



39a Priory Terrace, Kilburn, London, NW6 4DG

Townscape Visual Impact Assessment

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of

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39a Priory Terrace – Townscape Visual Impact Assessment

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CONTENTS

1.0. Introduction	3
2.0. Methodology and Criteria	4
Summary of Townscape Context	7
3.0. Townscape Visual Impact Assessment.....	8
3.1. Viewpoint 01 – Abbey Road looking North-West.....	8
3.2. Viewpoint 02 – Priory Terrace looking North-West.....	10
3.3. Viewpoint 03 – Abbey Road looking South-East.....	12
4.0. Conclusion.....	14
Appendix 1: National Guidance (<i>The Setting of Heritage Assets</i>, December 2017)	15
Appendix 2: The Building in Context Toolkit	19

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The subject site at 39a Priory Terrace, London, NW6 4DG comprises a corner site at the junction of Priory Terrace and Abbey Road. There is a pair of garages built in 1963 located to the west side of the site (only the eastern garage is within the ownership of the subject site), whilst the east of the site is brownfield land with some planting following the clearance of a 19th century building during the early 1960s. The site is located within the Priory Road Conservation Area, London Borough of Camden.
- 1.2. The proposals include:
- The demolition of the eastern garage of the pair of existing garages.
 - The construction of a residential “lodge” house comprising a basement, lower and upper ground floors, and a roof terrace.
- 1.3. The purpose of this document is to establish the visual impact of the proposals on the surrounding townscape. The document establishes a clear understanding of the subject site and its townscape context. Key views towards the subject site and the potential impacts on the townscape which would result as a consequence of the development proposals have been assessed. This assessment complies with the requirements of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019) and the online Planning Practice Guidance in respect of achieving good design and well-designed places.
- 1.4. **Authorship**
- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC - Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), ICOMOS UK and Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. He is also a trustee of the Drake and Dance Trusts and a Scholar of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a panel member of the John Betjeman Design Award and the City of London Heritage Award, and is a Design Review Panel member of the South West Region, the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Lewisham, Islington and Wandsworth, and the Design Council/CABE. Dorian has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award along with a number other public sector and commercial design awards.

- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading, where he specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and estates. Daniel has a Master's degree in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He has an excellent working knowledge of the legislative and policy framework relating to the historic environment. Daniel has extensive experience in projects involving interventions to listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, providing detailed assessments of significance and impact assessments required for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission.

2.0. METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA

- 2.1. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) takes into account the good practice guidance outlined in '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*', Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 3rd Edition, 2013: (GLVIA3); this guidance pertains to urban townscape as much as landscape. The guidance does not provide a detailed universal methodology, but recognises that much of the assessment must rely on professional judgement.
- 2.2. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment also takes into account relevant conservation guidance and principles, namely Historic England's *Setting of Heritage Assets* for adopting a broad approach to assessment (see **Appendix 1** for an outline of the 5-Step approach described in the guidance), undertaken as a series of steps to assess the contribution of a view and landscape to the significance of heritage assets and the ability to appreciate that significance:
 - **Step 1:** Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
 - **Step 2:** Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
 - **Step 3:** Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
 - **Step 4:** Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- 2.3. Historic England's *Setting of Heritage Assets* observes that the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset (paragraph 10). The document also recommends that where complex issues involving views come into play in the assessment of setting – whether for the purposes of providing a baseline for plan-making or for development management – a formal views analysis may be merited.
- 2.4. A site visit was conducted on 3rd February 2020 to establish the area from which the subject site may be visible and to identify key viewpoints within the public realm from where the townscape character of the subject site may be best appreciated and understood. Three viewpoints have been carefully selected in

39a Priory Terrace – Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (May 2020)

order to establish the visual impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Priory Road Conservation Area and on the settings of other nearby heritage assets (Figure 1). These specific points have been chosen where the proposals might impact on townscape, scale, height, massing, and the settings of any heritage assets. Consideration was given to the historical development of the area, its physical fabric (building types and materials), and key views to any notable historic buildings or other landmark structures.

- Viewpoint 1: Abbey Road looking North-West
- Viewpoint 2: Priory Terrace looking North-West
- Viewpoint 3: Abbey Road looking South-East



Figure 1: Plan of the views assessed in this report in relation to the subject site (outlined in red).

