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## Heritage Statement

Proposal      Renovation of existing basement, creation of sunken external courtyard/lightwells,  
and new entrance stair  
Location      Carlton House, 20 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton, CH43 1UX

### Introduction

This heritage statement has been prepared by SDA Architecture on behalf of our client in support of an application for Planning & Conservation Area Consent in respect of renovation and modification works proposed to Carlton House, 20 Shrewsbury Road, Oxton, CH43 1UX. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted architectural drawings accompanying the planning application.

The application site is located within the Oxton Village Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The aim of this statement is to assess any impact of the proposed development on the heritage asset, enabling and encouraging a positive cooperation with Wirral Council and partner organisations, assisting these to realise planning and conservation objectives.

### Heritage Significance: Oxton Village Conservation Area

Located approximately 1.5 miles inland on the north-eastern side of the Wirral peninsula, the historic hilltop settlement of Oxton predates and is distinct from the surrounding conurbation of Birkenhead. The heritage of the area as an early rural hamlet and affluent Victorian commuter settlement is widely known and celebrated locally. Oxton Village was designated a Conservation Area in 1979 and *The Oxton Village Conservation Area Management Plan* (2011), prepared by Wirral Council in conjunction with The Oxton Society, identifies some of the area's key elements of special interest as follows:

- Variety within a limited range of building development forms
- Sense of seclusion from the greater urban area of Birkenhead
- General high quality of buildings and structures
- Generally small scale but unexpected large mature dwellings
- A rural remnant
- A largely intact early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century idyll



Location of Nos. 20-22, Shrewsbury Road within  
the Oxtun Village Conservation Area





The application site lies on the north side of Shrewsbury Road, on the northernmost edge of the Conservation Area. As well as the Conservation Area boundary, Shrewsbury Road is also one of the main through routes within the Conservation Area. The road is mentioned in 'The History of the Hundred of Wirral' (p. 413) by William W. Mortimer (1847) as follows:

*"Large sums of money have recently been expended in the making and improving of the public roads; one of them – a street called the Shrewsbury Road – is hardly exceeded by any in this part of the kingdom, being about two thousand yards in length, and twenty yards in width, bounded on both sides by land belonging to William Potter, Esq."*

The site is categorised within the Oxtown Conservation Area Appraisal as 'Zone D', giving the following description (see pp. 22-23):

*"This zone sits on the north side of Oxtown Hill and is characterised by substantial villas set back in large, regular plots along a generally consistent building line. High boundary walls of brick and sandstone, with some mature tree cover, partially screen buildings from the often busy roads."*

*"Shrewsbury Road is a wide principal thoroughfare with a high level of traffic, contrasting with the relative peace and tranquillity of other zones. The former villas are currently in a variety of commercial and residential uses, with a number of former front gardens now given over to car parking."*

