

Charlotte Straker House, Corbridge Heritage Statement

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Prepared in relation to a proposed application for planning permission for a single storey garden room extension – Charlotte Straker House, Corbridge



Charlotte Straker House, Cookson Close, Corbridge NE45 5HB - Proposed extension

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in relation to a proposed single storey extension of Charlotte Straker House, Corbridge, to create a residents garden room on the south elevation.

1.2 Charlotte Straker House is an unlisted building but constitutes a heritage asset by virtue of its location within the Corbridge Conservation Area (designated 1974, amended in 1996 and 2009). As a building within this area, the property can be considered a heritage asset in its own right.

1.3 Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”.

2.0 Context

2.1 Charlotte Straker House sits south of St Helen's Lane, a historic route which connects Stagshaw Road (B6529) with Aydon Road (B6321). The site lies to the northern end of the Conservation Area, which was designated in 1974 and extended in 1996. The 1974 boundary had focused tightly on the eighteenth century and earlier medieval core of the village, and was modified to take in areas of nineteenth century expansion.

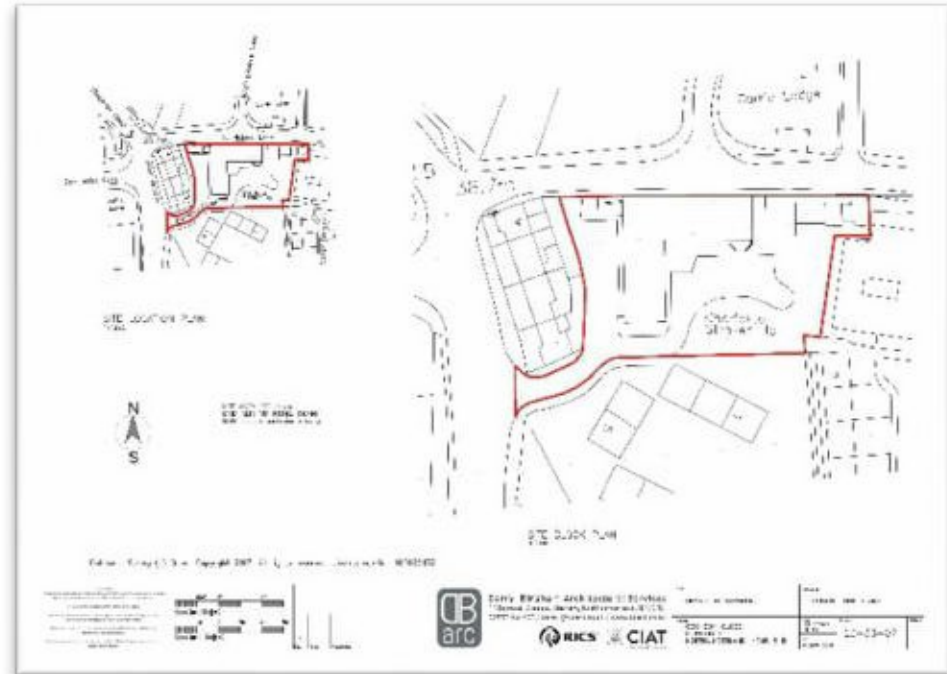


Figure 1 Location plan and existing block plan

2.2 The detached building dates from the late C19/early C20 and does not feature on the 1897 second edition OS map for Corbridge. In the early C20 it is recorded as a private dwelling called 'Prior House'. In 1918 Local magnate Joseph Straker bequeathed the property to be run as a cottage hospital in memory of his late wife Charlotte Maria Straker. The building was given in memory of his beloved wife Charlotte Maria, who died of complications from measles. In those days, only the wealthy could afford any kind of health care, so Joseph's act of benevolence was priceless to the poor of the community.



Figure 2 & 3 Southern elevation with 1992 extension to left

2.3 In 1989, the NHS closed the cottage hospital, and to maintain an obviously much needed facility, a group of local people formed the Charlotte Straker Project Trust. Enough money was raised to completely refurbish the old cottage

hospital, with four renovated flats on the first floor, state of the art nursing beds on the ground floor and 8 sheltered housing bungalows in the gardens.