2.5. The TVIA will firstly establish a baseline for each view against which to judge the impact of proposals upon the local townscape. The townscape in each view is described in terms of its constituent elements and character, including development patterns and scale (including use of materials, massing, density and enclosure), any heritage assets, green and open spaces, transport routes and uses; the way in which the townscape is experienced and by whom also forms part of the assessment. In accordance with **Steps 1 and 2** of the Historic England criteria outlined above, the baseline will identify the heritage assets and the degree to which the townscape in the view contributes to an understanding and appreciation of their setting/significance. The extent to which proposals have an impact on the existing townscape character is often related to the sensitivity of the townscape to change. Criteria for assessing townscape sensitivity have been based on a variety of factors and attributes which are generally agreed to influence the existing character and value of the townscape:

Sensitivity	Criteria
Very High	Strong townscape structure and a distinctive intact character exhibiting unity, richness and harmony, and a strong sense of place. Internationally or nationally recognised townscape, e.g. a World Heritage Site, extremely susceptible to minor levels of change.
High	Strong townscape structure, distinctive features and a strong sense of place with some detracting features. Nationally or regionally recognised townscape or high quality and distinctive character, e.g. a conservation area containing a high proportion of listed buildings, susceptible to change.
Medium	Recognisable (perhaps locally recognised) townscape structure with some distinctive characteristics and in a reasonable condition. May be capable of low levels of change without affecting key characteristics.
Low	Undesignated townscape of local value with few distinctive characteristics. May contain elements in a poor state of repair. Capable of moderate levels of change/enhancement.
Negligible	Weak or disjointed townscape structure, capable of high levels of change/enhancement.

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

- 2.6. Using the baseline, the impact of the proposals on the views will be assessed by considering how the townscape and an appreciation and understanding of the setting and significance of identified heritage assets may be changed or affected by reason of the latter's location or design in accordance with **Steps 3 and 4** of the Historic England criteria outlined above. Aspects of design such as scale, height, mass, orientation, palette of materials and landscaping are particularly relevant. The assessment will illustrate how the proposals might affect the elements that make up the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the townscape and its distinctive character, and how observers may be affected by any changes in the content and character of the views. The potential impacts have been categorised as:

Magnitude of Impact	Criteria
Negligible	Impacts considered to cause no material change to the visual quality of the view.
Minimal	Impacts considered to make a limited impact on a townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a minor component of the wider scene that may affect slightly the character and quality of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset.
Moderate	Impacts considered to make an appreciable difference or change the quality of the townscape where there is some sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would form a recognisable new element within the scene that would noticeably have an impact on the quality and character of the townscape in the view or the setting of a heritage asset.
Substantial	Impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the townscape where there is a high sensitivity to change. Where the proposed change would affect the quality and character of a valued view, the character and quality of a highly sensitive townscape, or the setting of a highly significance heritage asset.

Source: Based on GLVIA3 (2013).

- 2.7. Impacts are therefore assessed in terms of the sensitivity of the townscape affected and the magnitude of the impact or change, and whether the impact is considered to be positive, negative or neutral. If the proposals will enhance the character and quality of the townscape, then the impact on heritage significance within the view will be deemed **positive**; however, if they fail to sustain the quality of the townscape in the view by the removal of characterising elements or add new intrusive or discordant features then the impact will be deemed **negative**. If the proposals preserve the quality of the townscape

in the view, or where positive and negative impacts are finely balanced then the impact will be deemed **neutral**.

- 2.8. This TVIA has also evaluated the proposals according to the eight principles of the *Building in Context Toolkit* (2001) which was formulated by English Heritage and CABI to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts. The founding and enduring principle is that all successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and character appraisal to fully understand context; the principles are listed in **Appendix 2**. The application of the principles of good design is considered to reduce or remove potential harm and provide enhancement. This assessment therefore also takes into account the Government's National Design Guide (October 2019), in particular Characteristic 1: understanding the history of the area, the settings of heritage assets and the context of the site; and Characteristic 2: reinforcing a coherent and distinctive identity.

