

No. 68 PRIESTFIELD ROAD
FOREST HILL

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Assessment has been prepared by GJHP in support of the planning application for a rear extension at no. 68 Priestfield Road, Forest Hill, in the London Borough of Lewisham. GJHP is a consultancy that provides expert advice on heritage and townscape matters.
- 1.2 The assessment considers the effect of the proposed development (the 'Proposed Development') on the significance of the Perry Fields Conservation Area within which the Site lies.
- 1.3 The report sets out the following:
- Relevant statutory duties and national and local policy and guidance;
 - A description of the Site and its heritage significance;
 - An assessment of the Proposals and their effect on heritage significance in light of the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 and national and local policy and guidance.
- 1.4 The report should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and the Design and Access Statement ('DAS') submitted with the application.

2 LEGISLATION, POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 2.1 This section sets out the relevant statutory duties and national and local planning policies and guidance that are relevant to the consideration of heritage matters.

Statutory Duties

- 2.2 ***The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990***

Conservation areas

- 2.3 Section 72 of the Act requires that when considering applications for planning permission for buildings or land in a conservation area, *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'*.

National planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

- 2.4 The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in February 2019. The NPPF sets out planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Heritage

- 2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It applies to plan-making, decision-taking and the heritage-related consent regimes under the 1990 Act.
- 2.6 Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as a *'building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*
- 2.7 The NPPF notes, at paragraph 184, that heritage assets *'should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.'*

- 2.8 The NPPF requires an applicant to describe the heritage significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting (para 189). It goes on to say that *'the level of detail should be proportionate to the heritage assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'*
- 2.9 The NPPF identifies three key factors local authorities should take into account in determining applications:
- '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.'
- 2.10 Paragraph 193 states that in assessing impact, the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be given to its conservation. It notes that heritage significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or from development within its setting.
- 2.11 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as *'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*
- 2.12 The NPPF states, at paragraph 195, that where a proposed development would lead to *'substantial harm'* or total loss of heritage significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused, *'...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 a number of specified criteria apply, including that the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site.
- 2.13 Where a development proposal will lead to *'less than substantial'* harm to the heritage significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 196).
- 2.14 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites (WHSs) and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their heritage significance. Paragraph 200 goes on to say *'Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably'*.

- 2.15 Paragraph 201 states *'Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance.'*

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.16 The PPG includes a section called *'Historic environment'* which was updated on 23 July 2019. It explains which bodies are responsible for the designation of HAs and provides information on heritage consent processes.
- 2.17 The PPG considers the factors that should inform decision taking about developments that would affect HAs. It notes that *'HAs may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a HA, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals...'* (18a-007). It goes on to say *'understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting from an early stage in the design process can help to inform the development of proposals which avoid or minimise harm'* (18a-008). It states that in assessing proposal, where harm is found, the extent of harm should be *'clearly articulated' as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'* (18a-018).
- 2.18 The PPG notes that setting is defined in the NPPF and that *'all heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent'* (18a-013). It goes on to say, *'the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each'* (18a-013).

Regional planning policy

The London Plan (2021)

- 2.19 The new London Plan was adopted in March 2021. Policy HC1 *'Heritage conservation and growth'* deals with matters relating to heritage assets and states at part C that, *'Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve*

their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings'.

Local policy and guidance

London Borough of Lewisham – Core Strategy (June 2011)

- 2.20 The London Borough of Lewisham adopted its Core Strategy in June 2011. Core Strategy Objective 10: 'Protect and enhance Lewisham's character' states that Lewisham's distinctive local character will be protected by:
- a. *'Ensuring that new development achieves high standards of urban design and residential quality, and contributes to a sense of place and local distinctiveness informed by an understanding of the historic context*
 - b. *Ensuring that new development and alterations to existing buildings are sensitive, appropriate to their context, and make a positive contribution to the urban environment*
 - c. *Preserving or enhancing the condition and historic significance of the borough's heritage assets and their settings and the other identified elements of the historic environment.'*
- 2.21 Core Strategy Policy 16, 'Conservation areas, heritage assets and the historic environment' states that *'The Council will ensure that the value and significance of the borough's heritage assets and their settings, which include the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, registered historic park and gardens and other non-designated assets such as locally listed buildings, will continue to be monitored, reviewed, enhanced and conserved according to the requirements of government planning policy guidance, the London Plan policies, local policy and English Heritage best practice.'*