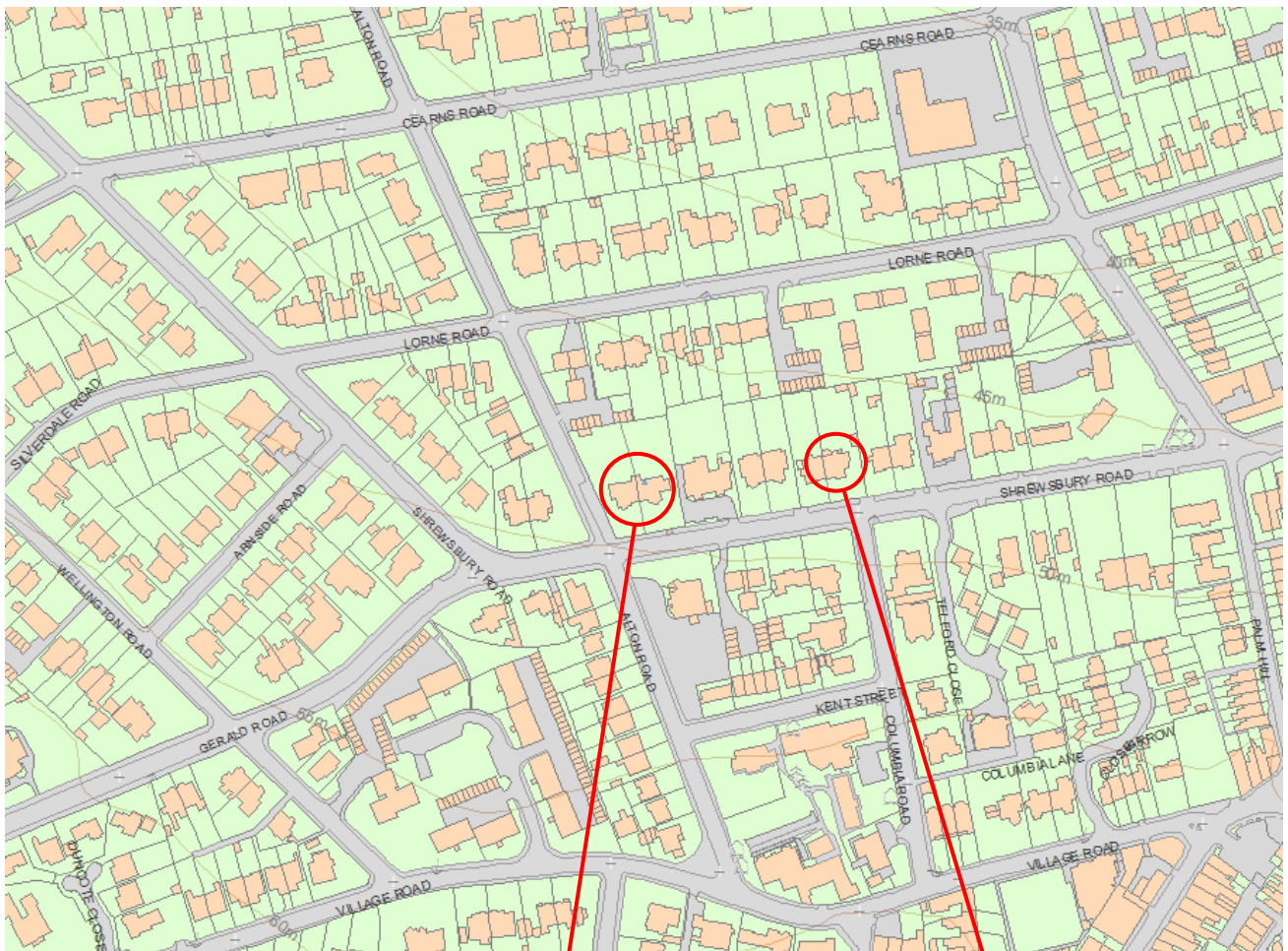
Carlton House is a semi-detached Victorian villa built during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Shrewsbury Road does not appear on the 1847 tithe map for the area; however, the street is shown as a recent development on the 1874 OS Map (shown below). Carlton House is a typical example of properties situated on the north side of Shrewsbury Road, which the Appraisal (p. 23) describes as "predominantly 2 and 3-storey villas of similar style comprising brick facades with projecting brick gables with stone dressings, some with classical stone pediments, projecting bays at ground floor, slate roofs and detailed chimney stacks". Like most houses along Shrewsbury Road, this is set well back from the road, screened from view by a boundary wall and mature foliage.

Map F included within the Appendices (Appraisal, p. 82) shows an assessment of the contribution of buildings within the conservation area to its overall character. Nos. 20-22, Shrewsbury Road, are identified as buildings which "make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area – buildings with most of their original character retained and buildings that may have some alterations, but the original character is still prominent".

The majority of buildings along Shrewsbury Road fall into this same category (B), although the directly adjacent pair of semis at Nos. 24-26, Shrewsbury Road, is identified as having a negative

impact “where the extent of intrusion or damage is so great that their appearance detracts from the significance or special character of the area”.

There are few buildings within the conservation area which Map F identifies as category A, or “critical to the character of the conservation area”. One such example is the listed building at No. 30, Shrewsbury Road.



