

18 SILVER STREET, DURHAM

HERITAGE STATEMENT

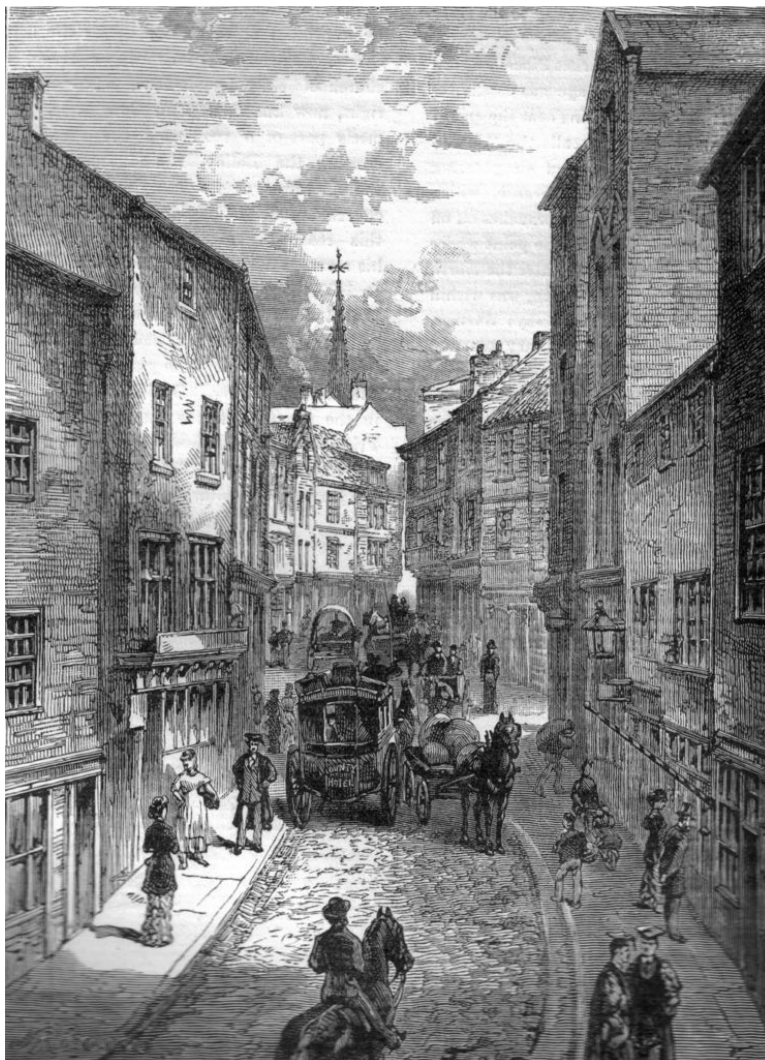
PROPOSED CONVERSION TO PROVIDE BOTH RETAIL AND RESIDENTIAL USE

Date of Issue 2022 05 10

1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany the prior notification application made by LPPL Property (UK) Ltd. and is required by virtue of the site's location in the City of Durham Conservation Area and its proximity to the World Heritage Site.

2.0 Nature of the Asset



Silver Street in the 19th Century

No. 18 occupies a corner site at the lower end of Silver Street where it approaches Framwelgate Bridge. Once beset with heavy traffic, the Street is now pedestrianised with controlled service access to the retail units. In itself the building is not worthy of listing but it enjoys non-designated heritage asset status because of its contribution to the group value of the city's medieval framework. At its upper end Silver Street joins the Market Place and is one of the busiest streets in the historic core, dominated by modern shop fronts, although the decline of the retail offer now features a proliferation of retail voids, in contrast to the days when it was primarily residential in character. Silver Street is said to acquire its name from being once the site of a mint where unique Durham coins were produced in the days of the Prince Bishops although a mint is also known to have existed at Palace Green. Originally it may not all have been called Silver Street however as lower down where it joins Framwelgate Bridge it is thought to have been originally called Smith Gate – the part of the city occupied by blacksmiths, reflecting the city's historic industrial riverside.

Historical Usage

Reference to title deeds in the Durham County Record Office archive has disclosed an interesting evolution in the property's use. Progressive deeds from 1789 have established that at that time 18 Silver Street was known as Waller's Hotel, whose uses included a malt kiln and malt loft. By 1806 the description had changed to house, shop and maltings. In 1872 it was described as a public house though still under the title Waller's Hotel. The following year it became the Castle Hotel and in 1921 it fell into the ownership of a series of brewing companies, the final operator being J. Nimmo and Son of Castle Eden. In the mid 20th century the Castle Hotel was closed and the building converted to retail.

Town maps in 1807 show that the property was limited on plan to a shallow depth on the street frontage. Later offshoots were constructed to the rear as shown on the attached Ordnance Survey maps of 1861 where the current block plan is more or less evident but there is a central yard to the rear serving as both access and light well. This arrangement continued until 1895 but by 1919 the eastern offshoot had been demolished and this was the situation until at least 1939. The OS map of 1960 shows the building footprint in its current form.

Structure and Condition

Behind the frontage rooms the offshoot compartments were built piecemeal and to a quality commensurate with their back-building status. Junctions with adjoining structures and buildings are accidental and it will be a function of the refurbishment works to correct poor construction practices of the past. The alterations of the mid 20th century to convert the building for retail use entailed the insertion of a steel frame to create functional clear span retail use, effectively obliterating any historic internal fabric. The façade to Silver Street alone clearly establishes the building's character value.



No 18 articulates the internal street corner



View from the public footpath to the rear of the site



View from Framwellgate Bridge western abutment with the roof of No. 18 part visible

3.0 Extent of the Asset

The building serves to articulate an internal corner of the street frontage. It is 3-storeyed to the street with simple slate-covered roof forms. The walls are finished in white render punctuated with mullioned sash windows, the north-facing ones of which are framed with plain stone architraves. Behind the façade the shell of the building is built against the massive revetment at the base of the castle slopes whilst the interior has been opened up to meet the retailing requirements. In fact, owing to the adjoining building to the west and the narrowness of the site there is very little of the building exterior open to public view. The plan extends for practically the full depth of the plot and terminates with a small triangular yard to the rear. The roofscape is a combination of pitched and flat forms.

4.0 Significance of the Asset

The building's heritage contribution hinges on its façade value to Silver Street and its proximity to the World Heritage Site boundary which it touches along the east side of the plot. Neither interface will be affected by the design which does not propose any extension of the building envelope.

5.0 Proposed Works

The scheme benefits from an existing planning approval for the conversion of the upper levels into residential use along with 1no. studio to the rear of the ground floor.

The prior notification proposes 1no. additional studio to the rear of the ground floor with no further external alterations required over and above what has already been approved

6.0 Conclusion

The application seeks to bring residential activity to currently unused building stock, underpinning the retail element and enhancing the vitality of the city centre. The proposal will have no visual impact. In terms of the local context the proposals can only benefit and sustain the urban and historic character.