



Heritage Impact Assessment

No. 22 Bridge Street, and
Commonhall Social, Commonhall
Street, Chester.

Openhome Ltd

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No. 22 Bridge Street is to the right

Executive Summary

This report is submitted in support of the full planning and listed building consent application for conversion of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of 22 Bridge Street to 2 apartments/townhouses, the creation of 8no. hotel rooms in conjunction with Commonhall Street Social, the refurbishment and upgrading of the Commonhall Street Social terraced area including the demolition of existing toilet block and storage areas to the rear, removal of canopy and increase in height of cellar room roof. Retention and refurbishment of existing, stand alone, ground floor shop. Proposed communal bin store in rear alleyway serving adjacent properties.

The site is within Chester City Conservation Area. No. 22 Bridge Street is located on the west side of Bridge Street, in an area that is predominantly retail and commercial. Commonhall Social is located on Commonhall Street. The buildings are in the vicinity of several heritage assets, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings and other buildings that are considered non-designated heritage assets. Collectively these have group value that contribute to the conservation area's special architectural and historic character and interest.

No. 22 Bridge Street forms part of The Dutch Houses, which are No. 22, 24, 26 Bridge Street, and No's 20 – 24 Bridge Street Row. It was probably built as one large townhouse in the 17th century but has been subdivided several times since. It now forms three townhouses and shops. There is a 19th century warehouse to the rear, which interconnects No. 22 Bridge Street with the rear yard of Commonhall Social. It is a Grade II listed building.

No 22 Bridge Street's significance lies in the strong architectural vocabulary as part of The Dutch Houses, expressed in the dominant projecting bay windows to second and third floor, the roof gables, and clearly articulated window detail to Bridge Street, with surviving 17th century fabric, and built within the medieval Rows structure. Its special architectural and historic interest has some features of interest internally but most of its interest is largely confined to the exterior, because of alteration in the 1970's that stripped out many features of importance. Nonetheless, the building makes an important contribution to this part of Chester City Conservation Area. It has a strong relationship and context to the wider townscape, complementing more exuberant frontages nearby and clearly articulated. It forms part of the street scene in Bridge Street that contributes to group value, views, and vistas; and its historical and aesthetic value, which helps define its sense of place.

The site is in an area identified in the Chester Characterisation Study as critical to the character of the sub area, "a key street intersection, with a remarkable mix of historic buildings, most of which are listed. The area includes The Rows, with vistas to key buildings and structures." The intrinsic significance of the application site is derived from its collection of commercial buildings, which form a recognisable and iconic street scene to The Cross and Bridge Street, developed over three hundred years.

The warehouse to the rear is an independent structure, and not built as an extension to No. 22 Bridge Street, although it forms part of the listing. The warehouse is accessed from both No. 22 Bridge Street and to Commonhall Social. It is a structure that defines the industrial character of development in a small quadrant of the city centre. Internally it has been stripped out and has no features of interest.

The setting of No. 22 Bridge Street has been carefully assessed. Notwithstanding its immediate setting, there are several listed buildings within the vicinity of the application site. These include No. 24 and 26, which form part of the listing as The Dutch House, the associated Rows, and No. 20 Bridge Street and No's 16-18 Row, which is a Grade II listed building. These are not directly affected by the proposals, but their setting will be. All of these are within the Chester City Conservation Area.

The Row level and upper floors to No. 22 Bridge Street have been vacant since 2020. The proposed conversion will not result in any significant changes to street level, but it will result in a significant aesthetic improvement at Rows level with the new shopfront. The internal proposals will create a difference to the existing plan form to facilitate the proposed development. There is an opportunity to appreciate the significance of the building which will be better revealed by restoring and highlighting some of the key architectural and historic internal features of the building, such as the staircase, fireplaces, and timber framing within the reordering.

The alteration to the rear of No. 22 Bridge Street involves the removal of a small section of late 19th / early 20th century outrigger to the rear of Rows level so the warehouse and No. 22 are no longer connected at this level. The purpose of this is to allow for improved daylight into long dark buildings, along with private outdoor space, which would improve the setting and legibility of each structure. No. 22 is still read as a town house and whilst it once had amenity space, now it has none. These townhouses, converted back to high quality residential properties, require some private space. This is a small change that would not appear in any views from Bridge Street and would only be seen in a limited way from the rear of Bridge Street buildings. This would be minor intervention, of less than substantial harm purely in terms of the small degree of loss of some 19th century fabric. In terms of impact this is not dominant. The courtyard amenity space is a contemporary feature. This alteration must be determined and assessed on a case by case basis to establish the impact.

Retaining a wall for the outdoor courtyard would mitigate to some degree this loss of enclosure of the plot at this level. It would cause a minor neutral change to the rear of No. 22 Bridge Street and the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. It would not have a significant impact on the character of the conservation area or on the listed buildings or their setting. It is not considered that the appreciation of No. 22 Bridge Street or the group of buildings and structures associated with it, would be changed to any significant degree. The high quality, contemporary proposed design would be a positive addition to the building.

Re utilising the former warehouse to the rear of No. 22 Bridge Street for hotel rooms in conjunction with Commonhall Social, plus the removal of a toilet block and canopy will retain and express the legibility of the original function, form, and identity of the warehouse and will reinforce the industrial 19th century character of this part of the conservation area. It is part of the small historic industrial quarter of the area, of which Commonhall Social forms part. The character and setting of Commonhall Social and its courtyard, of which the warehouse forms part, is enhanced.

The significance and setting of the heritage assets and key views have been carefully considered as part of the development proposal. The proposed residential use to No. 22 Bridge Street will create a viable new use to a vacant listed building within the city centre, The investment into the repair and maintenance into the building will be a key heritage benefit. The ability to appreciate and regenerate The Row level is a significant public benefit, that would encourage footfall to the Row area. The removal of a poor quality later frontage to the Rows for a traditional shop front that in terms of design, proportion and geometry is a positive intervention. The reuse is not considered contentious from a heritage perspective. It will regenerate this part of the Rows. It will preserve the special interest of the building and will not diminish its significance.

The works to the warehouse to create hotel rooms for Commonhall Social is well considered and will put a much altered building back into a viable and appropriate use, with a use that is seen to similar establishments in the city centre, such as Oddfellows.