2.4 Charlotte Straker House is now operated as a charitable trust to provide a home for the elderly frail in Tynedale and West Northumberland and is much valued by its residents, their relatives and the local community.

2.5 The building is mainly constructed of

dressed ashlar sandstone to the south elevation and a random rubblestone to the northern elevation. Portions are rendered, including a large southern extension built in 1992, a projecting two-storey bay to the south and the rears of the proposed extension to the north. It is roofed in welsh slate in standard coursing and retains wooden sash windows to all elevations. While attractive, the building is very unadorned and restrained on all elevations, with no marked ornamentation.

2.6 Figures 2 and 3 shows the building from the south, showing original elevation and 1990s bedroom wing extension. The proposed extension would occupy the crook of these two buildings, offset from the extension which houses bedrooms and ensuites, and accessed directly from the dining room in the main building. Figure two shows the decked area occupied by a gazebo to provide outdoor shelter during the recent Covid19 pandemic.

2.7 The proposed garden room would be single storey under a slate roof, with sash windows matching those on the main southern elevation.

3.0 Heritage Context

3.1 The application site sits within the boundary of the Corbridge Conservation Area following its modification in 1996. Corbridge Conservation Area was first designated in 1974 and was modified in 1996 and again in 2009. The original 1974 Conservation Area boundary focused on the pre C19 core of the town, with an increase in 1996 which saw it expand from covering only Corbridge's C18th town centre to areas of C19 expansion. It was further modestly adjusted in 2009 to delete an area of low interest

3.2 The Corbridge Conservation Area Appraisal makes reference (p8) that "during the medieval period a subordinate hamlet became established on the land around the prior's manor house and the lost Norman Trinity Church, built on the site of the late nineteenth century Trinity Terrace". This area is located off Corchester Lane, to the west of the application site with the Grade II listed Old Prior Manor and Prior Manor Cottage a surviving remnant.