Summary of Townscape Context

- 2.9. The subject site is located on the west side of the junction of Priory Terrace with Abbey Road and within the Priory Road Conservation Area. The site forms an awkward gap in the townscape which was occupied originally by a 1½ storey stables building and yard with residential accommodation which was contemporary with the adjacent 19th century buildings on Priory Terrace; this was demolished during the 1960s to leave the subject site as existing.
- 2.10 The character and appearance of the Conservation Area is defined by its homogeneous architectural language in the Italianate style of classical architecture which prevailed during the mid-19th century. Symmetrical semi-detached houses villas from that period predominate, which are designed to appear like one large detached villa. Shallow-pitched roofs with overhanging eaves, string courses, porticos, two-storey canted bay windows, decorative ironwork to the window guards of the ground floor windows, rustication to the lower ground and ground floors, and stucco detailing are the main architectural elements within the Conservation Area. Prevailing boundary treatments comprise low brickwork walls with capped piers and railings with planting behind to enhance the attractive suburban character of the area. Landmark buildings within the immediate townscape include No. 53 Priory Road on the north side of Abbey Road which is built of gault brickwork, a substantial entrance porch and stucco architectural detailing. The Grade II statutorily listed St Mary's Church, Kilburn is located diagonally opposite the subject site on the north side of Abbey Road. The church was built in 1856; its gothic architectural detailing, stone spire and ragstone stonework make it another landmark building in the immediate townscape of the subject site. The junction of Priory Terrace and Abbey Road is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal as a key junction where the defining characteristics of the original development can be best appreciated. The townscape to the south-east on Abbey Road is more fragmented as a result of bomb damage during the Second World War and includes the 1960s Abbey Road estate, particularly the substantial tower block (Snowman House) at the junction with Belsize Road.

3.0. TOWNSCAPE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1. Viewpoint 01 – Abbey Road looking North-West

3.1.1. Baseline View



Figure 1a: Baseline View 01 looking north-west along Abbey Road

This view is taken looking north-west along Abbey Road at the junction with Priory Terrace; the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies this junction as one of those at which some of the key elements of the character and appearance of the Priory Road Conservation Area can be best appreciated and understood. The view is located on a busy traffic thoroughfare and is widely experienced kinetically by motorists and pedestrians.

The view is characterised by the mid-19th century developments on the Priory Estate. The semi-detached villa at 39 Priory Terrace dominates the foreground and embodies the prevailing built form of the Conservation Area in its classical proportions and form – a raised rusticated ground floor, bracketed sills to the ground floor windows, moulded string courses and stucco architectural detailing. The rear elevations and roofscape of similar villas are visible in the background fronting Priory Road. 53 Priory Road is a prominent building terminating the view with its exposed gault brickwork and stucco dressings, whilst the stone spire of the Grade II listed St Mary Church acts as a local landmark in the townscape – the busy thoroughfare of Abbey Road forms a primary aspect of its mid-19th century suburban setting. Street trees and greenery behind boundary walls enhance the attractive suburban character.

The subject site is prominent at this corner junction location, but appears an uncomfortable termination of the pairs of villas on Priory Terrace and breaks the suburban grain and homogeneity of the townscape. The piers of the curving boundary wall have been reduced in size and the railings removed to leave the site particularly exposed in this view. The plain and utilitarian 1960s eastern garage with the adjacent two-storey late 20th century building of red brickwork with a large slate mansard roof are particularly unattractive elements and contribute negatively to the quality of the townscape in the view.

The view has medium sensitivity – there is a recognisable townscape structure with distinctive characteristics in a reasonable condition. There is some capacity for change and enhancement given the negative contribution made by the subject site as existing.

3.1.2. Proposed View North-West along Abbey Road



Figure 1b: Proposed View 01

The view following the proposed redevelopment of the subject site can be seen in Figure 1b. The proposed single storey height plus basement sits comfortably adjacent to No. 39 Priory Terrace with the parapet height matching the string course of the mid-19th century semi-detached villa. The parapet coping and sills of the ground floor windows with iron guards provide visual ties with the horizontal elements of the adjoining villa. The architectural language of the proposed building has been designed in a modern idiom to better reflect the built context. This includes the incorporation of classical proportions (basement, ground floor and parapet) by the considered use of rustication to the eastern part of the proposed building and brickwork detailing to the western part. The use of white render with rustication to the eastern part of the proposed building addresses the west side of Priory Terrace, whilst exposed London stock brickwork to the western part of the building addresses Abbey Road to reflect No. 53 Priory Road in the background. The design and detailing not only complement the architectural language of the townscape, but also visually address the corner site by helping to break up the massing of the building and so provide a subservient and high-quality termination to the west side of Priory Terrace.