The ability to appreciate the reasons for the designation of the conservation area and listed buildings would remain, and their fundamental character would still be wholly legible. Many of the changes are positive, and it is considered that any harm arising from the small scale area of demolition would be less than substantial in the terms of the NPPF. Any harm caused to the character of the building by this would be limited and would have to be balanced against the benefits outlined above. The proposal will bring substantial positive public benefits to the building, The Rows and to Chester. As such, it is respectfully requested that the application is supported.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage impact assessment has been prepared on behalf of Openhome Ltd, to assess the heritage impact of proposals on No. 22 Bridge Street and Commonhall Social. No, 22 Bridge Street Chester, is a Grade II listed building. This report is submitted in support of the full planning and listed building consent application for conversion of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of 22 Bridge Street to 2 apartments/townhouses, the creation of 8no. hotel rooms in conjunction with Commonhall Street Social, the refurbishment and upgrading of the Commonhall Street Social terraced area including the demolition of existing toilet block and storage areas to the rear, removal of canopy and increase in height of cellar room roof. Retention and refurbishment of existing, stand alone, ground floor shop. Proposed communal bin store in rear alleyway serving adjacent properties.”.
- 1.2 No. 22 Bridge Street was granted permission for the insertion of new partitions and services, and the removal of modern finishes and partitions to convert the retail and associated office space of 22 Bridge Street to a bar/restaurant space on the ground, first and second floor, and residential accommodation on the second, third and fourth floor in 2021 under listed building consent reference 20/04059/LBC and planning reference 20/04058/FUL.
- 1.3 No. 22 Bridge Street was listed in 1955. The listing description was amended in 1998. The building is located within the Chester and Boughton Area of Archaeological Importance. It is located within Archaeological Character Zone 8: The Chester Rows.
- 1.4 The purpose of the assessment is to identify the significance of the heritage assets affected, and to consider and describe the effects of the proposals to them. This includes direct and indirect impacts on the listed building and its setting. This includes views from key landmark buildings within Chester City conservation area, and how the proposals will preserve and enhance the special architectural interest of the conservation area. It identifies mitigating measures, where necessary, to address this impact.
- 1.5 This document has been prepared following several site visits, the most recent in April 2023, and historical research. It is to be read in conjunction with other associated documents in relation to the planning and listed building consent application.



Fig 2. Aerial images. The buildings are arrowed red.

2.0 Relevant Conservation Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 Under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities must give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 of the same Act states, in the exercising of planning functions in conservation areas special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, when assessing planning applications.
- 2.2 National guidance is within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policies 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Of relevance is policies on Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets, which 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.” In Considering Potential Impacts the NPPF states that “193. 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 ... irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. 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. Paragraph 196. advocates 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.” Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that “Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.”
- 2.3 A **heritage asset** is described in the glossary of the NPPF (Annex 2) 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. Heritage assets includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” (*Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, June 2021*). Designated heritage assets as those designated under legislation. These are a “World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area”.

- 2.4 The definition of **significance** in relation to heritage policy is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. “
- 2.5 The **setting** of a heritage asset is defined 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.” Setting is not a heritage designation.
- 2.6 In the Bramshill case in the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Lindblom stated “what amounts to "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" in a particular case will always depend on the circumstances. Whether there will be such "harm", and, if so, whether it will be "substantial", are matters of fact and planning judgment.” This is balanced against the public benefits generated by the proposals.
- 2.7 Relevant local plan policies are in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan: Part 1: ENV5 Historic Environment, and ENV6 High quality design and sustainable construction; and Part 2: CH 5 - Chester conservation areas, CH 6 - Chester key views, landmarks and gateways and historic skyline, DM 3 - Design, character and visual amenity, DM 14 – City and Town Centres; DM 46 - Development in conservation areas and DM 47 – Listed buildings. These policies reflect national planning policy in the preservation and enhancement of the building environment. In line with Local Plan (Part One) policies STRAT 3 and ENV 5, development within Chester's conservation areas, as identified on the policies map, will be required to demonstrate a very high quality of design, and contribute positively to the townscape and the city's setting.

2.8 The Rows

2.8.1 Local Plan (Part Two) Policy DM 47 – Listed buildings specifically mentions The Rows. Of relevance to this application is the following: -

Where it can be demonstrated that the special architectural and historic interest of the premises and the character of the building and wider townscape is protected, new uses for buildings on The Rows which encourage pedestrian footfall, retain the predominant public access to the Rows, improve natural surveillance, and promote commercial viability will be supported in accordance with Local Plan (Part Two) policy DM 14 Business signage applied or attached to Row beams or posts will only be supported where the design, location and materials are sympathetic to the character and appearance of The Rows.

Hanging signs on street frontage elevations will only be supported where they advertise the businesses at the premises; are of appropriate size, design, and materials; and are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building and The Rows.

2.8.2 Local Plan (Part Two) Policy DM 14 – City and Town Centres also states, regarding The Rows: -

Within the historic Rows, new development must encourage footfall and provide interest through active frontages, with the retention of historic frontages as a priority.

3.0 The application site and identified heritage assets.

3.1 The application site is No. 22 Bridge Street and No. 20 The Rows. The site is part of Dutch House and part of the Rows system. The listing description is described as Number 20, 22 And 24 Row, The Dutch Houses, Number 22, 24 And 26 Street. The site is within Chester City Conservation Area. It is located on the west side of Bridge Street, close to the junction with Commonhall Street. Bridge Street is a key thoroughfare within the city centre in the walled city. The building is retail / commercial to ground floor, and vacant at first floor Row level and above. The warehouse to the rear presently is used as an art gallery.

3.2 The designated heritage assets that are relevant in considering the proposed development are identified below:

Directly impacting:

Listed Building: No. 22 Bridge Street – the application site and No 20 Row (Grade II)

Conservation Area: Chester City

Non-designed heritage asset – Commonhall Social, Commonhall Street

Indirectly impacting: -

Listed Building: No. 20 Bridge Street and No 16 and 18 Row (Grade II)

Listed Building: No. 24 Bridge Street and No 22 Row – part of the same listing as the application site.

Listed Building: No. 26 Bridge Street and No 24 Row – part of the same listing as the application site.

The setting on specific buildings close to the rear of the application site.