London Borough of Lewisham – Development Management Local Plan (2014)

- 2.22 The Development Management Local Plan was adopted in November 2014. It sets out LBL's planning policies for managing development, and supports the implementation of the Core Strategy and the London Plan.
- 2.23 Policy DM Policy 31 relates to the alterations and extensions to existing buildings and states they *'will be required to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respect and/or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, and detailing of the original buildings, including external features such as chimneys, and porches. High quality matching or complementary materials should be used, appropriately and sensitively in relation to the context.'*

- 2.24 It goes on to set out further criteria and those relevant to this assessment include:
- b. rear extensions will generally not be permitted where any part is higher than the height of the ridge of the main roof, or where the extension is not set back into the roof slope.*
 - d. additional or enlarged windows, doors and other openings, should be in keeping with the original pattern.*
 - f. the Council will consider proposals for building extensions that are innovative and have exceptional design quality where these are fully justified in the design and access statement.*
- 2.25 At part 3 the policy states, ‘*Extensions will not be permitted where they would adversely affect the architectural integrity of a group of buildings as a whole or cause an incongruous element in terms of the important features of a character area.*’

Alterations and Extension SPD adopted April 2019

- 2.26 The SPD states in respect of single storey rear extensions that a rear extension is often the most appropriate way to extend a building. It notes that ‘*rear extensions should generally not be more than 3m deep for terraced or semi-detached properties. Deeper extensions may be acceptable for detached properties or on large plots. Under no circumstances should the extension take up more than half the depth of the original rear garden/yard to avoid the overdevelopment of sites.*’ It goes on to give additional guidance for conservation areas, noting they ‘*should remain clearly secondary to the host building in terms of location, form, scale and detailing; respect the original design and architectural features of the existing building.*’
- 2.27 The SPD states ‘*A modern, high quality design can be successful in achieving a clear distinction between old and new. In some locations, a traditional approach can be a more sensitive response to a historic building, particularly where homogeneity of groups of buildings is part of their special character.*’
- 2.28 The SPD states that two storey rear extensions will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate exceptional design quality and that in these cases the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that the characteristics and integrity of the host property is maintained/enhanced and that the impact on neighbouring properties is not significant. It goes on to say that ‘*bulky two storey additions are entirely unacceptable where the consistency of form and repetitive rhythm of unaltered rear elevations make an important contribution to the character of the area.*’

Other guidance

Historic England Advice Note 1, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition) (February 2019)

- 2.29 The purpose of this note is to provide information on conservation area appraisal, designation and management to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment legislation, the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The advice in this document emphasises that evidence required to inform decisions affecting a conservation area, including both its designation and management, should be proportionate to the importance of the asset.
- 2.30 At paragraph 4 of the introduction it states, ‘Change is inevitable, and often beneficial, and this advice sets out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas’, and that ‘Conservation areas can contribute to sustainable development in all its three dimensions as outlined in the NPPF.

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- 2.31 The purpose of this note is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These include assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding.
- 2.32 In terms of general advice on decision-taking it notes at para 4 that, ‘*The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance*’. The guidance goes on to suggest a number of common steps in assessing significance.

Historic England Advice Note 12, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019)

- 2.33 Historic England issued Advice Note 12, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets in October 2019. The note covers the NPPF requirement that heritage significance is described in order to help local authorities make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets.

It states, in paragraph 2 of the introduction, that *'the level of detail in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent should be no more than is necessary to reach an informed decision, and that activities to conserve the asset(s) need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the impact on that significance'*. It describes a statement of heritage significance as *'an objective analysis of significance, an opportunity to describe what matters and why'*.

- 2.34 The advice note states that a staged approach to decision making, where the significance is assessed before the design of the proposal commences, is the best approach. It states in paragraph 29, under 'proportionality', that while *'analysis should be as full as necessary to understand significance, the description provided to the LPA need be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on significance'*.

3 THE SITE AND ITS HERITAGE CONTEXT

Location

- 3.1 Priestfield Road is in Forest Hill. The house lies at the southern end of the street, on its western side. No. 68 Priestfield Road, and no. 66a to the north, lie within the Perry Fields Conservation Area, see below.

