



Heritage Statement

4 Montpelier Square,
London

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HCUK Group is a multi-disciplinary environmental practice offering expert advice in archaeology, heritage, landscape, arboriculture, and planning. It began life in 2010 as Heritage Collective LLP, before becoming Heritage Collective UK Limited in 2014. In the coming years diversification saw the addition of Archaeology Collective, Landscape Collective and Planning Collective, before all strands came together to be branded under a single umbrella: HCUK Group, based on the acronym for the original company. A home working company since the beginning, we are pleased to employ a talented workforce of consultants and support staff, who are on hand to advise our clients.



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App. 1 Scale of Harm table (Heritage Collective, 2019)

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Heritage Statement has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of A.M.B.R.A SRL. It relates to proposals for the extension and alteration of 4 Montpelier Square, a grade II listed building located in the Knightsbridge Conservation Area. Westminster City Council are the determining authority.



Figure 1: Front elevation of 4 Montpelier Square

The Context

- 1.2** The site (as part of 1-7 Montpelier Square) was added to the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest in May 1971 (UID: 1223388). The List Description for the building and wider terrace is set out below:

"Row of houses. Mid C19. Stock brick channelled stucco to ground floor; stucco dressings. Four storeys and basement (nos 1 to 2 with full attic storey, No 3 with mansard attic). Two windows each. Entrances to left hand side, that to No 1 in return; square headed entrances with flanking pilasters. Windows square headed

except to 1 and 2, which are round headed in round reveals. Continuous cast iron bombé balcony to first floor. Windows mainly sashed, with glazing bars. Cornice. Parapet. Area railings. Part of group with rest of Montpelier Square.”

1.3 The Knightsbridge Conservation Area was first designated in 1968 and extended in 1978 to include areas north and west of Prince Gardens and around Rutland Gardens and Gate. The area is bounded by Hyde Park to the north and the borough boundary of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to the south.

The Proposals and Relevant Background

1.4 The proposals are based on a thorough understanding of the historic development, character and significance of the building and seek to enhance the functionality of the grade II listed building as a single family dwelling while respecting the unique heritage values of the site. In brief the proposals can be summarised as:

- Introduction of a new basement, beneath the lower ground floor, to the rear of the building;
- Extension of the existing lower ground floor into the garden area;
- Changes to the existing rear elevation and additions including the addition of a lightweight glazed infill addition, the removal of the poor quality conservatory addition and the raising of the closet wing to match those adjacent properties;
- Changes to plan form on all levels;
- Reintroduction of appropriate detailing within the historic building;
- The alteration of the main staircase and introduction of a passenger lift into the existing closet wing; and
- The provision of a roof extension.

1.5 The proposals were subject to pre-application consultation with Westminster City Council, and feedback regarding the pre-application scheme was received in June 2020.

1.6 With regard to the proposed internal works the LPA stated:

"Internally the building has sustained some unfortunate alterations and modifications which have diminished its internal character, including modern ceilings and partitions. However, from the photos submitted, features of significance include the principle staircase, some door and window joinery and fire surrounds.

Whilst the reinstatement of the ground floor plan form is a heritage benefit, the removal of the basement staircase is unlikely to be supported, nor is the lowering of the basement floor level. The secondary staircase at second floor level appears a modern addition and its reconfiguration is unlikely to be opposed subject to its detailed design."

1.7 The proposed roof-extension received a generally positive response during the pre-application, and it was noted that *"Whilst the proposals would see the loss of what appears to be a traditional butterfly roof, which is regrettable, a traditional mansard would not be out of keeping."*

1.8 With regard to the rear extension of the building the response was as follows:

"In listed building terms, whilst the extension is likely to be supported subject to its materiality and fenestration details, the windows on the flank elevation may raise amenity concerns. You are advised that the loss of the third-floor window on the rear elevation of the building will not be supported and should be retained as existing.

A two-storey light-weight infill extension is proposed within the light-well. Whilst a light-weight extension in this location is not opposed in principle, a strong objection is raised to the loss of the rear wall of the host listed building. The rear facade of the building needs to be preserved to provide a clear distinction between the old and new, including retaining existing door openings.

Remodelling of the ground and first floor extensions appears to show a reduction in overall mass and bulk, which would be welcome. However, the proposal needs to retain more of the rear facade of the building and traditional shallow closet wing to maintain an appreciation of the building's original form. Whilst a contemporary approach could be supported, its design quality and materiality

need to be proven, however the extent of uninterrupted glazing, particularly at first floor level is of concern and needs to be addressed.”

- 1.9** The final proposals have responded to the pre-application advice received, and have been amended in order to retain a significant portion of the rear façade and closet wing at lower ground floor level, retain the basement stair, and have reduced the level of excavation at basement level preserving both the ceiling heights and also consequentially the existing hierarchy exhibited by the layout. Further alterations made to the scheme following the pre-application stage are the inclusion of radiators at ground and first floor level and under floor heating in the rest of the property.

Purpose of this Statement

- 1.10** The statement presents an assessment of the significance of affected heritage assets, namely 4 Montpelier Square and the Knightsbridge Conservation Area. This is followed by an assessment of the impacts of the scheme. Other heritage assets (predominantly listed buildings) in the area are not capable of being affected by the proposals which typically affect the building’s interior and rear.
- 1.11** The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to assist with the determination of the applications by informing the decision takers on the effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment. The heritage assets susceptible to impact have been observed and assessed by the author following a site visit in good weather.
- 1.12** Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. The report sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the NPPF and local planning policy.

2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1** The decision maker is required by sections 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.¹
- 2.2** There is a broadly similar duty arising from section 72(1) of the Act in respect of planning decisions relating to development within conservation areas.
- 2.3** For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm.² Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England’s Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.³
- 2.4** The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.
- 2.5** The setting of a heritage asset can contribute to its significance. Setting is defined in the NPPF as follows:
- “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.”*
- 2.6** The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial

¹ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council and others [2014] EWCA Civ 137.