3.3 The building is in the Chester & Boughton Area of Archaeological Importance and within Character Zone 8 of the Chester Archaeological Plan (2014). The impact of development on archaeology has not been assessed and will be subject to further comment from the Council's Development Management Archaeologist.

4.0 Historical context and heritage assets

- 4.1 Chester is a Roman city in origin, with its defensive rectangular fortress, grid iron street pattern and impressive gateways, which are still evident today. There are four main streets in the walled city, Northgate, Eastgate, Watergate and Bridge Street, of which three meets at The Cross, a central crossroads. The street pattern is based on the Roman fort layout. Bridge Street lies on Via Praetoria, the main access through the fort. Watergate Street was on the line of Via Principalis. The fort's headquarters was the site of where St. Peter's Church now stands. During this period the west side of Bridge Street including the application site, was occupied by Tribunes House, the officers' quarters, and the hospital.
- 4.2 The Norman earls enlarged the Roman and later Saxon defences to complete the city walls that survive today. By 1350, the Rows were largely in place in the four main streets including Lower Bridge Street, with documentary references to the Rows indicating that the area around St. Peter's Church and The Cross were the first.
- 4.3 Chester was reconstructed after damage wreaked by the Civil War, which was towards the end of the 17th century. It became a fashionable place to live and prospered. Architecturally this is expressed by Georgian town houses built in a classical style, such as the Old Bishop's Palace on St. John Street, Booth's Mansion on Watergate Street, Forest House on Love Street, and structures such as the Grosvenor Bridge and the Propylaeum. It was during this time that the city walls were converted into pedestrian walkways and where the medieval gateways were gradually replaced by wider gateways to allow carriages through. In 1768, Richard Grosvenor, 1st Earl Grosvenor replaced Eastgate. Joseph Turner's Watergate was built 20 years later. Running parallel to this was an improvement in transport networks including the construction of the canal and the Grosvenor Bridge, a single segmental arch of two hundred feet (61 metres), over the river Dee, the largest in Europe at the time, built in 1827.
- 4.4 The Georgian era was prolific, with buildings created by Thomas Harrison (1744 –1829), once of Chester's most eminent architects, described as a leader of the Greek Revival in North West England. His commissions include Chester Castle and accommodation for the Assize Court (now Chester Crown Court). This also included the Prison, Armoury and Exchequer, built between 1793 and 1820, and Propylaeum built between 1811-1813. Harrison built Northgate; a Grade I listed sandstone archway connecting the city walls over Northgate Street.

- 4.5 The period in architecture for which Chester is best known and which established the identity of the city centre was the extensive rebuilding in a vernacular revival style which began in the 1850's and lasted well into the early 20th century. This resulted in the half-timber buildings that romanticised the spirit of a former age, with sensitivity to artisanship, using a high quality but narrow pallet of materials. As well as the creation of several buildings, the ethos was on retaining and maintaining historic landmarks such as The Rows, and 'restoring' existing timber framed buildings, such as Bishop Lloyd's Palace. The movement in Chester was pioneered by the architect Thomas Mainwaring Penson (1818–64). Many buildings were built in this style by Thomas Meakin Lockwood and John Douglas (1830-1911), who transformed the character and appearance of Chester.



Fig 3. Bridge Street West, adjacent to the Cross, built by Lockwood in 1892.

4.6 The Rows

- 4.6.1 Despite many alterations, from the 16th century onwards, The Rows are in a form that is still recognisable today and are unique to Chester. They are elevated pedestrian walkways at first floor level, accessed by steps at various intervals ground floor level. Underneath the walkway are undercrofts and shops; the latter are also on the first floor. These create a double tier of shops, and the second-floor projects over the walkway, supported on pillars. They are multi-faceted, typically representing several different architectural styles in one building.
- 4.6.2 Between the Rows walkway and the balustrading to the street are stalls. These developed from the late 15th century onwards, when properties were made larger by extending the chamber or second floor over the Row and supporting it on posts. The gap between these posts and the street side of the Row walkway was then covered by a stallboard. This allowed for both extending the undercroft or shop at street level, and for adding appropriate headroom. This encroachment took place through the 1500's and 1600's. They are still evident today. Many slope downwards from the Rows balustrades at street level to the Rows walkway.
- 4.6.3 Enclosure and removal of some areas of the Rows gallery occurred towards the end of the 17th century following the end of the Civil War, when the city became fashionable with wealthy families and buildings were re-fronted or rebuilt in the classical style. However, the Rows were still thriving places of trade and permission to enclose was carefully scrutinised and largely refused by the City Assembly. The 1845 Chester Improvement Act clarified Council and owner responsibilities for maintaining the Rows.
- 4.6.4 The Rows became fashionable again during the vernacular revival period of the mid-19th century. The Rows were appreciated for their historic uniqueness, and antiquity, and as an asset to tourism, and new development retained the Rows within their new structure.
- 4.6.5 Today the Rows remain crucial to the special character of Chester and its attraction as a tourism and retail destination. They are, however, chronically underutilised, and underappreciated, with high vacancies at Rows level and dark and dirty pockets, particularly at No. 2 – 8 Bridge Street. No. 10 Bridge Street, and Bridge Street Row West.

4.7 No 22 Bridge Street

- 4.7.1 No. 22 Bridge Street, along with the remainder of the Dutch House, which is externally expressed as one building, appears to be 17th century in origin, and forms part of the Rows system on Bridge Street West. The Rows of Chester Research Project (1999) describes the building as “this structure, with its distinctive façade and twisted columns, appears to have been built as a single impressive property.” We now know, from inspection of the stripped out interior, that it was heavily altered during repair work in the early 1970’s by Chester City Council. Steelwork including goalpost structures were inserted into the structure and No. 22 has few surviving historic features to Rows level and above. Features that remain include evidence of timber framing to the attics to the front and rear and a 17th century roof structure. The Rows level and above have sandstone columns evident, which rises through the whole 4 storeys. Alterations in the 18th, 19th and early 20th century have taken place, and these are evidenced by window styles for example, or floor boarding, and changes to brickwork.
- 4.7.2 The Rows would have had associated yards, and separate kitchens, prior to the interventions and rebuilding that took place in the 19th century. Workshops and The Courts – a series of residential courtyards accessed by alleys from Commonhall Street and The Rows- dominated the hinterland behind the Rows and were built over yards and gardens to the rear of and between Watergate Street, Commonhall Street and Bridge Street. They were probably built between the earlier 18th century and the 1840s, to house the urban poor, and following the Chester Improvement Act of 1845, many had been cleared by the late 1890’s.
- 4.7.3 The building has a distinctive double storey projection where the building jetties over the Rows and over the street. New windows were inserted to the front s part of the restoration work of the 1970’s. The Row front has substantial painted wood barley sugar balusters and rails, those to No.20, inserted 1973, were in place of 19th century cast-iron railings. There exists a rectangular stop-chamfered sandstone pier at each end and between Nos 20 & 22. The Row walk paving is covered, and there is a modern Row shop front that detracts from the building.