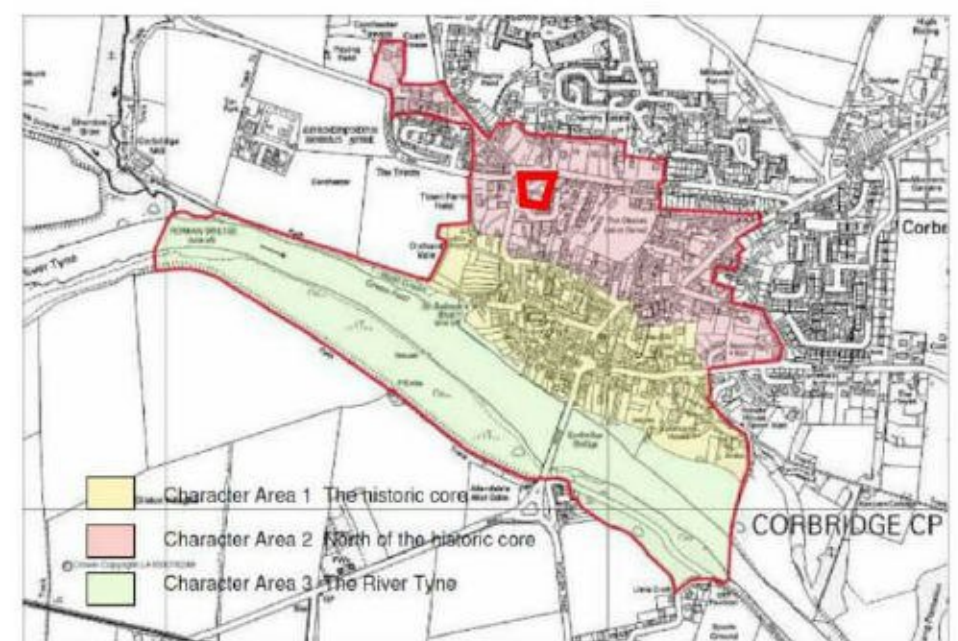
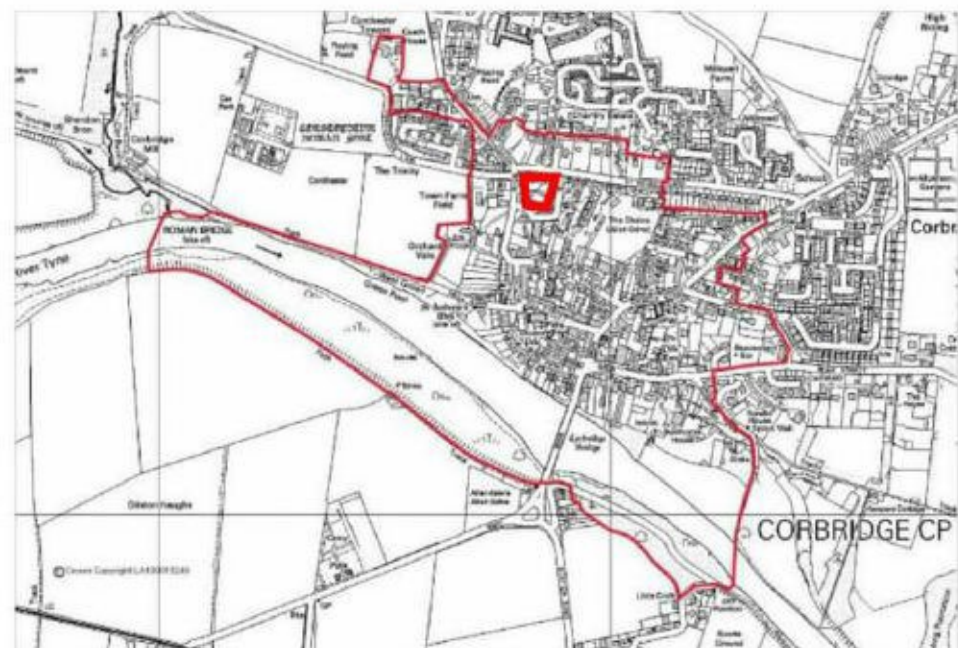


Figure 4 and 5 – Conservation Area boundary and Character Areas showing site in area 'North of the historic core'



3.3 Historic mapping shows the site as undeveloped on the 1860s ordnance survey (fig 6). The hamlet to the west is evident, as is the Chains – an area of small parcels of allotment land.



3.4 The site remained undeveloped on the 1897 OS but by 1920 the site is marked as 'Cottage Hospital' with a building on the present site, albeit of smaller footprint.



3.5 The 2009 Corbridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal does not make significant reference to the building, despite its prominence, noting only that the "Charlotte Straker House care and nursing home, formerly Prior House, is located at the junction of Stagshaw Road and St Helen's Lane. It was extended in 1992 with the addition of a new large, boxey, and featureless south wing which looms over properties that front onto Stagshaw Road. New bungalows, Manor Cottages, to the south of the home do not enhance the character of the conservation area whereas the neighbouring late nineteenth century West End Terrace is of both historic and visual merit". (P38)

3.6 The report details the gradual northerly expansion of Corbridge in the late c19 and C20 to the point at which The Chains housing scheme developed on the remnant allotment/market gardens to the east of the application site.

Figure 6 1860 Ordnance Survey
Figure 7 1897 Ordnance Survey
Figure 8 1920 Ordnance Survey

3.7 Designated heritage assets are shown at figure 9 overleaf. The concentration of

designated heritage assets clearly lies in the historic medieval core, with only limited amounts of assets in the northern area. Designated assets in the vicinity of the application site are the mid C17 (with C18 and C19 alterations) Old Prior Manor and Prior Manor Cottage – Grade II listed in 1952. Their list entry is here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1303394> ; and Town Farmhouse and Garage, listed in 1988 - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1370542>. Old Prior Manor and Prior Manor Cottage are located to the north side of St Helen's Lane, and 50m from the development site; with Town Farmhouse some 100m to the west. The



Figure 9 Site in relation to designated heritage assets

buildings of Town Farmhouse are separated by intervening built development, and the development proposed is not visible from their vantage point. The listed buildings to the north are set back behind landscaped gardens and are barely visible from the road.

