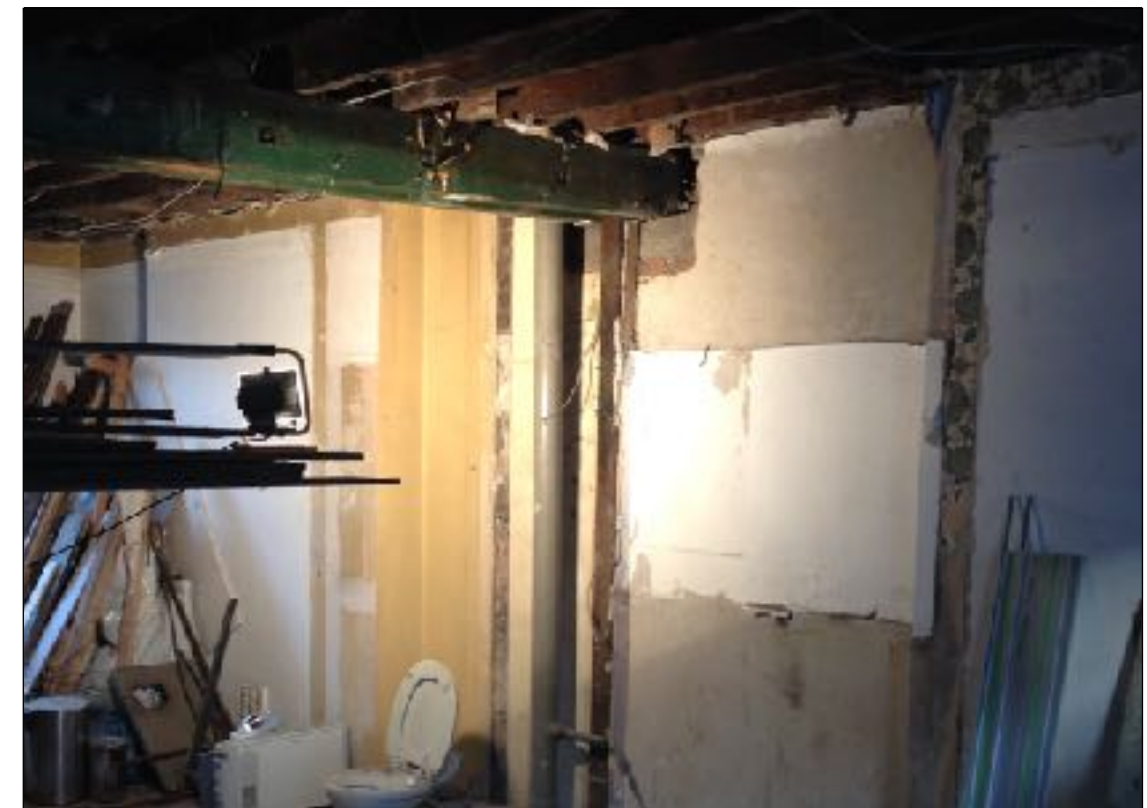
Above : Stud partition construction



Above : Modern galvanised plasterboard edging within partition



Above : Stud partition construction



Above : Partition set onto modern timber and plasterboard

4.4 Skirtings and Architraves

it is understood that the same pattern of architrave was common throughout the apartment prior to the commencement of recent works. The pattern shown is clearly not of late 18th C. design and moreover is found on the face of re-plastered walls and also edging the former bathroom partition.

In the recent works all skirtings were removed and a simpler and more honest detail introduced.



Above : Skirtings to the modern partition wall indicate their placement within the last 25 or so years



Above : The same skirting pattern was found throughout the apartment possibly indicating complete renewal when the apartment was last refurbished.

