

Denewood, St Ann's Road, Prestwich, Manchester

Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment

August 2021





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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Townscape has been commissioned by the owners of Denewood St Ann's Road, Prestwich to produce this Heritage Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment to support a planning application for alterations to the existing property. Townscape are Chartered Town Planning and Heritage Consultants who serve public, private and community sector clients. We specialise in all aspects of our historic environment, heritage, town planning and wider urban design.



fig 1 Denewood, St Ann's Road

2. Historic Description and Context.

- 2.1 Denewood, St Ann's Road, is not a historic building, statutorily listed or recognised as a building contained within a local list. However, the building is a contributor building to the character of the St Mary's Conservation Area and is an example of inter war development and the speculative development that in part characterises the Prestwich Park South/St Ann's character area. Therefore an assessment of its contribution to the character of the conservation area is made and to understand if the building has any merit.
- 2.2 Denewood, St Ann's Road is a two storey property dating from the early to mid-20th century, approximately 1925-30. The building is constructed in brick with render, with a combination of traditional timber and replacement Upvc windows set under a tile roof. The building features a central double height bow/canted window. The property enjoys a generous plot set behind a boundary wall. The building is orientated to one side of its plot, creating a large wrap around garden front, side and rear. The property was constructed as part of the incremental development of St Ann's Road where speculative infill development occurred from the 1850 onwards. The building has benefitted from improvements to include internal and external modernisations and small side extension together with front facing porch.



Fig 2 OS Map extract 25in 1891



Fig 4 OS Map extract, 25in 1932



Fig 3 OS Map extract 25in 1915

St Mary's Conservation Area, St Anne's Road.

- 2.3 This area is a 19th century residential suburb, originally laid out as a private estate from c1850. It also contains dwellings from the early 20th century and examples of late 20th century residential redevelopment. The main quality of this area is in the character created by large period buildings in generous grounds. The style of individual buildings varies from the remnants of the Georgian tradition through Victorian and Edwardian styles to mid war dwellings. All these combine, together with a mature street and garden landscape, to produce an area of significant character. The quality of the area has been eroded by a mix of modern development during the last half of the 20th century, when original dwellings were removed to allow the denser development of plots. In the main, poor quality architecture came hand in hand with

redevelopment. New development has also been built up to the edge of the older areas. However, more modern in particular 21st century development and new architecture has contributed positively to the conservation area, and there is no reason why modern architecture cannot continue to provide characterful contributions to the conservation area.

3. Statement of Significance and Heritage Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 Understanding significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within current government policy in the NPPF. A key objective in the NPPF is 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater weight should be given its conservation. English Heritage issued Conservation Principles in 2008 to explain the importance of understanding what is significant before making changes to a historic building. English Heritage set out four main aspects of significance: evidential (or archaeological), historical, aesthetic and communal. Measuring significance is not an exact science; it relies on a combination of comparative analysis, an understanding of the building's development and architectural history and the setting. Assessments depend on using judgment in relation to the quality of the original design and fabric and the level of alteration. There are four main categories of significance that can be measured and these are summarised within ICOMOS, a guide to heritage impact assessments which provide a useful understanding to significance:

Exceptional – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* Listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

High – a designated asset important at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and locally designated conservation areas. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

Medium – an undesignated asset important at local to regional level, including buildings on a Local List (non-statutory) or those that make a positive contribution to a conservation area. May also include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

Low – structure or feature of very limited heritage value and not defined as a heritage asset. Includes buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area and also later additions to listed buildings of much less value.

Negative – structure or feature that harms the value of heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

3.2 **Significance conclusion** - Denewood itself is not a heritage asset other than within the boundary of the conservation area. It has a historic quality as a contributing building to the growth and development of the conservation area. Its architectural or aesthetic merit is limited and whilst it's appearance is as an interwar property its actual architectural appearance is fairly plain.

3.3 The building does contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. The property therefore has a medium significance.