- 4.7.4 Internally there are few features of interest. Of note are sandstone 17th century fireplaces to the upper floors above Rows level, and a 17th century staircase. The listing description describes the rear has having two gables, to the north bay (No.20 Row) and to the combined middle and south bays (Nos 22 & 24 Row), indicating an early single tenement. The attic storey, largely clad, shows a late C17 roof truss at rear of front room of No.20 and at rear of Nos 22 & 24, oak purlins.
- 4.7.5 The plan has been altered considerably. Access to the upper floors of No. 22 Bridge Street is from the Rows only. The second floor is accessed via a steel staircase. The building is deep and narrow with little light to this level. The walls are of exposed brick. There are no features of historical interest of note.
- 4.7.6 The Rows plus one floor, (second floor) includes a generous and well-lit east facing room projecting over and overlooking Bridge Street. The 1970's transom and mullioned windows are substantial and let in a good amount of light. Of note are 17th century sandstone chamfered pillars to each of the north and south walls, with lamb's tongue stops. This room, or front parlour, also has a red sandstone fireplace of 17th century date, lined with brick. This level also has what appear to be a section of 17th century staircase with barley sugar balustrades, some missing.
- 4.7.7 The Rows plus two floors (third floor) has a similar front room to that below, with similar detailing, including a smaller red sandstone fireplace with a cyclopean Tudor arch. leading up to the attic, or fourth floor; the latter being probably the most complete in terms of survival of 17th century fabric.
- 4.7.8 The fourth floor has two small attic rooms, accessed from the stairs. A small attic room to the east front of the building includes exposed oak purlins, and oak panelling with lath and plaster to the central wall It is possible that the floor has been raised. A rear attic room on the same floor includes a 19th century fireplace, with timber framing including arched wind braces to the north roof slope.



Fig 4. Top, left, an engraving by George Cuijt, c1810-11; right: an engraving by George Bateman 1816.

Bottom left: The Dutch Houses 1895 and right: today



Fig 5. Rows level – left internal view of the Rows doorway; centre: steel goalposts c1973-5; right: timber framing and behind, the south wall of No. 20 Bridge Street

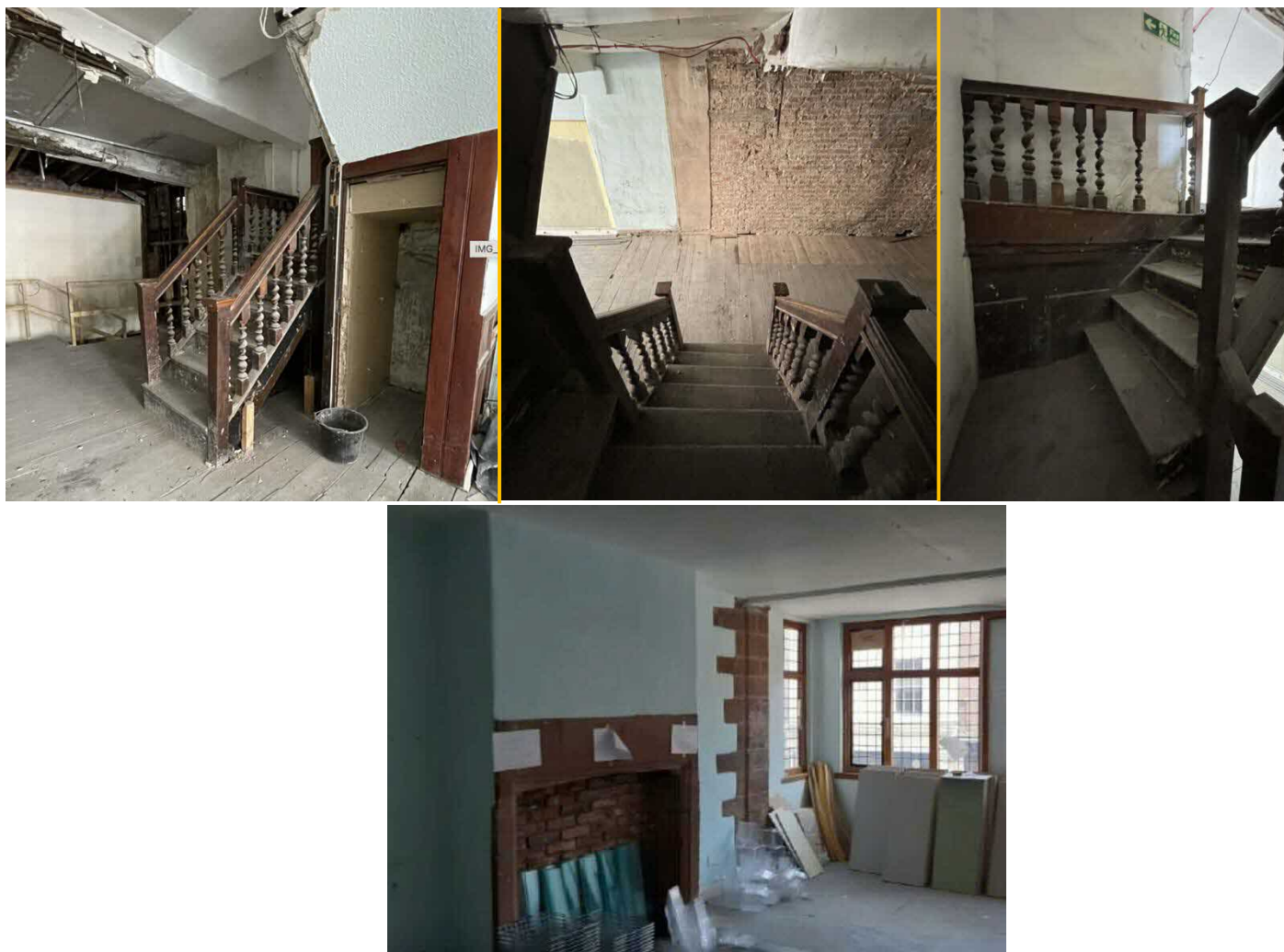


Fig 6. The 17th century staircase on the Row plus one level; and the sandstone fireplace surround.