² South Lakeland v SSE [1992] 2 AC 141.

³ Conservation Principles, 2008, paragraph 84.

harm” as described within paragraphs 195 and 196 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.⁴ The Scale of Harm is tabulated at Appendix 1.

2.7 Paragraphs 195 and 196 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefit. Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) online makes it clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, whether paragraph 195 or 196 of the NPPF applies, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets as follows:

“Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.”

2.8 Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.

London Plan

2.9 The London Plan 2021 was published on 2nd March 2021 and now comprises part of the development plan for decision making in Greater London. Policy HC1 “*Heritage conservation and growth*” requires that:

C. Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets’ significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings, should also be actively managed. Development proposals should seek to avoid harm and

⁴ Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG and Nuon UK Limited [2013] EWHC 4344 (Admin).

identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

D - Development proposals should identify assets of archaeological significance and use this information to avoid harm or minimise it through design and appropriate mitigation. Where applicable, development should make provision for the protection of significant archaeological assets and landscapes. The protection of undesignated heritage assets of archaeological interest equivalent to a scheduled monument should be given equivalent weight to designated heritage assets.

Westminster City Plan

- 2.10** Local policy is contained in the Westminster City Plan (2013) and the Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan. Of relevance are Strategic Objective 2, regarding the aspiration to sensitively upgrade Westminster’s building stock to secure a sustainable and inclusive design.
- 2.11** Strategic Policy S25 deals with heritage matters specifically and Saved Policies DES 1 (Principles of urban design and conservation), Policy DES 5 Alterations and Extensions, DES 9 Conservation Areas and DES 10 Listed Buildings are all relevant to the application. Of greatest relevance are:
- 2.12** DES9: Conservation Areas - The City Council seeks to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Westminster's conservation areas as well as their setting. The policy addresses changes of use permitted development, conservation area audits, alterations, extensions and demolition.
- 2.13** DES10: Listed Buildings - The City Council will endeavour to protect and enhance all listed buildings, their settings and those features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess. Proposals for alterations to a listed building should “preserve, restore or complement its features of special architectural or historic interest”. This does not suggest a blanket protection of every part of a listed building. Instead it relates, specifically, to features of special architectural or historic interest.

2.14 The Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 is soon to be adopted, due in March 2021. Policies of relevance to this application are considered below.

2.15 *Policy 40 Westminster's Heritage:* This policy notes that the city's unique historic environment will be valued and celebrated with development optimising the positive role of the historic environment. Heritage assets and their settings should be conserved and enhanced and works to listed buildings should preserve their special interest, relating sensitively to the period and architectural detail of the original building and protecting or, where appropriate, restoring original detail and significant historic fabric.

3. Background and Development

Montpelier Square

- 3.1** In 1824 John Belts of Brompton Row and Thomas Weatherley Marriott of Knightsbridge acquired an area of land north of Brompton Row and began the development of the Montpelier Square area, starting with the south side.
- 3.2** Historic maps confirm that this area of land remained open before the developments initiated by Belts and Marriott, but that development was indeed underway by the mid-late 1820s. However, it was not fully populated until the 1850s and, despite being predominantly the work of the same builder, the variance in style of housing across the square reflects the period of construction which lasted over three decades, alongside successive changes by owners and occupants.
- 3.3** The Survey Of London⁵ notes:
- "There were originally to have been three similar terraces of nine houses each, forming three sides of the square, with a longer range to the north. But construction work, begun at the peak of a development boom, came to a premature halt when the boom collapsed. The leading builder was bankrupted, and only the south side – a fully stuccoed range – was completed as originally intended."*
- 3.4** The east side, which includes the site, was entirely constructed in the 1840s with the final component of the square, the north side, being completed in the early 1850s. Shortly after in 1867 the communal garden within the square was vested by the Metropolitan Board of Works under the Gardens in Towns Protection Act of 1863.
- 3.5** The east side of the square did not follow the established norm of nine buildings, having only been constructed with seven, and it was nos. 1 and 2 which were built first in c.1843. The rest of the terrace were constructed shortly after but varied

⁵ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol45/pp109-116>

from the form of nos. 1 and 2 as they had a different treatment of ground floor windows (flat arched as opposed to round arched) and lacked an attic floor.

4 Montpelier Square

3.6 4 Montpelier Square has been subject to considerable change over a long period of time and that now forms part of the character of the building. There is a limited planning history available for the building online via WCC's website but key information provided by this search is presented below:

- 1970s – Application documents are available online which confirm that in the early 1970s the vast majority of the roof and rear parapet wall was reconstructed. This appears to have been due to deterioration from water ingress. On site investigative works have also confirmed that though the traditional butterfly roof style of room survives, the vast majority of the existing roof structure is modern with very limited surviving historic timbers which no longer appear to be structural.
- 1999 – A retrospective application (LPA ref: 99/2633/LBC) for the reconfiguration of the third floor and provision of new slates to the roof was approved. No plans are available online but the application form suggests comprehensive changes to layout and locations of stud walls.

3.7 From a site visit, it is clear that it is not only the third floor that has seen changes. While the building broadly retains its historic layout (specifically to the ground, first and second floor) there are changes to every floor and room and, in some cases, whilst the plan form is traditional, partitions appear to be constructed largely of modern fabric.

3.8 At lower ground floor level two vaults remain adjacent to the front lightwell and the main basement stair appears to be original (though now particularly narrow potentially due to lining of the party wall). However, the front corridor leading from the lightwell door has been removed and the rear room which would have been originally a single open space has been subdivided into two.