3.4 The St Mary's Conservation area is of high importance, a designated heritage asset

Heritage Impact Assessment

4. Scope and method of assessment.

4.1 This impact assessment relies on the understanding of the property identified that is St Mary's Conservation area (heritage asset) and a brief understanding of the heritage asset; its significance has been discussed in the heritage statement. This impact assessment is a judgment on the proposal to further improve living arrangements with a revised fenestration; to discuss the impact of the new proposals upon the character of the heritage asset, its overall design philosophy, and to provide a professional judgment on its acceptance and relationship in contribution to the character of the property and its setting.

4.2 In assessing the impact of a proposal which entails the impact on a heritage asset, this assessment draws on a number of key guiding documents where applicable, such as English Heritage Conservation Principles, 2008 and Historic England Guidance, Historic Environment good practice advice in planning Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets, March 2015 where required. However, given the limited scope of the works which are self-contained within the plot and form a domestic extension and external alterations, it is my professional opinion that the works proposed will not result in a detailed assessment on the setting of the heritage asset, the conservation area being required.

I have also considered the impact of the proposal upon the heritage asset by relating directly to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Bury Council Planning policies.

4.3 In determining applications affecting Listed Buildings, local authorities have to have regard of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. Policies in the NPPF reinforce the 1990 Planning Act, but use slightly different words and emphasise balancing use, viability and conservation: 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'; The local authority should 'identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets', and 'take account of available evidence and necessary expertise'.

4.4 This report provides an appropriate level of significance assessment for this case, when 'considering the impact of a proposal on a

heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'. The NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposal 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be'. More weight is therefore given to assets of national importance such as listed buildings, than to local heritage, and more weight should be given to features and elements of high significance than those of lower importance.

- 4.5 Proposals may enhance, have a neutral impact or cause harm to a heritage asset. The level of harm may be slight, 'less than substantial harm' or substantial. The NPPF states that substantial harm to listed buildings (such as demolition or loss) should be exceptional, and it has to be very robustly justified. Where 'less than substantial' harm is likely to be caused, the harm has to be balanced against the public benefits. This level of harm can include removal or covering over of features

5. Description of Proposed Development and its Impact.

- 5.1 This report is to be read in conjunction with plans submitted by Whitebox Architecture, which proposes a refreshed fenestration at Denewood formed as new windows throughout, and reformed front facing double height window with render and rear canopy. The proposed works will feature a modern architectural style. The proposed replacement windows will introduce a sympathetic modernist window style with both a vertical and horizontal emphasis. The proposed reformed double height front window will

be replaced in a similar sized and scaled window with pitch roof and flat glazing.

- 5.2 Whilst works will impact Denewood itself. Works are considered to be outside the scope to impact on the setting of the heritage asset and therefore a detailed views analysis of the setting of the heritage asset (the conservation area) is not required under GPA3. However, the proposal would extend the footprint of the building, the cumulative impact is still within the site boundary.
- 5.3 The building will remain modest in size, and will be subordinate in scale to both sets of neighbouring buildings, and enjoy a similar building line to the existing building. The only change is to its fenestration and change of windows.
- 5.4 Whilst the building will be a reordering to the external fabric, the overall objective is to provide for a sympathetic yet characteristic re-fenestration to the building that ensures that the proposed works unifies the architectural language of Denewood. The proposed works will have no greater visual impact over and above Denewood itself, the works will not be seen by neighbours or passing pedestrians due to the dense and mature site boundaries. In addition, the large and generous plot to Denewood will for most part still remain substantial and overall the proposal will enhance the character of the conservation area by the introduction of new architectural style.
- 5.5 The proposed replacement windows and reformed new double height bay window, will unify the building and will provide for a

significant improvement to the building's appearance and architectural expression. Whilst the building dates from the inter war period, the introduction of a modernist style window system is not unduly out of character to the buildings' age.

- 5.6 The front boundary wall will remain and no key views into or out of the conservation area will be affected and it's setting remain unchanged.

6. Assessment of proposed development against Heritage Planning Policy Criteria; Nationally and Locally

- 6.1 The heritage impact assessment set out above has identified that overall no harm will result in the proposed works to Denewood and that the works proposed will improve the appearance and character of the area and introduce new and distinctive built form.