The proposed building is considered to be a high-quality subordinate addition which better reflects the homogeneity of the townscape (urban grain and built form) and helps to screen the unattractive western garage and inappropriate late 20th century redbrick building at this important junction location; it therefore also complements and enhances the townscape setting of the Grade II listed church. The proposed roof terrace would have minimal visual impact, whilst the provision of planting in this location would enhance the attractive suburban character. The reinstatement of the traditional capped piers and railings to the curved boundary provides better definition and enclosure at the junction with Priory Terrace.

The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be moderate and neutral to positive, as the proposals would form a recognisable new element within the view, but would have an enhancing impact on the quality of the Conservation Area townscape in the view whilst sustaining an appreciation and understanding of its distinctive elements and of the townscape setting of the listed church.

3.2. Viewpoint 02 – Priory Terrace looking North-West

3.2.1. Baseline View



Figure 2a: Baseline View 02 looking north-west along Priory Terrace

This view is located to the south of the junction of Priory Terrace and Abbey Road within the Conservation Area. Priory Terrace is a one-way residential street and so this view is experienced by a more limited number of motorists and pedestrians than View 01.

The view illustrates the attractive suburban qualities which contribute positively to the townscape of the Conservation Area, most notably the street trees and planting within front garden areas behind the fragmentary remains of original boundary walls. The built form encapsulates the homogeneous architectural language of the Conservation Area in comprising pairs of unlisted semi-detached stuccoed villas on the west side of Priory Terrace and the north side of Abbey Road. Prevailing heights are three storeys over a semi-basement; architectural detailing comprises doric porches (or ionic pilasters), rustication to the ground floors and basements, and moulded string courses. The classical proportions of the window openings diminish from the ground floor through to the second floor. The Grade II listed Church of St Mary is prominent building throughout the local townscape, particularly in this view the distinctive ragstone sanctuary with its “decorated” 14th century style tracery to the east window and pitched roof.

The subject site is barely discernible in this view, appearing as a gap in the townscape at the end of the pairs of semi-detached villas on the west side of Priory Terrace since the demolition of the original building during the 1960s.

The view has medium sensitivity – there is a recognisable townscape structure with distinctive characteristics in a reasonable condition. There is some capacity for appropriate change given the neutral contribution made by the subject site as existing.

3.2.2. Proposed View North-West along Priory Terrace



Figure 2b: Proposed View 02

The view following the redevelopment of the subject site can be seen in Figure 2b.

Only the ground floor level of the proposed new building will be visible in this view moving north towards the junction with Abbey Road. This part of the building complements the classical architectural language, proportions and use of materials of the adjacent and nearby mid-19th century semi-detached villas, comprising a white rendered elevation with a clearly defined rusticated ground floor and plain parapet; the latter incorporates coping and mouldings in the render to reflect the horizontality of the string coursing on the adjacent villas. The proportions of the window opening fronting Priory Terrace reflects those of the principal ground floor windows of the adjacent villas. The appropriate height, scale and mass of the building ensure it is a subordinate addition which forms a high-quality termination to the built form on the west side of the street and adds architectural interest to a current gap in the townscape. An appreciation and understanding of the distinctive architectural qualities of the Grade II listed St Mary's Church would be sustained in the view. The reinstatement of the rendered capped piers and railings to the curved boundary at the junction, together with new landscaping behind the boundary with planting, would enhance the historic mid-19th century suburban character of the area.

The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be minimal and neutral to positive, as the proposals would have an enhancing impact on the quality of the Conservation Area townscape and setting of the listed church in the view, whilst sustaining an appreciation and understanding of its distinctive elements.

3.3. Viewpoint 03 – Abbey Road looking South-East

3.3.1. Baseline View



Figure 3a: Baseline View 03 south-east along Abbey Road

This view, illustrated in Figure 3a, is taken looking south-east along Abbey Road from near the junction with Priory Road within the Priory Road Conservation Area. This is a busy thoroughfare experienced kinetically by large numbers of motorists and pedestrians.

The view forms part of the townscape setting of the Grade II listed Church of St Mary (left), which is a landmark building with its gothic detailing and stonework construction. The distinctive built form of the Conservation Area is not readily appreciated and understood in this view, with only side and rear elevations of the pairs of mid-19th century villas visible – the prevailing Italianate forms, height and scale are readable, but an appreciation of the stucco architectural detailing is more limited. The suburban qualities of the Conservation Area are evident, however, by nature of the attractive street trees and planting behind the boundary walls. Substantial modern developments are prominent in this view – most notably the 1960s tower block on the Abbey estate with the concrete bridge crossing Abbey Road in the background, but also the somewhat unattractive late 20th century house with its incongruous mansard roof and bulky form in the foreground.