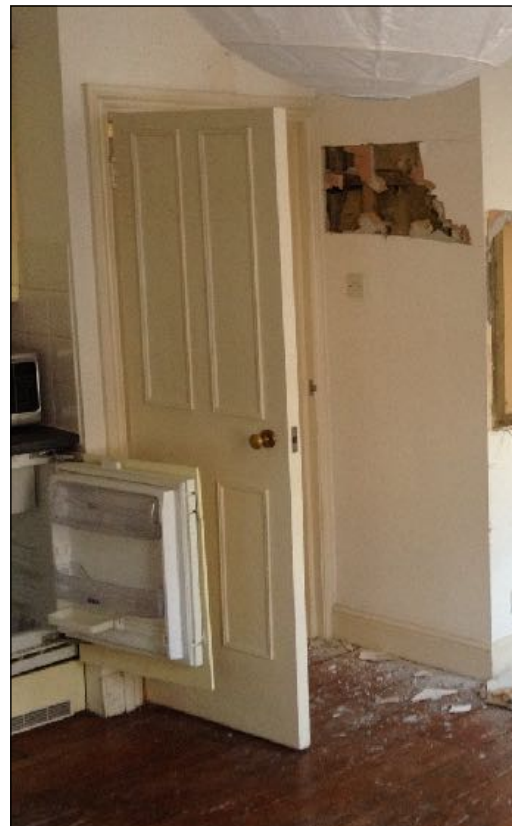
4.5 Doors

Prior to the most recent works to the apartment all internal doors were of a common, simple pattern.

These doors were formed of a composite sheet material over a timber frame and with planted detailing forming the four panels. Brass furniture and hinges to several doors are understood to have been of some apparent age however it is unlikely that they were survivors from original construction transplanted to a replacement door.

In the recent refurbishment works all internal doors were removed and replaced with simple pattern items.

The front door was replaced with a solid hardwood door in keeping with the previous contemporary door.



Above: Previous composite doors with planted detailing within apartment



Above : Replacement fire-rated internal door within apartment



Above: Entrance door to the apartment was replaced with like-for-like door (architrave not replaced)



Above: Entrance door to another apartment in the building (Flat B, 1st floor)

4.6 Floors

All timber floor boarding throughout the apartment has been removed and replaced with modern boarding over composite deck sheet.

It is evident from the photographs available that the boarding was of some age and it appears that they were formed from pine which is consistent with Georgian and Victorian development. As the boards have been removed it is not possible to accurately date them, however, the absence of floor board nails would seem to indicate that the boards are a replacement from the original as it was not until after 1830 that consistency in manufacturing and the advent of tongue and groove detailing allowed for “invisible nailing” as a means of improving the appearance of what were considered to be inferior materials at the time.

It is understood that these boards were removed owing to excessive cupping of the floors and this is supported by the visible presence of shims and fillets to the previous kitchen and the necessity to add shims to level the floor. In adding the shims the structural integrity of the joists was increased and allowed for the installation of a kitchen with heavy marble work surfaces which the improved joists were calculated to be able to support without deviation. Similarly, no additional notching of joists was required as existing utility runs were reused to carry upgraded power and water supplies to both the bathroom and kitchen.