- 6.2 Nationally, and in accordance with the principles in of the NPPF, this might be classified as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial' harm. Although no definition is provided as to what constitutes 'substantial' in such circumstances, the Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment states that 'in general terms substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases'.

- 6.3 The NPPF states that '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 use'. The

proposed alterations will lead to no harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

- 6.4 The benefits offered by the proposed scheme area as follows:

- The proposal will enable the owners of this important site to enjoy an enhanced lifestyle.
- The design of the proposed works has taken full account of its context and there is no negative impact upon neighbouring buildings, their outlook, setting or style. In addition, the design, layout and orientation of the proposal takes full account of its position within the conservation area.
- Continued investment into this area of St Anne's Road whilst ensuring the intrinsic character of the CA is enhanced through modern, sympathetic architecture.
- The existing building whilst exhibiting a diluted architectural appearance, lacks a sense of character to its fenestration, perhaps altered with ill-conceived external improvements such as the front facing conservatory which clutters the front elevation. The opportunity now exists to reform the building providing a correct yet exciting new phase to the building. The proposal can help to enhance the conservation area.
- The proposed building will also add to the setting and character of the CA as a whole. It will not alter or change established views within the CA nor impact on the setting of heritage asset or positive buildings and will result in a positive enhancement to the heritage asset.

7 Local Planning Policy

7.1 Locally, Bury Council (UDP 1997), Policies in relation to the Historic Environment Policy EN1, EN1/2/3, EN2/1 EN2/2 and 2/4 sets out its key policy considerations in determining applications in relation to new development within conservation areas. In particular, EN2/2 Development within a Conservation Area will only be acceptable if it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area.

In considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas, regard will be had to the following criteria:

- the nature of the development in terms of its bulk, height, materials, colour, design and detailing;
- the relationship between the proposed development and the architectural and visual qualities of the surrounding area;
- where demolition is proposed, the contribution of any proposed new building to the character or appearance of the area as compared to the building to be demolished;
- in the case of the re-use of buildings or the introduction of new uses, the impact of the proposal on the character or appearance of the area and the fabric of the existing building.

7.2 The proposal as submitted and to which this report relates has outlined that the proposals are seeking to update the existing property with new replacement windows and replacement double height front facing window. The works are considered to integrate and complement the existing character of the heritage asset and

the property itself. The proposed alterations will be of a scale that is subordinate to Denewood and the external alterations including the windows will reinforce and enhance the prevailing character and architectural interest of the conservation area. The proposed works have been designed with full respect to neighbouring buildings, features of interest and the wider environment. The proposal would therefore meet the objectives of in force planning policy.

The proposal as designed, is complimentary to immediate neighbours, and is of a design not uncommon within the conservation area or St Ann's Road. Therefore, the proposal is helping to achieve and set a new standard and quality of architecture within the conservation area.

8. Conclusions

8.1 This report has considered the heritage implications of works proposed to Denewood. The current owners see the site as an opportunity to boost the potential of the site, improving their living environment and the appearance of the conservation area.

8.2 Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework requires that proposed changes to the historic environment are based on a clear understanding of significance of any heritage asset and their setting that are affected, providing information so that the likely impact of proposals can be assessed. The heritage assessment provided in this report is carried out in accordance with the historic environment policies in the NPPF and

local planning policy, and is intended to aid the assessment of the planning application. I have outlined the significance of the existing house, its character and appearance, and that of the conservation area. I have outlined the scope of the works/interventions and commented on the likely impact upon the heritage asset and any mitigating factors

- 8.3 The crucial test contained within the NPPF is whether the harm to a heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. Overall the impact upon the character of the conservation area is slight positive. Supporting the proposals through the outlined works will result in a positive enhancement to the conservation area. My conclusions have found that the proposed works will result in a positive enhancement to the heritage asset with no aspects of any harm.
- 8.4 I believe the proposals strike a balance between the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. Also the relationship and distinctiveness of neighbouring properties and that the proposals as set out will not present any detrimental impact or harm upon the heritage asset and will result in a positive enhancement.

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Director

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