The subject site appears as an awkward gap in the townscape at the junction with Priory Terrace since the demolition of the original building during the 1960s. The truncation of the original boundary treatment and the lack of built form (the site was cleared during the 1960s) make the site appear as an unresolved termination of the pairs of villas on Priory Terrace at a key junction location within the Conservation Area, therefore making a neutral to negative contribution to the townscape in the view.

The view has low sensitivity – whilst the Grade II listed St Mary's Church is partially visible, its architectural interest is not readily appreciated in the view, whilst the distinctive characteristics of the Conservation Area are readable but not best understood. There is considered to be a moderate capacity for change and enhancement given the level of modern intrusion and the neutral to negative contribution made by the subject site.

3.3.2. Proposed View South-East along Abbey Road



Figure 3b: Proposed View 03

Figure 3b depicts the view following the proposed redevelopment of the subject site. The proposed building has responded positively to its townscape context in its design and detailing. The division of the building into two elevational treatments helps to break up the massing and adds architectural interest to the awkward gap site by better relating to the local context: the exposed London stock brickwork to the west part relates to the exposed brickwork of 53 Priory Road (behind this viewpoint), whilst the rendered east part relates to the mid-19th century villas on Priory Terrace and the north side of Abbey Road. The textured brickwork and banding of the west part and incised rusticated render to the east part reflect the classical proportions of the villas which characterise the Conservation Area townscape, whilst the proportions of the window openings reflect those of the principal ground floors of the villas. The proposed single storey height plus basement sits comfortably adjacent to No. 39 Priory Terrace and ensures the building is a discreet and high-quality termination of the villas at the junction of Priory Terrace.

The reinstatement of the traditional rendered capped piers, dwarf wall and railings to the curved boundary provides better definition and enclosure at the junction with Priory Terrace. The provision planting to the roof terrace enhances the attractive suburban qualities of the townscape on this busy thoroughfare and integrates the terrace comfortably with minimal visual impact.

The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be minimal and neutral to positive, as the proposals would sustain the quality of the townscape in the view whilst sustaining and enhancing an appreciation and understanding of its distinctive elements, including the setting of the Grade II listed Church of St Mary.

4.0. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. This Townscape Visual Impact Assessment has reviewed the visual impact of the proposal on the local townscape at 39a Priory Terrace. **The quality and sensitivity of the townscape in the three assessed views is variable, but generally medium and capable of enhancement given the poor quality of the existing garage to the rear of the site, the open nature of the site breaking the urban grain and the truncated boundary treatment at a key junction location.** The proposals have been designed to suitably address the townscape character, the character and appearance of the Priory Road Conservation Area and settings of other nearby heritage assets through the use of appropriate height, scale, massing, orientation, elevational treatment and use of materials.
- 4.2. The proposed design has responded positively to its townscape context with a high-quality and visually literate design, which better reflects the prevailing architectural language, detailing and use of materials within the Conservation Area. It therefore responds positively to its context and provides enhanced townscape and architectural interest on this important junction location on the corner of Priory Terrace and Abbey Road. It is considered that **the proposals overall will have a minimal and neutral to positive impact on the local townscape character with the provision of enhancement to the character and quality of the townscape of the Priory Road Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed Church of St Mary.** The proposals have therefore taken full account of Step 4 of the Historic England criteria *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (December 2017) in order to avoid harm to the settings of all identified heritage assets (see Appendix 1), principally by removing an intrusive building and space within the Conservation Area townscape and replacing it with a new and more harmonious building that adds to the better appreciation and experience of the prevailing suburban character and built form.
- 4.3. This TVIA has also evaluated the proposals according to the ten characteristics of the Government's National Design Guide (October 2019), in particular Characteristic 1: understanding the history of the area, the settings of heritage assets and the context of the site (appropriate form, appearance, scale, details and materials) in order that the proposal relates well to its surroundings; and Characteristic 2: reinforcing a coherent and distinctive identity (appropriate scale, height, materials, street frontage, façade design and consideration of views) that relates well to the history and context of the site.
- 4.4. This TVIA has also evaluated the proposals according to the eight principles of the *Building in Context Toolkit* (2001) which was formulated by English Heritage and CABI to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts (see Appendix 2). It is considered that the proposals have taken full account of the eight principles, particularly in understanding the history of the place and lie of the land (Principle 2), ensuring the character and identity of the site will be appropriate to its use and context (Principle 3), designing forms and orientation so the buildings address the pattern of existing development (Principle 4), respecting the important views within the Conservation Area (Principle 5), respecting the scale of neighbouring buildings (Principle 6), using high-quality materials to reflect those on neighbouring buildings (Principle 7), and creating new juxtapositions to enhance the quality and character of the townscape at this key junction location within the Conservation Area (Principle 8).

APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL GUIDANCE (*THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS*, DECEMBER 2017)

This note gives assistance concerning the assessment of the setting of heritage assets. Historic England recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to the complexity of the case, from straightforward to complex:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

The setting of a heritage asset is ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’. Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset. The starting point of the analysis is to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the development proposal.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.

This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting will provide the baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on significance. We recommend that this assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider:

- the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets
- the asset’s intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use
- the contribution made by noises, smells, etc to significance, and
- the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

The wide range of circumstances in which setting may be affected and the range of heritage assets that may be involved precludes a single approach for assessing effects. Different approaches will be required for different circumstances. In general, however, the assessment should address the attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:

- location and siting
- form and appearance
- wider effects
- permanence

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Enhancement may be achieved by actions including:

- removing or re-modelling an intrusive building or feature
- replacement of a detrimental feature by a new and more harmonious one
- restoring or revealing a lost historic feature or view
- introducing a wholly new feature that adds to the public appreciation of the asset
- introducing new views (including glimpses or better framed views) that add to the public experience of the asset, or
- improving public access to, or interpretation of, the asset including its setting

Options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the repositioning of a development or its elements, changes to its design, the creation of effective long-term visual or acoustic screening, or management measures secured by planning conditions or legal agreements. For some developments affecting setting, the design of a development may not be capable of sufficient adjustment to avoid or significantly reduce the harm, for example where impacts are caused by fundamental issues such as the proximity, location, scale, prominence or noisiness of a development. In other cases, good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement. Here the design quality may be an important consideration in determining the balance of harm and benefit.

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

It is good practice to document each stage of the decision-making process in a non-technical and proportionate way, accessible to non-specialists. This should set out clearly how the setting of each heritage asset affected contributes to its significance or to the appreciation of its significance, as well as what the anticipated effect of the development will be, including of any mitigation proposals.

Assessment Step 2 Checklist

The starting point for this stage of the assessment is to consider the significance of the heritage asset itself and then establish the contribution made by its setting. The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. It may be the case that only a limited selection of the attributes listed is likely to be particularly important in terms of any single asset.

The asset's physical surroundings

- Topography
- Aspect
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design eg hierarchy, layout
- Orientation and aspect
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
- Functional relationships and communications
- History and degree of change over time

Experience of the asset

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Noise, vibration and other nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Scents and smells
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Land use
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- Rarity of comparable survivals of setting
- Cultural associations
- Celebrated artistic representations
- Traditions

Assessment Step 3 Checklist

The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. It may be that only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development.

Location and siting of development

- Proximity to asset
- Position in relation to relevant topography and watercourses
- Position in relation to key views to, from and across
- Orientation
- Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset

Form and appearance of development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Competition with or distraction from the asset
- Dimensions, scale and massing
- Proportions
- Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through), reflectivity
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc)
- Architectural and landscape style and/or design
- Introduction of movement or activity
- Diurnal or seasonal change

Wider effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline, silhouette
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc
- Lighting effects and 'light spill'
- Change to general character (eg urbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to public access, use or amenity
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover
- Changes to communications/accessibility/permeability, including traffic, road junctions and car-parking, etc
- Changes to ownership arrangements (fragmentation/permitted development/etc)
- Economic viability

Permanence of the development

- Anticipated lifetime/temporariness
- Recurrence
- Reversibility

APPENDIX 2: THE BUILDING IN CONTEXT TOOLKIT

The Building in Context Toolkit grew out of the publication **Building in Context™** published by English Heritage and CABE in 2001. The purpose of that publication was to stimulate a high standard of design for development taking place in historically sensitive contexts. The founding and enduring principle is that all successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and character appraisal to fully understand context.

The eight Building in Context principles are:

Principle 1

A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.

Principle 2

A successful project will relate to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land.

Principle 3

A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.

Principle 4

A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it.

Principle 5

A successful project will respect important views.

Principle 6

A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings.

Principle 7

A successful project will use materials and building methods which are as high quality as those used in existing buildings.

Principle 8

A successful project will create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.