Fig 7. Left: The 17th century sandstone fireplace on the Row plus two level; Right The 17th century sandstone piers to north and south walls with lamb's tongue stops.



Fig 8. Left: The 17th century staircase on the Row plus one level; Right The 19th century fireplace and west facing attic room to rear.



Fig 9. Left: Rear west facing attic room showing 17th rafters. Middle: note arched braces to rear, and light coloured modern ceiling timbers. It appears that the roof was truncated when No. 20 was built (right), and the timbers of the original roof structure have been pushed back into No. 22 so that they are flat rather than part of the roof structure. Modern windows to rear.



Fig 10. East attic room showing timber frame roofing structure and three oak purlins.

4.8 The Warehouse

- 4.8.1 Aerial photographs suggest that warehouses to the rear of Bridge Street west were built in some numbers and appear to be of approximately of late 19th century date. They have been 'shoehorned' to the rear of Bridge Street, Commonhall Street and Watergate Street, hemmed in by other buildings and taking up available space in previous yards or courts. There exists five such warehouses of similar scale, design, and massing, including that to No. 10, the rear of No. 18 and the rear of No. 20 Bridge Street. Prior to the period 1850-1914, many rooms in domestic properties were used as workshops. In the 19th century many of the buildings traditionally classified as workshops made some use of power, to some processes only. Whilst the warehouse use is assumed to perhaps have been associated with the use at No.22, this is not conclusive and is difficult to prove. It may have been built speculatively.
- 4.8.2 Neither the listing description or The Rows of Chester Research Project (1999) mention the warehouse, and where warehouses exist behind the buildings along Bridge Street; the warehouse appears to be 19th century. Inside it has been gutted with new floors inserted, but it retains its king post trusses. It is accessed from No. 22 from the ground floor, where it forms part of the retail space. It is accessed also to Commonhall Street Social via a modern opening to the rear. The warehouse is of three storeys. It has a pitched roof with an outshut for housing concrete stairs that allows for access to all floors. The roof is supported by king post trusses (for a modest span), and there are eight rooflights.
- 4.8.3 The warehouse is an independent structure, and not built as an extension to No. 22 Bridge Street. The warehouse is of a local brick suggesting it may be earlier than the late 19th century, as others in the vicinity built in the late 19th century are of Ruabon red brick. Access to the warehouse externally appeared to have been originally via the alley through the Courts, behind Commonhall Street.
- 4.8.4 The plan of the interior of the warehouse is rectangular and quite shallow in depth, and probably only suitable for small scale business use. The relative compactness of the warehouse makes it more suitable as a workshop rather than as a warehouse. The building has undergone alterations, but the footprint remains largely the same as when it was built. It is inconclusive whether historically the workshop was related to the business use at No.22 or whether space was let out to any business requiring or sharing space, or for manufacturing and for storage and packing. The fenestration pattern is the same to all floors suggesting that the use was not specialised or restricted to one floor, and there doesn't appear to be any loading door, or any evidence for one. It could have been multi tenanted.



Fig 11. Aerial views looking from east Bridge Street to west, and north from the Cross (Copyright: Historic England). The arrows denote the application site.