Listed Heritage Asset

Application Site



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Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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 the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

The relevant List Entry is included below for reference (map overleaf):

*30, Shrewsbury Road*

*Heritage Category: Listed Building*

*Grade: II*

*List Entry Number: 1201732*

*Date first listed: 28-Mar-1974*

*House now divided as flats. c1860. Brick with stone dressings and concrete tiled roof. Designed as one of a symmetrical pair, 2-storeyed, 2 bays, with recessed full-height entrance block to right of advanced pedimented gable. 4-panelled door with overlight in segmental arch with voussoirs. Staircase giving access to upper flats added against return wall. Canted bay with casement window and parapet with balustrading to ground floor of gable with 4-pane sash window above. Tripartite window to left and 4-pane sash above, divided by paired string course. Axial and end wall stacks. 4 interior rooms remodelled by C.F.A. Voysey in 1902, including chimney pieces, joinery, and built-in furniture. (The Buildings of England: Pevsner N and Hubbard E: Cheshire: Harmondsworth: 1971-). Listing NGR: SJ3045987924*

Despite the subject site's location on a busy thoroughfare, this is well-screened from public view and afforded a sense of intimacy due to dense mature foliage along the front boundary. Whilst not itself a listed building, the heritage significance of No. 20, Shrewsbury Road, is recognised due to the wide range of factors identified above, including its preserved original character, positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, its location on a main thoroughfare through the conservation area, and proximity to the Grade II listed heritage asset identified as being critical to the character of the conservation area.





OS Map dated 1874 showing  
existing pair of semis at Nos. 20-  
22, Shrewsbury Road



## Site Images



*Image 1. Front elevation, No. 20, Shrewsbury Road*





*Image 2. Side (east) elevation, No. 20, Shrewsbury Road*





*Image 3. Rear elevation, No. 20, Shrewsbury Road*



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## Assessment of Impact & Mitigation

The proposed development comprises renovation of the existing basement, the creation of sunken external courtyard/lightwells, and new external entrance stair. Please refer to the existing and proposed plans, elevations and section drawings accompanying the application for details.

Like many such houses in the area, this has been previously subdivided with planning permission (reference APP/94/06996) having been granted in April 1995 to convert the lower ground floor into a self-contained flat. The proposals are intended to restore the property more fully into a single-family dwelling, albeit as a multigenerational family home with separate living facilities comprising living room, kitchen/dining area, bedroom, and study at basement level.

While the basement 'apartment' is connected to the main house internally, it will benefit from its own external access by way of a composite 'feature' door to the side elevation.

Overall, the original character of the property has been well preserved over the years, with many original features retained both externally and internally. Notably, however, this is more particularly the case at ground floor and above, while the basement has unfortunately suffered from a period of neglect. Timely renovation is proposed to preserve the original fabric of the building, while repurposing this for future use by providing additional residential accommodation to the main dwelling.

In terms of external changes to the property, these relate to the property at basement level and include replacement of the existing windows to the front and rear elevations. Full-height glazing is proposed to maximise on natural light within the newly created habitable spaces.

The existing basement-level windows and stone dressings do not benefit from the decorative features of those above-ground and are much simpler and more functional in appearance. The proposed windows are intended to be modest, simple, and functional in design, to complement those above, while the existing lintels are to be inspected onsite for proposed reuse.

Two external courtyard/lightwells are proposed to the front and rear, each with retaining walls finished in facing brick to match the main building. A simple glazed balustrade is proposed above-ground for safety.

The proposed materials have been carefully selected to enhance the dwelling's external appearance and better reflect the renewed character of the site and overall quality of buildings within the conservation area.







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## Conclusion

The proposals have been carefully designed to enhance the appearance of the building in keeping with the general high quality and diversity of structures which typify the Oxton Village Conservation Area. In view of the latest NPPF, the proposals are intended to be sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area and shall complement the neighbouring buildings. We regard the proposed development to be positive in terms of preservation of the building for sustained use as well as the social and economic impact on the wider area.