3.8 Although Corbridge is replete with listed buildings, the immediate vicinity of the application site does not have listed or unlisted buildings present. Those referred to above are at

some distance, with no clear relationship in terms of setting to the application site and the scale of the proposed works.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 The proposal is for a modest single storey garden room on the southern elevation of the main building. To be roofed in slate and with fenestration to match the main building, the room will afford direct access from the dining room to additional social space – of increasing importance given



Figures 10 and 11 Existing elevations and floorplan



Figure 12 Proposed elevations

the social distancing imperative of the last 12 months arising from Covid19.

4.2 The works would replace an area of informal decking with a stone walled, slate roofed modest extension with traditional timber sash windows matching the main elevation. An external ramp will allow access to outside. An existing external door opening will be retained, as will an existing sash window, although this will become internal. The works would ultimately be reversible in future with minimal permanent impact on the building.

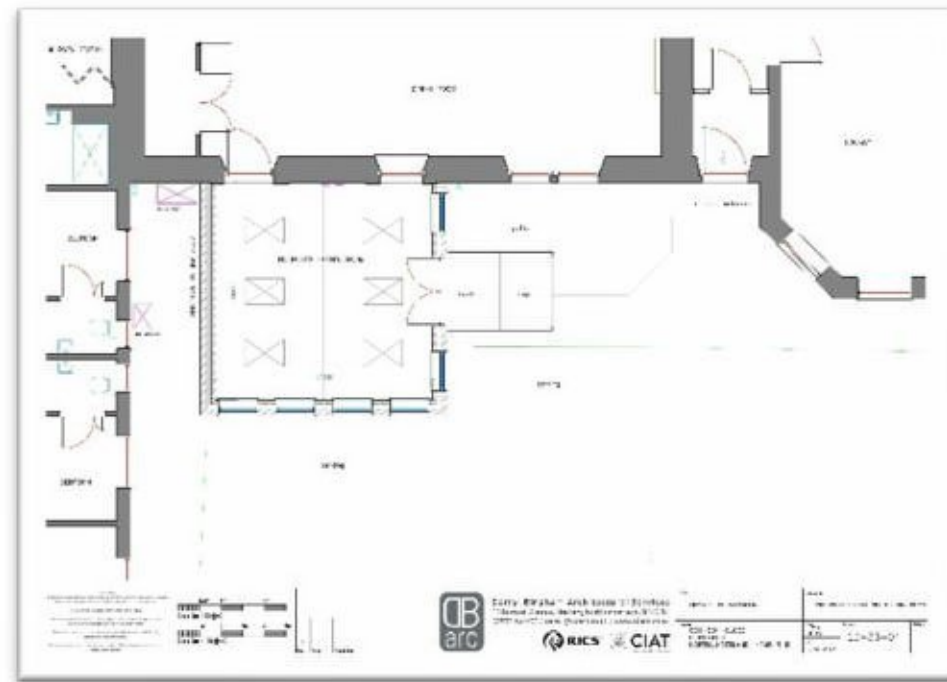


Figure 13 Proposed Floorplans

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework

5.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) sets out national planning policy. Section 12 'Achieving well-designed places' states in Paragraph 124 that 'Good Design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.

5.1.2 Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) Paragraph 189, states that "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."

5.1.2 Paragraph 192 advises that "in determining planning 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".

5.1.3 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that "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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance".