- 3.9** The ground floor survives more intact with the front corridor and main staircase. The front room's proportions are intact (though the double door is modern and not in its original location) but the rear room has been subdivided in to two room rooms.
- 3.10** The first and second floor retains a broadly intact plan form with the only alterations being the removal of much of the spine wall at first floor and the removal/alteration of doors at both levels. At third floor, accessed by a smaller late 20th century staircase away from the main stair, a compartmentalised layout survives but, as per the planning history, this is known to date to the late 20th century.
- 3.11** Throughout the building the majority of internal original detailing has been lost and much surface fabric appears to be modern. Many of the walls have been lined with late 20th century (potentially 1970s/80s) veneer lining which is now in a poor state of repair due to significant water ingress and the floors feature parquet flooring of a similar date. Some portions of original detailing (for example skirting boards) survive sporadically throughout the property.
- 3.12** The main staircase, extending from ground to second floor, is original with a highly polished balustrade and decorative iron balusters. But the staircase providing access from the second to the third floor is a modern intervention, likely dating to the 1970s/80s and contemporary with the veneer wall linings.
- 3.13** Fireplaces all appear modern and chimney breast appear to have been removed throughout the building with the only prominent chimney breasts being present in the ground and first floor front rooms (some chimney breasts may survive behind inbuilt furniture etc.).
- 3.14** To the rear of the building the closet wing is in an unusual form. A shallow closet wing rises up to the second floor but a much larger footprint exists at the basement and ground floor and this appears to date to the late 19th century based on a review of historic mapping (see Figures 2-6). Atop the flat roof of the extended closet wing at first floor is a modern conservatory.

3.15 Historic mapping also demonstrates that, during the mid 20th century (see Figure 6) there was a much larger addition within the rear garden of 4 Montpelier Square which occupied much of the former garden area.