The Site

- 3.2 The Site comprises an unremarkable detached interwar house with a hipped pitched roof. It has a double fronted elevation to the street with a central entrance with a porch with a tiled pitched roof. The bay to the left (facing) projects forward as a two storey wing with a gable end and a pitched roof. This has a two storey canted bay window, with a tiled hung spandrel, over which the half timber effect gable projects with two large timber brackets each side.
- 3.3 The ground floor is faced in red brick and the 1st floor is rough cast rendered. The windows (replacements) are casements with top lights. The roof is clad in tiles and there is a chimney either end.
- 3.4 The rear elevation is flat, again with a brick ground floor and rough cast rendered first floor. It is of a less ordered design with an external encased flu emerging towards the top of the ground floor and rising up to the eaves level.



The Site

Heritage context

- 3.5 There are no listed buildings in the area around the Site.
- 3.6 The Site lies in the Perry Fields Conservation Area, on its southern edge. The house is not included in the 1980 Article 4 direction, nor is the neighbouring bungalow (which is not shown on the map).

Significance of the Perry Fields Conservation Area

- 3.7 The National Planning Policy Framework defines heritage significance at ‘Annex 2: Glossary’ as:

‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

- 3.8 The assessment of significance below is based on the Council’s SPGs. It is proportionate both to the importance of the asset and to the nature and extent of the application proposals. It is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on heritage interest.

- 3.9 The Council describes the conservation area as follows on its web site:

‘The area was designated in 1975. It represents a good example of a late 19th century suburban residential development, the central core of which comprises a coherent group of Victorian villas.

The properties were built in the 1880s along the existing historic road pattern on land previously used for pasture and brick making. They comprise a distinctive unit immediately recognisable from the surrounding later development. With the exception of the post-war flat development at the junction of Garlies Road and Perry Rise, the whole estate has remained virtually intact.

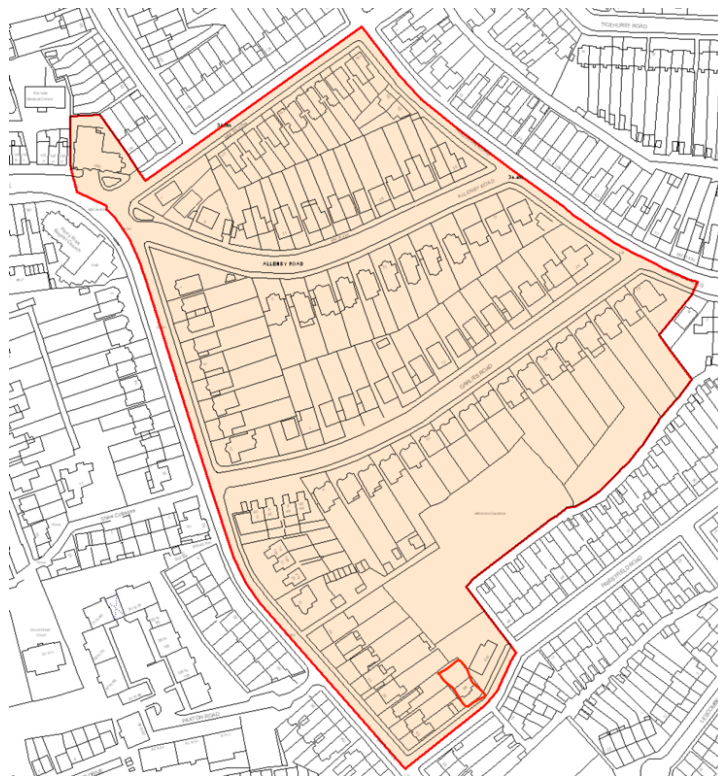
The houses themselves are mostly of two storeys and are either detached or semi-detached. Most of them are constructed in yellow London stock brick with stone sills and lintels, decorative eaves and chimney details, and hipped slate roofs. The one-over-one sash vertical sliding sash window is the predominant window type in the area.

The houses fronting Woolstone Road and Perry Rise south of Garlies Road exhibit more variety in their styles, and some have red brick fronts. Houses in Allenby and Garlies Road, and those fronting Perry Rise between these two roads, comprise a coherent and distinctive core to the conservation area. Stylistically, they are within a narrow range

of houses typical of the 1870-80s. Their spacious and leafy front gardens greatly add to the distinctive suburban feel to the area.

In the north-west corner the conservation area also contains the Perry Vale Fire Station, built in 1902 by the London County Council in the Arts and Crafts style, and now statutorily listed.'

- 3.10 The conservation area boundary is shown in the plan below from the Council's website, the Site (its boundary is marked in red) lies on the southern edge of the Conservation Area.