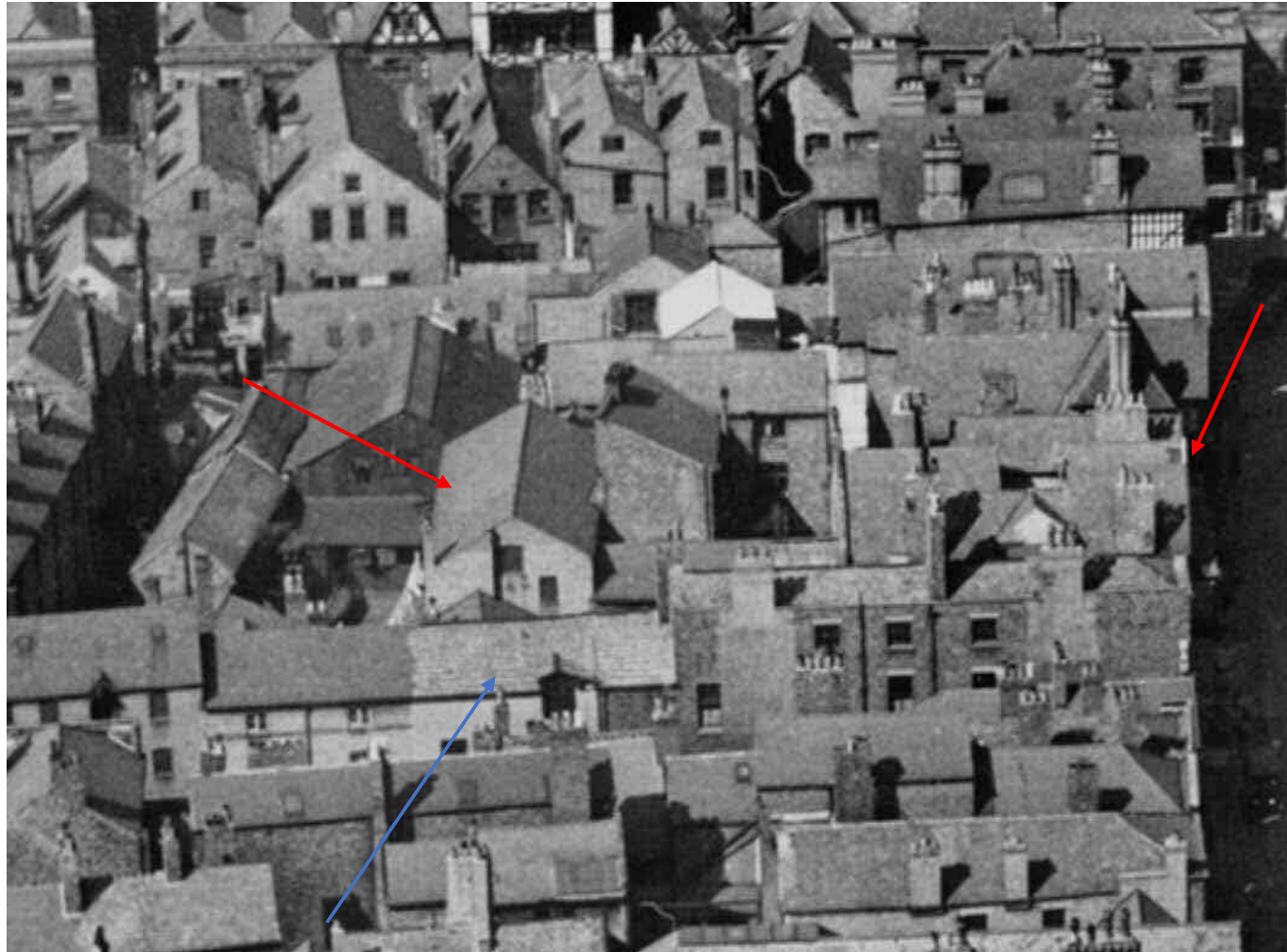


Fig 12. Image EPW005884 ENGLAND (1921). Bridge Street, Chester, 1921. (Copyright: Britain from the Air). No. 22 Bridge Street and the warehouse are arrowed red.



Fig 13. Image EPW029884 ENGLAND (1929). Watergate Street and Eastgate Street, Chester, 1929. (Copyright: Britain from the Air). Warehouse arrowed red, No. 22 Bridge Street arrowed blue. Note connecting outrigger to No. 22 - arrowed yellow, and the former court dwellings in front of the warehouse (arrowed green)..



Fig 14. Inside the warehouse. The floors were removed under 10/12883/LBC | Removal of all internal fixtures and fittings | 22 Bridge Street And 20 Bridge Street Row Chester Cheshire CH1 1NQ – floors removed from warehouse to rear of similar construction and build for former Steam Trader.

- 4.8.5 No. 22 was in use as a retail shops in the later 20th century. It is assumed that at some point in the 20th century the buildings came to be owned by the same company and as such a link was created joining the two buildings.
- 4.8.6 There is no visible evidence of the warehouse being interconnected with any neighbouring building in the past. The removal of all the modern fittings and new flooring approved in 2010 leaves the shell. The warehouse is a structure of some local, rather than national interest. It doesn't appear to have had any specialist function, related to any specialist trade concentrated in the area, and is utilitarian in appearance. It is not mentioned in the listing.

5.0 The significance of the heritage assets

5.1 **Assessing significance** is embedded in national planning policy. Heritage values that contribute to a greater understanding of significance are identified by Historic England in 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (April 2008)' as being: -

Evidential
Historical
Aesthetic
Communal

5.2 There are six commonly accepted levels of significance. These are as follows: -

Outstanding	Highest level of importance, SAMs, WHS, Grade I / II* listed buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens
High (significant)	Grade II listed buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and conservation areas
Medium (moderate)	Locally listed buildings, and those buildings that contribute to a listed building's setting
Low (limited)	Limited heritage value
Neutral	Neither positive nor negative features
No significance	Features that detract from the heritage values

5.3 A report by Donald Insall Associates was submitted in October 2020 for the previous listed building consent reference 20/04059/LBC and planning reference 20/04058/FUL for No. 22 Bridge Street. This outlined several features of significance. The features of significance are agreed and where relevant the findings have been added to this report.

5.4 The significance of Chester City Conservation Area – Central Area: The Cross

5.4.1 Chester City Conservation Area has a very distinct character created by its ancient history, its high quality and distinctive architecture, the City Walls, amphitheatre, the two-tiered Rows, Cathedral, the topography which influences its key views into and outside of the city and setting on the river Dee.

5.4.2 The conservation area has been assessed in the Chester Characterisation Study. Its overall character has been subcategorised into several character areas and summarised as follows:

Critical: of utmost importance, this sub-area plays a crucial role in the character of the conservation area overall.

Positive: the sub-area contributes positively and is important to the character of the Character Area.

Neutral: the sub-area either has no overall or both positive or negative impacts on character; and is neutral in balance.

Negative: the sub-area detracts from the character of this Character Area.

(Chester Characterisation Study 2011: Executive Summary)

5.4.3 No. 22 is within Area A1. Bridge Street. The Chester Characterisation Study defines the boundary as the area that “radiates from The Cross and contains the core of the city and the majority of the unique Rows system”. The character area is described as thus: - “A key street intersection, with a remarkable mix of historic buildings, most of which are listed. The area includes The Rows, with vistas to key buildings and structures. The land falls southwards on Bridge Street towards the Dee and on Watergate Street towards the Old Port.” Area A1 is identified as critical to the character of the sub area.

5.4.4 Commonhall Street is in Area A10. The Chester Characterisation Study defines the boundary as the “rear area behind central shopping streets. Buildings mixed in age and quality. Some good street frontages, some underused and cleared areas. Good listed Victorian cottages.” Area A10 is identified as neutral to the character of the sub area.