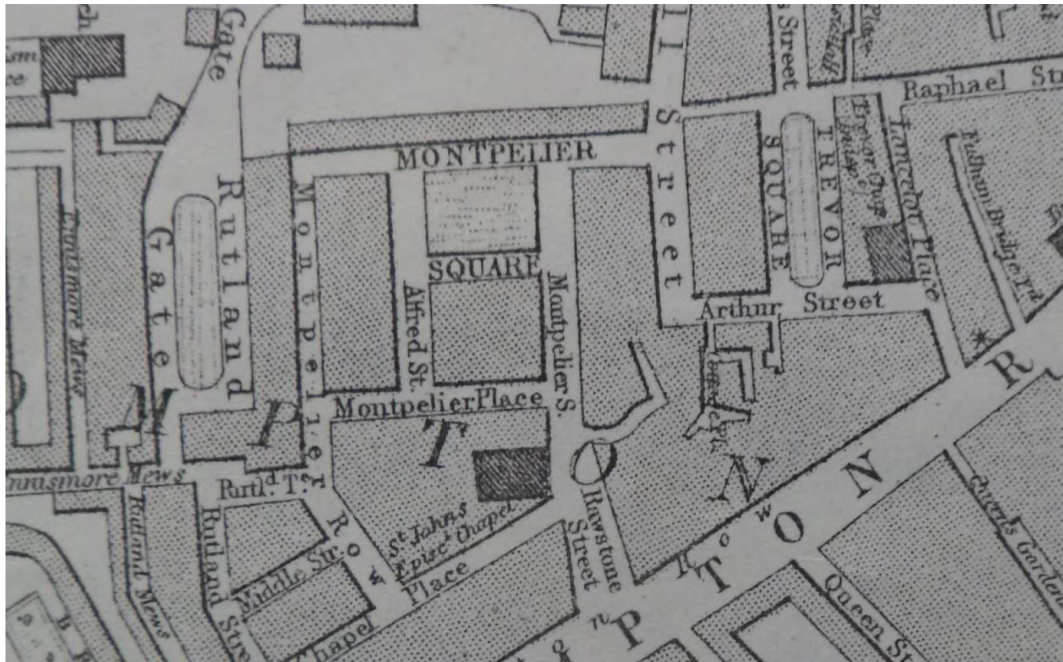


Figure 2: Extract from the 1827 Greenwood Map of Westminster

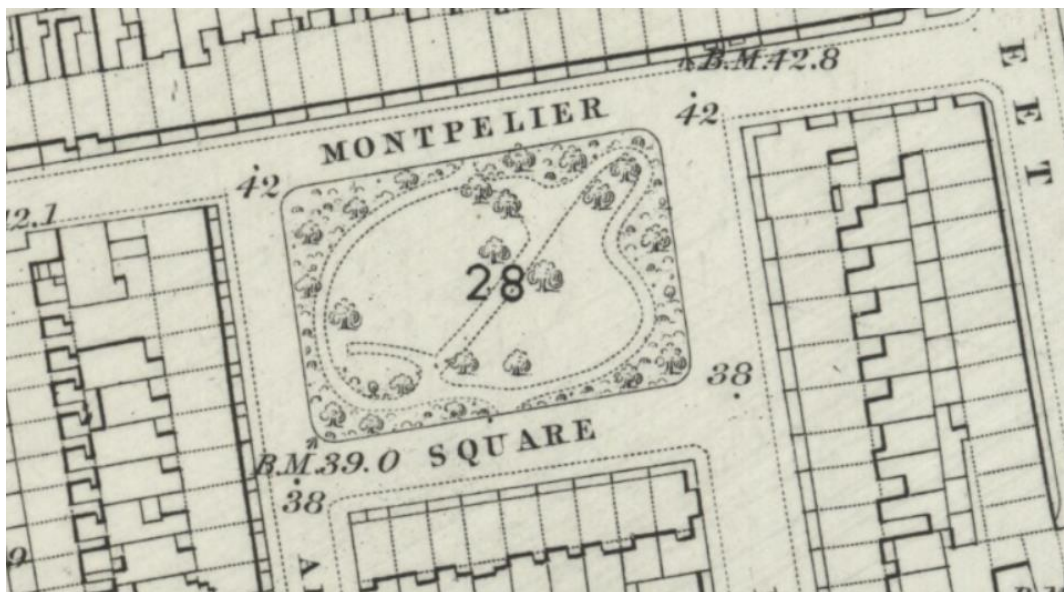


Figure 3: Extract from the 1869 OS Map (surveyed 1863-1865) © NLS



Figure 4: 1895 London Plan © NLS

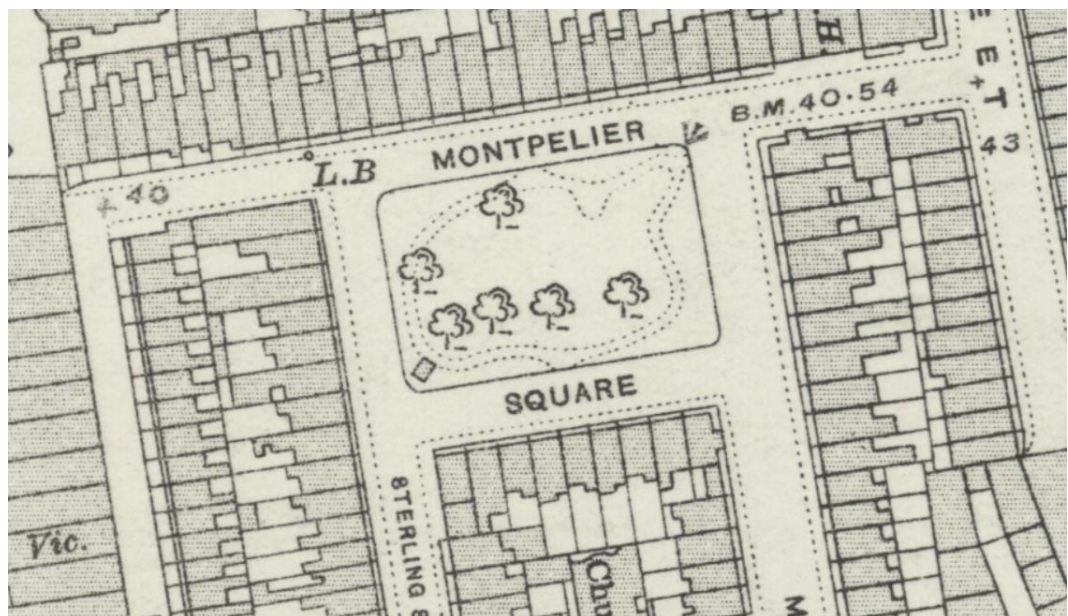


Figure 5: Extract from the 1936 OS Map (surveyed 1914) © NLS

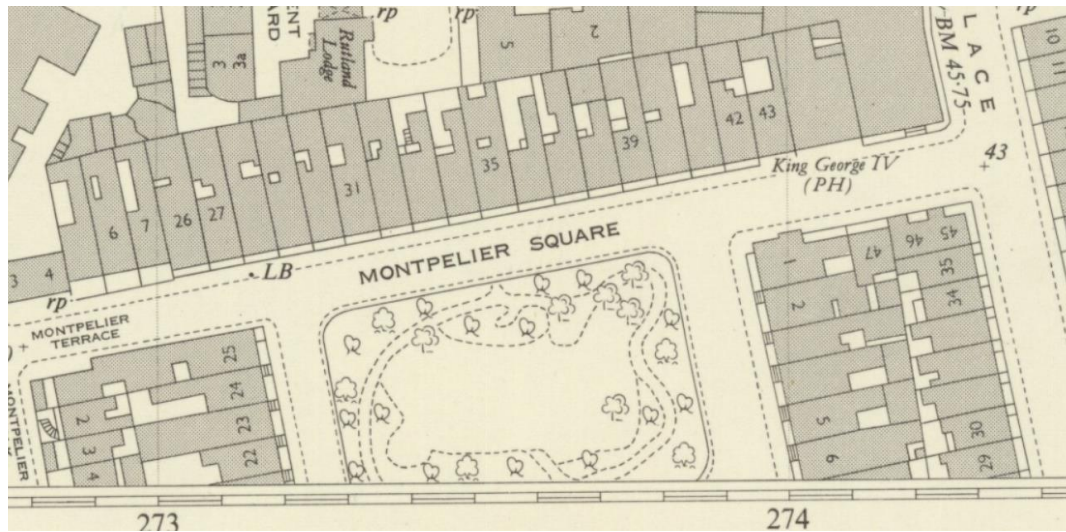


Figure 6: Extract from the 1952 OS Map © NLS

4. Statement of Significance

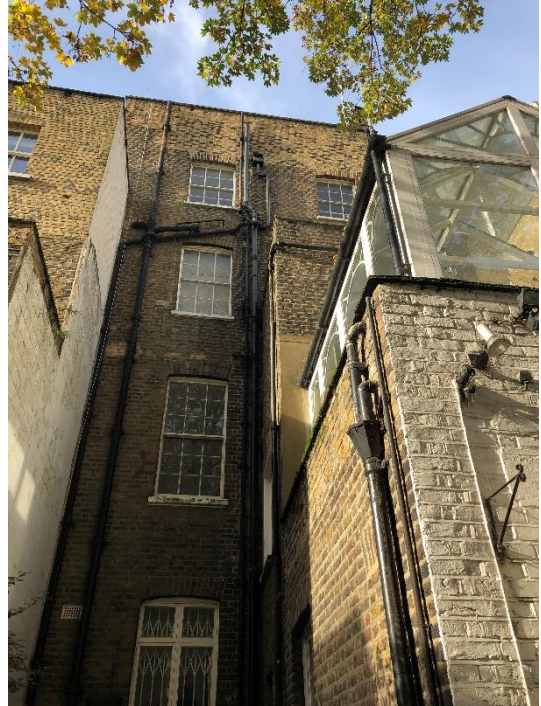
Assessment of Significance

- 4.1** It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases, certain aspects or elements could accommodate change without affecting the Government's objective, which includes the conservation of heritage assets and which seeks to ensure that decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of heritage assets.
- 4.2** Change is only considered to be harmful if it erodes an asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage asset affected and any contribution made by their setting (paragraph 189 of the NPPF) is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change
- 4.3** An assessment of the significance of the grade II listed 4 Montpelier Square and Knightsbridge Conservation Area is provided below. In accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the descriptions are proportionate to the asset's significance and are sufficient to understand the nature of any impact the proposals may have upon that significance.