Above : Levelling shims set under the modern kitchen units



Above : No apparent board nailing and evidence of cut and splice work



Above : Levelling fillets to support the new floor deck



Above : Deviation of floor joists

4.7 Windows

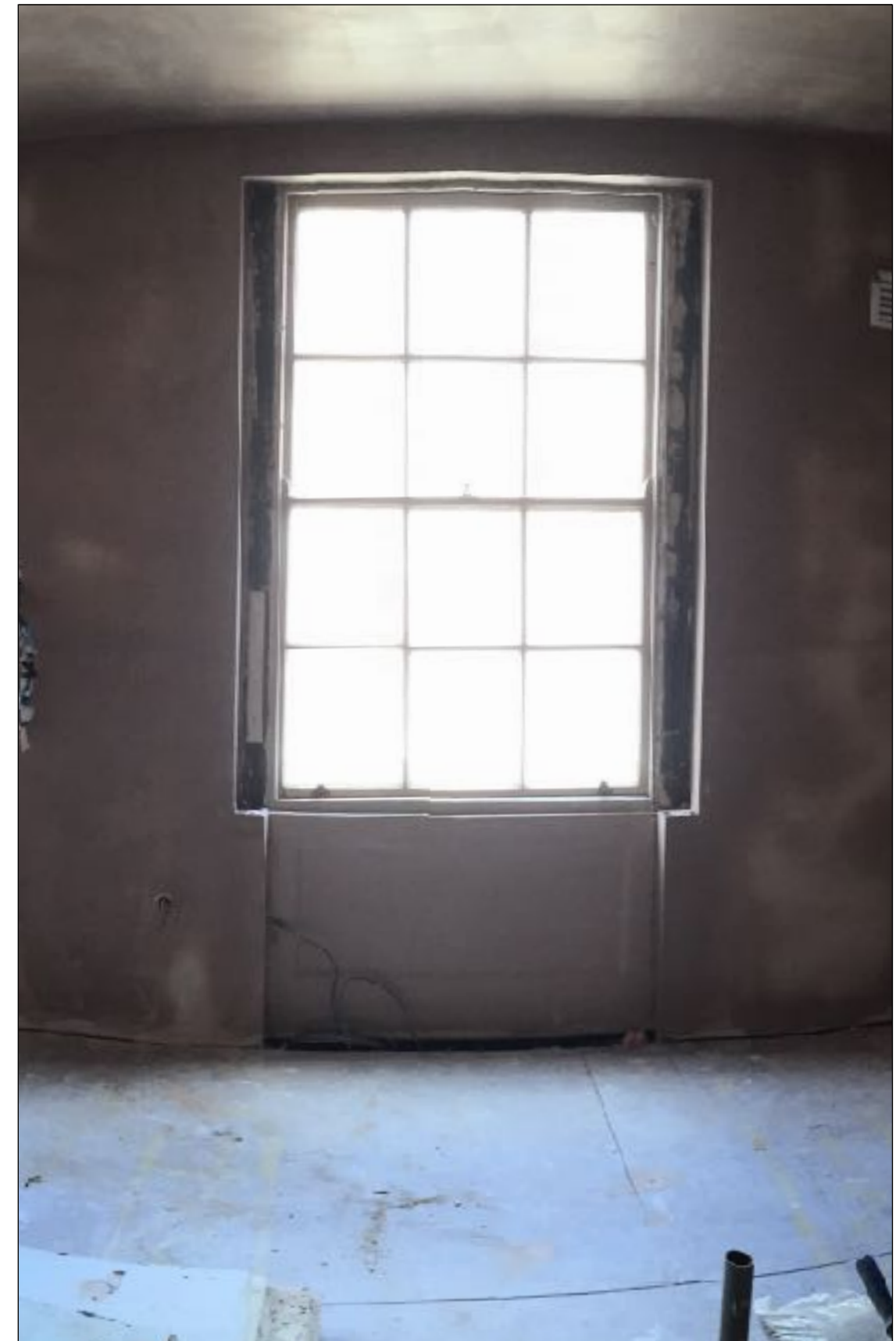
All windows to the apartment have been retained and restored to full functionality with a minimal degree of intervention to the frames.

Timber panels below windows to the kitchen/ reception/dining room to the front of the property have similarly been restored and reset into their apertures.

This detail was missing in the bedroom to the rear and so the space has been filled by a slimline radiator.



Above : Window to the rear bedroom.



Above : Window to the left hand side of the living / kitchen / dining room. Note the timber panel detail.

Appendix 1 - HE Map

CAMDEN

TQ2982SW FITZROY STREET 798-1/93/454 (West side) 14/05/74
Nos.31-37 (Odd) and attached railings

GV II

Terrace of 4 houses. c1791. Darkened brick with rusticated stucco ground floors and plain stucco 1st floor sill bands. Upper floors of Nos 31 and 33 partly refaced; upper floors of Nos 35 & 37 refaced. 4 storeys and basements. 2 windows each. Round-arched doorways with heads on keystones. Nos 31 & 33 with panelled pilaster-jambs, fluted cornice-heads, radial patterned fanlights and panelled doors. Nos 35 & 37 with C20 simplified versions of Nos 31 & 33. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, 1st floor with wrought-iron and cast-iron balconies. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with spearhead finials to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXI, Tottenham Court Road and Neighbourhood, St Pancras III: London: -1949: 44).