Plan of conservation area from the Council's web site

- 3.11 The Council's on-line description of the conservation area makes no reference to Priestfield Street or interwar house. The Site does not form part of the 1880s residential estate development that provides the '*coherent and distinctive core*' of the conservation area.
- 3.12 The closest 19th century houses to the Site are the large semidetached and detached houses running along the north-east side of the southern end of Perry Rise. These are built of red brick or rendered. Further north are the yellow brick houses along Garlies Road. There is a group of 1920s semidetached maisonettes at the junction of the two streets.



View of eastern of north-east side of southern end of Perry Rise (B227) and the characteristic late 19th century houses.



View of stock brick houses along Garlies Road.



Views of the Site from Priestfield Street

- 3.13 The Site, comprising an interwar detached house of an unremarkable design, sits some way from the rear of the properties on Perry Rise and appears quite distinct from them. A number have extensions (see the DAS), including no. 41 which has a large two storey rear extension, as seen in the photograph above. The Site does not form part of the phase of development that resulted in the designation of the conservation area, and as such its contribution to the significance of the conservation area is limited to its residential use as a single family dwelling house.
- 3.14 Adjoining the Site to the north is a 1908s bungalow, built following the designation of the conservation area, and together they form a pair at odds with the prevailing

built character of the conservation area. No. 78 has more in common with the contemporary terraces of houses that line the remainder of Priestfield Street which lie outside the conservation area.

4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This section describes the Proposed Development as relevant to the consideration of effects on heritage significance. Reference should be made to the scheme drawings and DAS.

Description

- 4.2 The Proposed Development comprises:
- A two storey rear extension.
 - The repair and refurbishment of the external facades including repair of the porch, render work and fascia boards, and decoration.
 - The introduction of crossover so the off-street drive and garage can be accessed safely.
- 4.3 The 1st floor element of the extension is set in from the side elevation and the shallow pitched roof lies well below the ridge line of the main body of the house. The propped materials match those of the existing house. The lintels of the windows in the well ordered rear elevation follow the height of those in the main house. As part of the works the flue to the rear is removed and the existing French doors are replaced with a window to match that above.

Assessment

- 4.4 The Proposed Development is well considered and based on a clear understanding of the Site, its heritage context, and the significance of the Perry Fields Conservation Area. It will make the best use of this piece of land and is compatible with local character. The extension is subservient to the main house and compatible with the local grain in respect of scale, height, massing, proportions, form, materials and detailing. It will not affect any view identified by the Council.
- 4.5 The plan of the extension complements the plan of the host house which will remain clearly apparent. It is just over half the width of the rear elevation (which is of a very plain design) and rises to the existing eaves height maintaining a simple uncluttered appearance. The shallow asymmetrical roof form above lies below the ridge of the main roof, ensuring the latter remains the prominent feature, and the two chimneys are retained.
- 4.6 As part of the works the house is renovated and decorated and this will enhance its appearance and its contribution to the local townscape.

- 4.7 In line with DM Policy 31 it is of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respects and complements the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, and detailing of the original building including external features such as chimneys, and porches. It adopts high quality matching materials that are appropriate to their context. The window design, which seeks to maximise the natural light into the living space, also gives the new extension its own distinct character. The lintel heights align with the windows in the host house (modern replacements). In addition, the extension lies far below the ridge of the main house.
- 4.8 In line with the SPD the extension, sympathetic and in keeping with the host house, but also with its own distinct character and clearly of its time, adopts strong sustainability credentials, which together with the new family home layout, contribute to it being of exceptional design quality. The characteristics and integrity of the host property are enhanced and there is no impact in townscape terms on neighbouring properties. The asymmetrical roof form and fenestration design articulate the new form, and the whole has an ordered appearance and a clear domestic character.

Conclusions

- 4.9 The Proposed Development is an intelligent and carefully considered response to the Site and its heritage context. It is based on a clear understanding of the design of the host building and its contribution to the Perry Fields Conservation Area. The rear extension, of a high quality of design, respects the character and proportions of the host building.
- 4.10 In respect of the design considered in its own right, and the relationship between the Proposed Development and the host house, as well as its heritage context, the effect will be entirely positive. There are no harmful effects on the significance of the Perry Fields Conservation Area, and therefore accords with the objective set out in section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended). The Proposed Development is in line with the policies and guidance on design set out in the NPPF and PPG; local policies and guidance and HE guidance.

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