4 Montpelier Square

- 4.4** 4 Montpelier Square is a building of considerable architectural and historic interest reflected in its designation as a grade II listed building. The building is not of any particular archaeological or artistic interest.
- 4.5** The building's architectural interest primarily results from the form and quality of its front elevation. The architectural interest of the building is enhanced when considered as part of the wider listed terrace (nos. 1-7), which are of broadly coherent date, material, form and composition, and when considered as part of the wider square. The rear elevation of the building is of lesser order and detail and has been subject to alteration and extension. This is characteristic of rear elevations along the terrace where the majority of buildings have been altered and extended

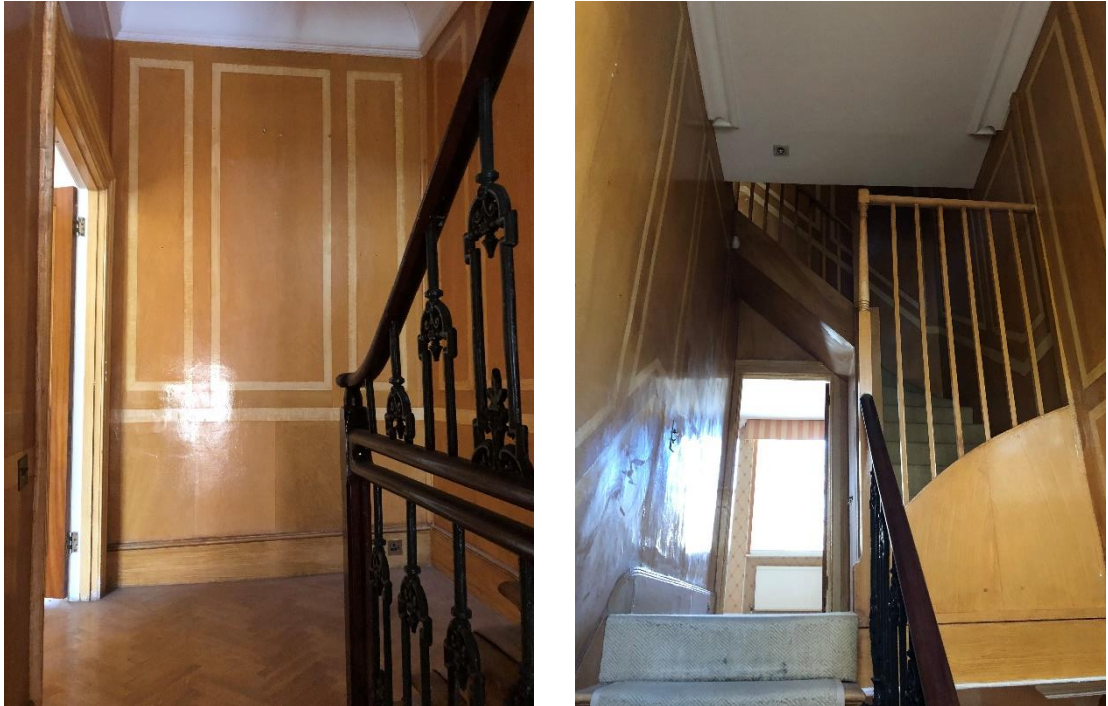
in an ad hoc way with no reference to the form and design of extensions in the wider group.



Figures 7 and 8: Front and rear elevation of the grade II listed building



Figures 9 and 10: Modern fire surrounds present within the ground and first floor front rooms



Figures 11 and 12: Main staircase with modern veneer wall lining (left) and modern staircase from second to third floor (right)

4.6

Within the building alteration is also evident to all floors and rooms. However, the building's development and significance remains evident and key elements of architectural interest include:

- The broadly readable plan form at ground, first and second floor;
- Original skirting boards, door and window joinery and architraves and decorative plasterwork where they survive (typically in limited amounts); and
- The main staircase which extends from the ground to the second floor.

4.7

The building has considerable townscape value and contributes positively to character and appearance of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area.

4.8

The historic interest of the building is primarily derived from its group value as part of a coherent group of properties developed within a close time frame that help to demonstrate the development of this part of Knightsbridge in the early to mid 19th century. Desk based documentary research has not provided any architect or builder or other known associations which would elevate the building's historic interest.

Ability of 4 Montpelier Square to Absorb Change

- 4.9** It is the rear elevation, due to its altered form and sheltered position which has the most capacity for change and alterations which would not necessarily affect the significance of the listed building or conservation area.
- 4.10** The highly altered interiors contain very little original detailing and fabric and as such there exists an opportunity for change which could potentially enhance the significance of the listed building. Similarly within the building there are numerous modern partitions, some of which do not demonstrate traditional plan form, and the interest of the building could benefit from reorganisation.