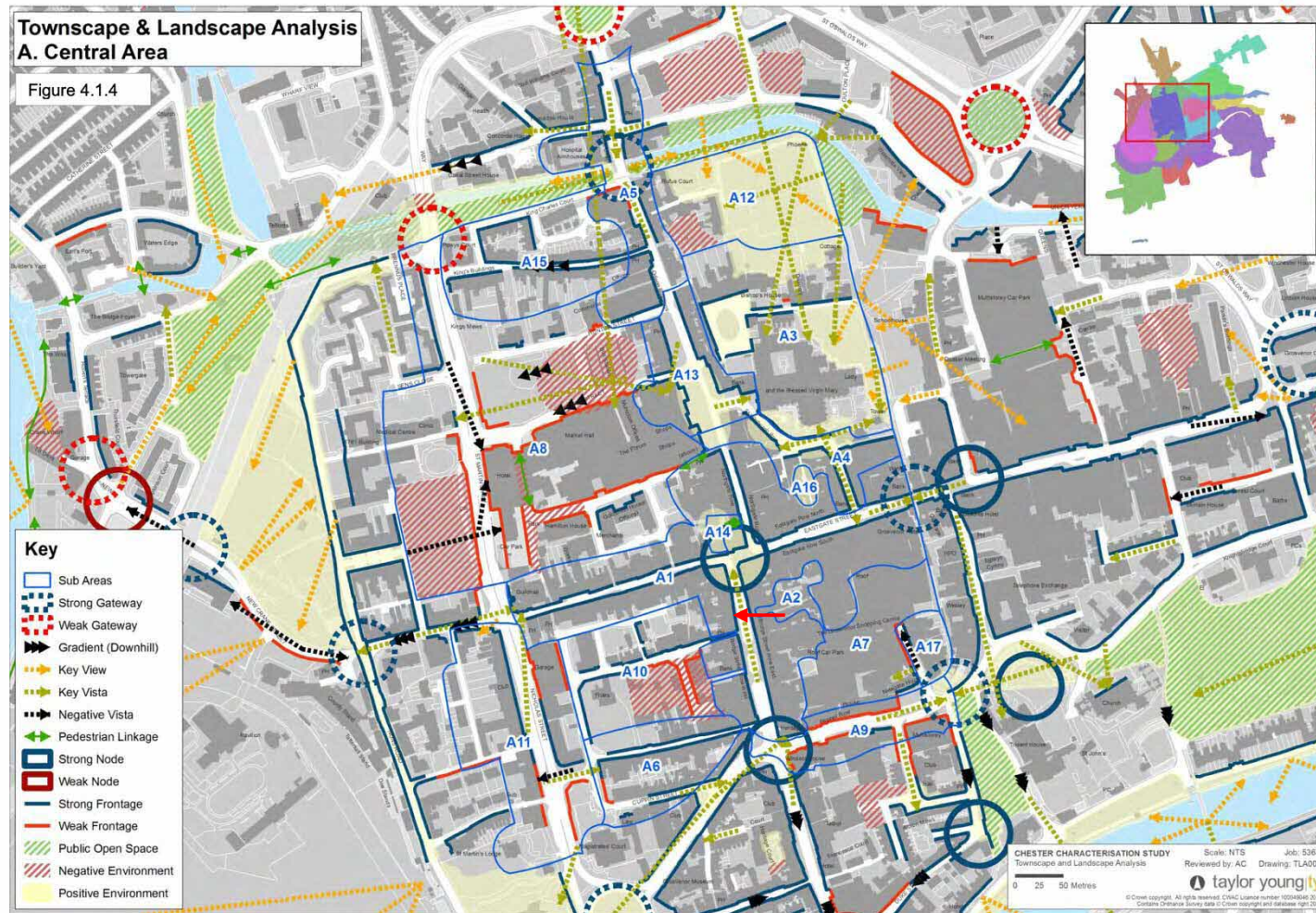




Fig 15. Fig 9: Townscape analysis of the area from the Chester Characterisation Study 2011 (red arrow is application site)


5.5 Heritage values - Chester City Conservation Area – Bridge Street and Commonhall Street

<p>Evidential Value – High</p>	<p>The area has a history of use that has gradually evolved over time, as evidenced in archival and archaeological records. This includes historic use, including the shape and boundaries, which are well preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and reports.</p> <p>There is national archaeological significance as the existing street pattern forms part of a medieval street pattern.</p>	<p>Overall significance High</p> 
<p>Historical Value – High</p>	<p>Chester is unique with its Roman street pattern and amphitheatre, the City Walls and later historic settlement pattern, landform, landscape, topography, and architecture contributing strongly to its sense of place. The conservation area retains many authentic structures that contribute to its wider setting. The evolution of the city is demonstrated in its streets and architecture. The Cross area is a key historic node, dating from Roman times.</p> <p>Bridge Street is of medieval origin, with surviving fabric and buildings of character from the medieval, Georgian, and Victorian period and later. Narrow frontages suggest that plots were built on burgage plots, and these have not substantially changed. Commonhall Street is more industrial in character and domestic in scale and read clearly as a secondary street.</p>	
<p>Aesthetic Value – High</p>	<p>Bridge Street is a busy thoroughfare on a north-east / south-west axis from The Cross to Lower Bridge Street and the River Dee and is in the city centre within the Walls. It has a diversity of architectural style and is predominantly retail and commercial. Buildings mostly sit directly on the building line at back of pavements, with an almost continuous frontage. The street generally is of high architectural quality, with a tight urban grain, defined by the street, block and plot patterns, and linear form, with exuberant and more restrained frontages. It has funnelled stop views along the street of buildings, with views up to St Peter’s church at The Cross and downwards towards river. The experience of the view changes because of the topography, staggered rooflines, strong narrow frontages, narrow grain, and architecture character. Its character is generally bustling. It is part of the permeable network of streets and alleys within the city centre. It has a high number of listed buildings. Commonhall Street is more varied in terms of buildings and the public realm is poor.</p>	
<p>Communal Value - High</p>	<p>The conservation area has regional interest for the wider community in which it serves and national and international significance for its historic and unique buildings, with Bridge Street contributing to the distinct sense of place.</p>	


5.6 Heritage Values - The Rows (various listings)

<p>Evidential Value - outstanding <i>This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity.</i></p>	<p>The site has a history of use that has gradually evolved over time, as evidenced in archival and archaeological records, with an emphasis on trading continuity. The construction, shape and boundary are well preserved as indicated by historic mapping and study sources, and they also identify what design and construction changes have occurred over the centuries. There is national archaeological significance as they overlie the Roman fort and settlement; but are part of the medieval structure of the city.</p> <p>They are integral to understanding the development of trade in Chester.</p>	<p>Overall significance Outstanding</p> 
<p>Historical Value – Outstanding <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i></p>	<p>The Rows has the greatest concentration of under crofts and medieval townhouses in England. The unique two-tiered trading space which has not significantly changed over 700 years is internationally significant. There is also a recognisable 17th century plan form to some of the buildings, and medieval under crofts. The Row was purpose built to No. 11 and 11A Lower Bridge Street in 1760.</p> <p>The Rows are listed at various gradings for their special architectural and historic interest and are within the Chester City conservation area.</p>	
<p>Aesthetic Value - Outstanding <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i></p>	<p>Notable architects who designed the architecture that includes the Rows are recorded, in particular those of the vernacular revival. There are earlier examples that date to the 17th and 18th centuries.</p> <p>Different treatments to The Row façade create a strongly aesthetic appeal. A narrow pallet of materials is used to create a high-quality architectural composition and they are nationally significant. Some are neglected and underused, as is the case with No. 11 and 11A, with poor frontages at Rows level.</p> <p>The stall boards and balustrades provide a degree of continuity. The internal and external juxtaposition of space allows for observing the streets and the buildings beyond.</p> <p>Much of The Rows are listed for their special architectural and historic interest and are within the Chester City conservation area.</p>	
<p>Communal Value - Outstanding</p>	<p>The Rows are unique to Chester. They have historical, architectural, symbolical, and cultural significance as a route above the street for domestic trade and tourism, offering a unique two-tiered visual experience. They are one of the most photographed images of the city.</p>	