Appendix 2 - Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy and Guidance

The proposed restoration, alteration and demolition of the existing listed building is required to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Further guidance can be found in Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Notes 2 and 3 and Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Part 1, Section 16(2) refers to the 'decision on application' stating :

- In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

In writing this statement the following paragraphs within the NPPF have been referred;

9 Positive improvements in the quality of the built and historic environment. The replacement of poor design with better and improving conditions in which people live.

14 The presumption in favour of sustainable development

17 Core Principles of a good standard of amenity, high quality design, promoting vitality and re-using buildings.

56 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, contributing to positively making places better for people

126 Conserve in a manner appropriate to their significance

131 New development making positive contributions to the local character and distinctiveness

132 Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm

133 Substantial harm

134 Less than substantial harm

137 Positive proposals should be treated favourably

Paragraph 17 of the Core Planning Principles refers to:

- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;

Paragraph 126 refers to conserving and enhancing the historic environment in a manner appropriate to their significance.

- viable uses consistent with their conservation

- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits

- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Appendix 2 - Policy and Guidance (cont.)

Paragraph 131 states that 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.

Paragraph 132 states the following regarding the effect of development on heritage assets:

- 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or

garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, Grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 133 states the following regarding the substantial harm or total loss:

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term, through appropriate marketing, that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 134 states the following regarding less than substantial harm or total loss:

- Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. 13

Paragraph 137 states that local planning authorities should:

- look for opportunities for new development within conservation area...within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Guidance on assessing the impact of harm on the significance of a heritage asset is given in the NPPG, which was published in 2014 in line with the guidance in within the NPPF.

Appendix 2 - Policy and Guidance (cont.)

Paragraph 17 states; While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.

In order to minimise harm to the significance of a heritage asset the NPG, **Paragraph 19**, states the following:

- Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress, as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits. Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Paragraph 118 of the Planning for the Historic Environmental Planning Practice Guide highlights that new development has the potential to enhance the historic significance of heritage assets:

Change, including development, can sustain, enhance or better reveal the significance of an asset as well as detract from it or leave it unaltered. For the purposes of spatial planning, any development or change capable of affecting the significance of a heritage asset or people's experience of it can be considered as falling within its setting. Where the significance and appreciation of an asset have been compromised by inappropriate changes within its setting in the past it may be possible to enhance the setting by reversing those changes.

Paragraph 160 of the Planning for the Historic Environmental Planning Practice Guide lists acceptable restoration if:

1. The significance of the elements that would be restored decisively outweighs the significance of those that would be lost.
2. The work proposed is justified by compelling evidence of the evolution of the heritage asset, and is executed in accordance with that evidence.
3. The form in which the heritage asset currently exists is not the result of a historically-significant event.
4. The work proposed respects previous forms of the heritage asset.
5. No archaeological interest is lost if the restoration work could later be confused with the original fabric.
6. The maintenance implications of the proposed restoration are considered to be sustainable.

Appendix 2 - Policy and Guidance (cont.)

Paragraph 161 of the Practice Guide states the possible positive benefits that the removal of poor quality later additions can bring to the historic significance:

- Restoration works are those that are intended to reveal or recover something of significance that has been eroded, obscured or previously removed. In some cases, restoration can thus be said to enhance significance. However, additions and changes in response to the changing needs of owners and occupants over time may themselves be a key part of the asset's significance.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all applications for permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Council's policies and guidance for conservation areas are currently contained in the Local Development Framework; 2010 and associated Core Strategy. The Local Plan has just been consulted on (ending March 2017). The current draft Local Plan was published in February 2016. Any changes will not materially affect principle the policy D2 Heritage. As the Local Plan is not yet adopted, policies within the Local Plan can therefore be given (limited) consideration when determining planning applications.