Knightsbridge Conservation Area

- 4.11** The character of the conservation area is defined primarily by the architectural quality of the development within it. Various private spaces, including Montpelier Square, have been maintained. The conservation area is defined by three distinct developments:
- The eastern area encompassing Trevor Square, Montpelier Square and Place which date to the early 19th century;
 - The central area consisting of Princes Gate, Rutland Gate, Queens Gate, and part of Ennismore Gardens developed during the mid-19th century; and
 - The western part of the conservation area which includes buildings such as Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Geographical Society building which date to the late 19th century.
- 4.12** The site, 4 Montpelier Square, lies within the eastern area which is important for its small scale houses set around leafy squares interconnected by short streets and pedestrian ways. In these areas there is a more suburban character due to the screening provided by larger modern development from Knightsbridge Road and Brompton Road.
- 4.13** While 4 Montpelier Square makes a positive contribution to the Knightsbridge Conservation Area, it is the square as a whole which makes the strongest

contribution. Montpelier Square is similar in detail and character to the neighbouring Trevor Estate but is on a slightly grander scale. As the history, set out above, highlights, Montpelier Square developed over three decades and this is apparent in the changing styles of the elevations on each side of the Square.

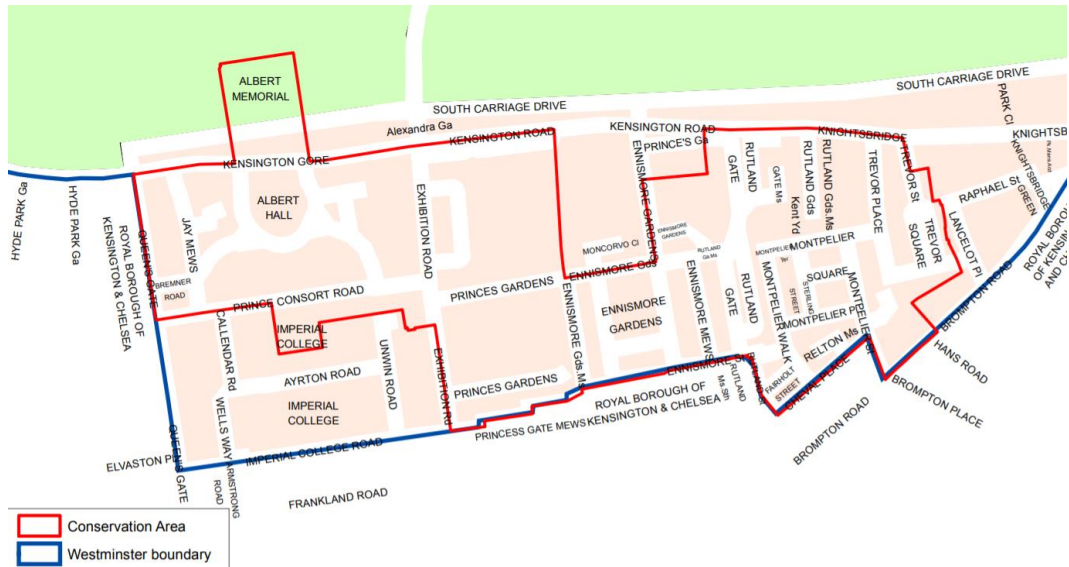


Figure 13: Knightsbridge Conservation Area Boundary © WCC

4.14 Given the form, composition and prominence of the front elevation of the terrace it is this which most strongly contributes to the special interest of the conservation area. The rear elevation of the terrace and no.4 is much altered and of lesser order and is predominantly sheltered from available views within the conservation area due to surrounding development to the east. The rear elevation of the terrace and no.4 make a limited contribution to the conservation area.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 With reference to Appendix 1, along with the most important considerations relating to the impact of the proposals on the setting of the designated heritage assets discussed within this Statement (which include, location and siting, form and appearance, effects and permanence⁶), judgements on the impact of the outline proposals on significance have been set out below.

5.2 This part of the report assesses the impacts of the proposals on the heritage significance of the site, 4 Montpelier Square (as part of the grade II listed 1-7 Montpelier Square) and the Knightsbridge Conservation Area. It should be read in conjunction with the submission drawings.

Impact Assessment

5.3 As identified within the Introduction proposals seek to undertake a comprehensive refurbishment of the grade II listed 4 Montpelier Square so that it can effectively function as a dwelling house in the 21st century. Proposals are discussed on a floor by floor basis below.

Lower Ground Floor and New Basement Level

5.4 At lower ground floor level proposals entail changes to layout and the dropping of the floor level by an additional step to gain more appropriate head height.

5.5 In terms of the changes to layout, the general two room plan would be retained (with the subdivisions from the rear room removed reinstating the proportions of this space) but the spine wall between the two main rooms would be opened providing increased connectivity and natural light. While these works would result in some loss of historic fabric, the beneficial reinstatement of room proportions would outweigh the minor loss. In order to preserve the lower ground floor's circulation and connectivity to the upper floors, the original basement stair is now retained.

⁶ Historic England's guidance on setting GPA3

5.6 Proposals also entail dropping the floor level in the existing lower ground floor by a single step to provide a more functional head height. Following the first stage of pre-application advice investigative works have demonstrated that the existing floor structure present to the lower ground floor is modern and the level of excavation proposed has been reduced. As a result it is confirmed that the proposals would not result in the loss of any historic fabric and the ancillary character and subservient nature of the lower ground floor would be retained. The minimal excavation proposed would not affect the character of this part of the building or its positioning within the hierarchy of the grade II listed building.

5.7 The lower ground floor would also be extended to the rear beneath much of the existing garden to provide additional living accommodation and a new staircase to the new basement below and ground floor above. In order to create more functional open plan space some fabric from the rear elevation and closet wing walls would be removed. However, large portions of the rear wall and closet wing fabric are retained to preserve a sense of the legibility of the historic core of the building. The extension of the ancillary floor in this manner, taking into account loss of some fabric, would result in a slight erosion of the historic legibility of the lower ground floor, affecting the significance of the building.