5.1.4 Paragraph 194 states that "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification".

5.1.5 Paragraph 196 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.

5.1.6 Paragraph 197 states that “The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”.

5.2 The Town and Country Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) Act 1990

5.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) Act 1990 sets out the wider legislative framework in which development which affects listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered. Section 72(1) states: ‘In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area....special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the that area’

5.3 Local Policy Context

5.3.1 Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007)
Policy BE1 – Principles of the Built Environment
Policy GD1 – The General Location of Development

Tynedale District Local Plan (2003)
Policy GD2 – Design Criteria for Development, including Extensions and Alterations
H33 - Residential extensions

5.3 Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance (English Heritage 2008)

5.3.1 Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance (English Heritage 2008) is intended as a guide to conservation thinking and practice. It defines conservation as the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage value and recognises that change in the historic environment is inevitable, whether this is caused by natural processes, wear and tear, or responses to technological, social or economic change.

5.3.2 The heritage values set out in the English Heritage document Conservation Principles: Policies and guidance are:

- Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.
- Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

5.3.3 There are six commonly accepted levels of significance. These are:

Outstanding level of significance: Exceptional levels of architectural and decorative preservation – corresponding to the NPPF advice that harm would be ‘wholly exceptional’ e.g. according to the highest level of protection and special interest afforded to a grade I or grade II* listing.

High Level of significance: A nationally and regionally important asset e.g. Grade II building to which substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

Medium level of significance: May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category to be retained where possible although there is usually scope for adaption.

Low level of significance: Undesignated assets that may make a positive contribution at a local level. There is usually scope for adaptation.

No interest: Historically unimportant but a category above intrusive or negative impact. Adaptation or removal would usually be acceptable.

Intrusive: Historically unimportant and having a negative impact on the setting or significance of other assets. Could be removed with beneficial effect.

6.0 Assessing the impact of the proposal

6.1 The property Charlotte Straker House is an attractive late C19/ Early C20 building constructed in a nineteenth century traditional vernacular form. It occupies a site which has gradually become incorporated into ‘urban’ Corbridge in the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth century. The proposed extension will be a modest extension to increase the utility of the building, and to accommodate the needs of the care home which has occupied the site for 100 years.



Figure 14 Site viewed from Stagshaw Road

6.2 The existing building on the site forms a hard boundary to St Helen’s Lane, and the proposed works are concealed within the site.

6.3 Using the levels of significance set out in para 5.3.3 above, the main building Charlotte Straker House has a low level of significance. The value of the building is principally historic and aesthetic.

6.4 Although designated heritage assets are present in the wider area, they are not impacted on by the extension to the building. Their setting remains unaffected by the development and they have no close historical or spatial relationship to the building.

6.5 Although the extension will have a degree of prominence, the general mass of the existing building will remain dominant and will continue to be the dominant feature of the elevation.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 It is respectfully asserted that the proposals would cause no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and only marginal 'less than substantial harm' to the character of the host building. This minor harm arises from minor interference with the southern elevation of the building. This should be counterbalanced by the generally low level of significance of the building, and balanced against the public benefits of the proposal, notably the historic continuation of the care home use which is part of a continuum stretching back to the establishment of the cottage hospital in 1918. The impact of its extension on the wider Conservation Area and designated heritage assets will be negligible.

Sources

1860 First Edition Ordnance Survey

1897 Second Edition Ordnance Survey

1920 Third Edition Ordnance Survey

Northumberland County Council 'Heritage Statement Guidance' (Development Services, Northumberland County Council, April 2015)

English Heritage. Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (London: English Heritage, April 2008)

Department for Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework (London, DCLG 2012)

Tynedale Council 'Corbridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal' (March 2009)

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/Conservation/Archaeology/Corbridge.pdf>

Northumberland County Council 'Corbridge Extensive Urban Survey' (2008)

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Additional web resources:

<http://www.hexham-courant.co.uk/news/corbridge/Century-of-care-in-Corbridge-marked-8cb75527-b898-4ebb-b4dc-cf19493120c6-ds>

<https://charlottestraker.org.uk/who-we-are/history-vision/>