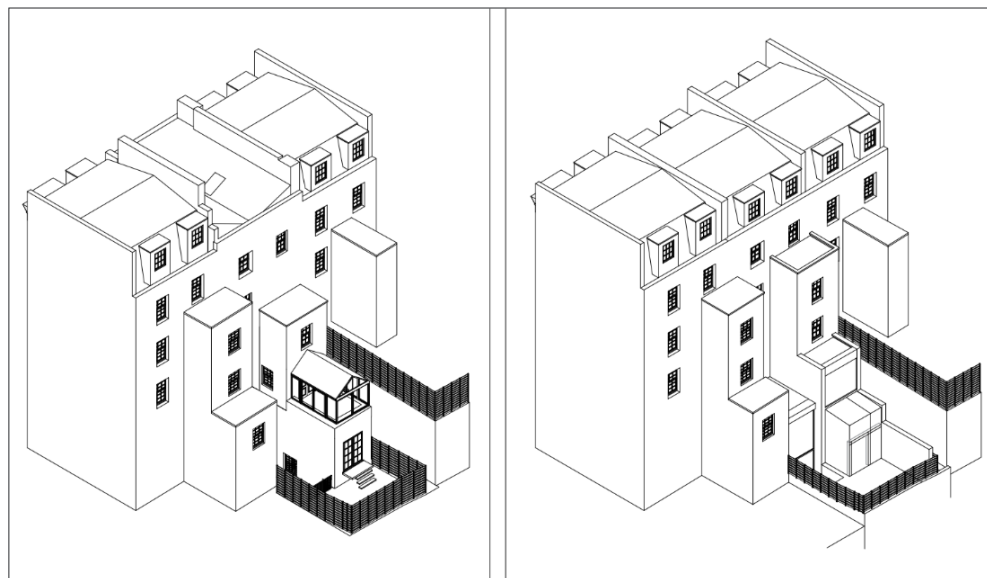


Figure 15: Existing (left) and proposed (right) rear views showing the rear of the building and various extensions

5.8 The final lower ground floor alteration is the provision of a double height glazed extension (serving this floor and the ground floor) which would be directly to the

rear wall as in infill extension adjacent to the closet wing. A small lightwell would be located beyond which would provide additional natural light to the lower ground floor and new basement below. This high quality glazed addition would not affect the way in which the building is experienced insofar as it would be a clearly modern addition which allows the historic development of the building to be clearly appreciated.

5.9 Beneath the lower ground floor, the new basement would primarily sit outside of the historic core of the building and beneath the eastern end of the site. Due to this, the way it is accessed away from the main staircase and primary areas of significance and lack of external manifestations, the addition of a new basement level would not result in any impact upon the significance of the listed building or conservation area.

Ground Floor

5.10 At ground floor level, changes to the principal rooms include a number of beneficial effects, namely:

- The relocation of a single door to the front room in its likely original location;
- Reinstatement of the original room proportions to the rear room; and
- Reinstatement of a chimney breast and fire surround to the rear room.

5.11 The proposals also include provision of double doors within the spine wall between the two main rooms. This spine wall is thought to be a modern partition given its narrow depth and the creation of an opening of limited scale would not affect the proportions of either room. To the rear wall of the rear room, the existing window would be retained allowing visibility beyond to the double height space beyond.

5.12 The closet wing at ground floor sees the biggest changes with the removal of (likely modern) partitions, the introduction of the staircase (as discussed above) and lift (discussed below) and the provision of a small fully glazed extension which would bring it level with the neighbouring closet wing.

5.13 Overall, while some changes to the ground floor are beneficial to both the conservation area and listed building, others (for example loss of fabric and character within the closet wing) would result in a slight erosion of significance.

- 5.14** Within the closet wing a new passenger lift would be provided which would serve the basement, lower ground, ground, first and second floors. The lift will be provided wholly within the existing closet wing avoiding the need for extensive external alteration and resulting in only limited loss of historic fabric (not thought to be of special interest in its own right) while also having the benefit of ensuring accessibility throughout the building.

First Floor

- 5.15** At first floor there are no changes within the main two rooms but alterations are proposed to the closet wing. Here the poor quality conservatory addition would be removed and a small higher quality addition constructed of matching London stock brick with a large glazed rear wall. This addition would better reflect the character of the closet wing and rear elevation of the building and would represent an enhancement to the significance of the building.

Second Floor

- 5.16** At second floor level changes to the layout are proposed to create a master suite. These alterations would have a harmful effect on the significance of the building through the erosion of the currently broadly intact plan form, but any harm would be wholly limited due to the retained compartmentalised arrangement.
- 5.17** Aside from changes to layout, the main alteration at second floor involves the removal of the existing staircase which provides access to the third floor and the extension of the main staircase upwards to serve the third floor and proposed roof extension. The removal of the existing staircase would have some effect on heritage significance given that, while modern, its location is likely to be the siting for original third floor access. Similarly, the extension of the otherwise complete 1840s decorative staircase (which terminated at second floor) would have an effect on the legibility of the feature which would impact upon the significance of the building. The new flights of the staircase would be carried out in a clearly modern aesthetic ensuring that they would read as an honest addition to the staircase and this would assist in mitigating the effects.

Third Floor

5.18 At third floor proposals entail the reorganisation of the layout to provide two bedrooms with a central shared bathroom. As identified in the preceding sections the existing floor plan and stud partitions at this floor date to the late 20th century and as such do not contribute to the significance of the building. While comprehensive, changes to the layout of this floor would not affect the significance of the building as a whole.

Roof Level/Fourth Floor

5.19 Above the third floor proposals involve the introduction of a roof extension. As discussed in the preceding sections, while the building retains its butterfly roof form, this is predominantly a modern structure having been almost entirely replaced in the 1970s. The removal of the butterfly formation (while not historic) will have some effect on the legibility of the building but the introduction of the roof extension has a number of benefits. Properties either side of the site (nos. 3 and 5) both have roof extensions and indeed it is only nos. 4 and 7 in the listed terrace which do not. As such, the introduction of an appropriately scaled and detailed roof extension as proposed would reinstate a degree of consistency to the terrace of buildings and rectify the current 'saw tooth' arrangement that is present on this side of Montpelier Square. This amounts to a benefit to the grade II listed building, wider terrace and conservation area.

Building Wide Alterations

5.20 Aside from the more structural alterations discussed above proposals also involve works to halt decay and stop water ingress and fully refurbish the building including the introduction of appropriate surface finishes including:

- The removal of the poor quality and detracting late 20th century veneer wall lining;
- The introduction of a new chimney breast and fire surround to the rear ground floor room;
- The introduction of period appropriate cornices and joinery throughout the building; and

- The introduction of appropriate flooring throughout the building including levelling of floors and introduction of underfloor heating (thus facilitating the removal of radiators on all levels except the ground and first floors).

5.21 These elements of the proposals have the potential to result in a considerable enhancement to the significance of the grade II listed building through the reinstatement of lost detailing and increased authenticity.

5.22 Other building wide alterations would include the provision of radiators at ground and first floor level and under floor heating in the rest of the property. These works are wholly minor and could be undertaken without resulting in any effect on the significance of the grade II listed building, wider terrace or conservation area.

Policy Compliance

5.23 The proposed development is based on an understanding of the character of the listed building and conservation area, their historic development and significance alongside an understanding of surviving historic fabric. The proposals have been designed to support the existing residential use of the building while enhancing the building's functionality as a family dwelling in the 21st century.

5.24 The proposed development will result in both positive and negative impacts on the significance of the grade II listed building. Negative effects primarily result from loss of historic fabric and changes to plan form and circulation, while beneficial elements of the proposals are widespread and can be summarised as:

- Reinstatement of original room proportions at lower ground and ground floor level;
- Reinstatement of original door size and location to the front ground floor room;
- Reinstatement of a chimney breast and fire surround to the rear ground floor room;
- The replacement of the poor quality first floor conservatory with a high quality locally relevant modern addition;

- The removal of the poor quality and detracting late 20th century veneer wall lining;
- The introduction of period appropriate cornices and joinery throughout the building; and
- The introduction of appropriate flooring throughout the building including levelling of floors and introduction of underfloor heating (thus facilitating the removal of radiators on all levels except the ground and first floors); and
- The introduction of a roof extension which reinstates consistency to the terrace of listed buildings and provides coherence to the roofline of this part of the conservation area.

5.25 Overall, any harm to the significance of the listed building (i.e. the terrace of 1-7 Montpelier Square rather than 4 Montpelier Square individually) would be wholly limited and amount to a low level of less than substantial harm that would not seriously affect the significance of the building (Appendix 1).

5.26 Application of paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires the harm to be balanced against these benefits which enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and conservation area. Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. In this case the most significant aspects of the building, its external form and appearance and contribution to the wider area and the vast majority of its historic fabric and plan form, will be retained and where possible enhanced.

5.27 The proposals will have a wholly positive effect on the significance of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area due to the beneficial introduction of a roof extension and the betterment of the rear elevation through replacement of poor quality additions. There would be preservation for the purposes of the decision makers duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF and supports an application for planning permission and listed building consent for the alteration and extension of the grade II listed 4 Montpelier Square. This report provides a proportionate assessment of the significance of the application site and this is followed by an assessment of the effect of the proposals on that significance.
- 6.2** 4 Montpelier Square is grade II listed as part of its wider terrace, 1-7 Montpelier Square. The building is of clear architectural and historic interest as a good quality mid 19th century townhouse. The site is also within the Knightsbridge Conservation Area which includes a large portion of similar mid 19th century residential development.
- 6.3** The proposed development entails a number of alterations and extensions to the listed building which have been informed by a site specific assessment of the building, its history and development, significance and ability to absorb change. As identified in the preceding section, the proposed development will result in both positive and negative impacts on the significance of the grade II listed building. Negative effects primarily result from loss of historic fabric and changes to plan form and circulation, while beneficial elements of the proposals are widespread and listed in full at paragraph 5.24.
- 6.4** Overall, as identified by Section 5, taking into account negative and positive elements of the scheme, the proposed development would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building which would need to be weighed against the public benefit of the scheme in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF.
- 6.5** The proposals will have a wholly positive effect on the significance of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area due to the beneficial introduction of a roof extension and the betterment of the rear elevation through replacement of poor quality additions.

Appendix 1

Scale of Harm (HCUK, 2019)

The table below has been worked up by HCUK Group (2019) based on current policy and guidance. It is intended as simple and effect way to better define harm and the implications of that finding on heritage significance. It draws on various recent appeal decisions and reflects the increasing importance being put on the contribution of setting to significance and the need to create a greater level of clarity within the finding of less than substantial harm (see the NPPF, paragraph 194-196). This has been proving more and more necessary and the table below goes some way to reflect the most recent updates (2019) to the guidance set out within the NPPG⁷

Scale of Harm	
Total Loss	Total removal of the significance of the designated heritage asset.
Substantial Harm	Serious harm that would drain away or vitiate the significance of the designated heritage asset
Less than Substantial Harm	High level harm that could be serious, but not so serious as to vitiate or drain away the significance of the designated heritage asset.
	Medium level harm, not necessarily serious to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but enough to be described as significant, noticeable, or material.
	Low level harm that does not seriously affect the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Heritage Collective, 2019

It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases, certain aspects or elements could accommodate change without affecting the government's objectives, which include 'intelligently managed change' and which seeks to

⁷ See NPPG 2019. Section: 'How can the possibility of harm to a heritage asset be assessed?'. Paragraph 3, under this heading notes that '*within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.*'

ensure decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of those heritage assets affected.

Change is only considered to be harmful where it erodes or negatively affects a heritage asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage asset (along with any contribution made by its setting) is, therefore, fundamental to understanding the ability for the asset to accept change.

Standard Sources

<https://maps.nls.uk>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

www.history.ac.uk/victoria-county-history

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition). Historic England (2017 edition)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990

National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2019

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, Historic England (2008)