5.7 Heritage Values - No. 22 Bridge Street (Grade II)

<p>Evidential Value - High <i>This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity.</i></p>	<p>The site has a history of use as a single town house (The Dutch House) before being split into three town houses with shops, as evidenced in archival and map sources. It was built in the late 17th century, approximately 1690, to include the Row, and erected above earlier undercrofts. It is 17th century in character with a modern shopfront and alterations. It has been altered in the 19th and 20th century, and with grant aid in the early 1970's as part of emergency repairs.</p>	<p>Overall significance High</p> 
<p>Historical Value – High <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i></p>	<p>Shop to ground floor; vacant to Rows level above. Historically this would have been former living accommodation. It was built in a period of 17th century remodelling and rebuilding in Chester from wealth from the landed gentry to create town houses in the city centre, but which still retains a vernacular character. It is an architectural style that is unique in Chester city centre.</p> <p>The building is listed at Grade II for its special architectural and historic interest and is within the City Centre conservation area.</p>	
<p>Aesthetic Value - High <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i></p>	<p>The building has a well well-articulated four storey frontage of various planes with a Rows level that is decorated in a 17th century jettied style. It is of three bays and is impressive in scale and character. Of render and timber to front; gabled grey slate roof and ridge at right-angle to front. Its frontage is reflective of the period in which it was built, window apertures all historic with modern windows; barley sugar posts are original. The shop front at street level is contemporary. The Row frontage is poor. It is reached from The Rows steps. Internally it has some features of interest to levels above the Rows.</p> <p>Whilst it forms part of a terrace, this is not uniform, and the surrounding buildings have all been constructed at different times, which adds to the character of the street.</p> <p>The building is listed at Grade II for its special architectural interest and is within the City Centre conservation area.</p>	
<p>Communal Value - high</p>	<p>The building was a townhouse and includes The Rows walkway, which is an historic route above street level that has been used for centuries in Chester.</p>	

5.8 Heritage values – Rear of No. 22 Bridge Street warehouse

Evidential Value – Low	<p>The site has a history of use as an early to mid-19th century warehouse, as evidenced in archival and map sources. The site records have little in the way of conclusive evidence of its use. The building is not associated with any breakthrough innovation. The building is not individually distinctive, and it does not contribute to a distinctive industrial landscape, although it does contribute to a 19th century commercial landscape in this part of the city centre.</p>	<p>Overall significance Low</p> 
Historical Value – low	<p>Purpose built warehouse, seemingly constructed as an independent structure. The warehouse is an example of a back land city centre warehouse or workshop relevant to this localised part of Chester. The warehouse is an example of a back land city centre warehouse or workshop relevant to this localised part of Chester. It appears to have been built as a speculative type of development, shoehorned into the back land area between Watergate Street, Bridge Street and Commonhall Street. Little is known about its purpose and use. The site is integrated to No. 22 Bridge Street by location rather than planned design. It is apparent by its materials and construction that this building is much later than No. 22 Bridge Street. It does not appear to be a strong representative example of a building or complex that gives the city centre its character, although it is noted that there are warehouses on Commonhall Street and Pierpoint Lane. This warehouse cannot be accessed from anywhere apart from No. 22 and the rear of Commonhall Social and will only be properly revealed from Commonhall Social rear yard.</p>	
Aesthetic Value – moderate	<p>The east elevation is jammed up against an outrigger that links No. 22 Bridge Street to the warehouse and as such the west façade is mostly hidden. The façade to Commonhall Social is covered by a retractable metal awning, and other items associated with the yard such as air conditioning units and plant equipment. It has replacement black metal casement windows with Ruabon red brick arched lintels. It has a slate roof with local brick to walls. Nonetheless its character is still read as an industrial warehouse</p>	
Communal Value - low	<p>The value of the warehouse is only appreciated in its historic communal context in the wider area of Bridge Street and Commonhall Street.</p>	

5.9 Key Points of Significance:

The architectural style of the building and its association with the merchant port of Chester about the localised wealth in the city and the buildings constructed during that period, which influenced the character of Chester's identify in the 17th century in a large scale vernacular style associated with the period.

Number 22 Bridge Street and Number 20 Bridge Street Row West (as part of The Dutch Houses) is listed at Grade II for its C17 character, which is evidence of a substantial single former town house; for its functional and associative relationship with the Chester Rows, which comprise various building styles and periods, but retain common features, including a continuous, uninterrupted walkway to the first floor and a stallboard. These are an integral part of the Chester Rows on Bridge Street, a medieval system of continuous walkways at first-floor level, which are unique to Chester, and which have no direct equal in any other town in the United Kingdom or in Europe, where the closest parallels are for small blocks of buildings only.

The relationship with Bridge Street and adjacent buildings that forms part of its setting.

Its high-quality townscape context and street scene that contribute to the group value and views and vistas of Bridge Street and Chester's architectural identify.

Its historical and aesthetic value, which along with nearby buildings helps define its sense of place.

The warehouse, taken in isolation as a warehouse there is some limited interest as a 19th century speculative warehouse, used as part of the city's commercial infrastructure in the heart of the city centre in the late 19th century; taken within the context of No. 22 Bridge Street, the significance is low.

5.10 Key Points of Significance relevant to the buildings

Of outstanding significance and particularly sensitive to change (highlighted in pink)

The Rows

Of high significance and sensitive to change (highlighted in red)

The frontage to Bridge Street and the Rows and its relationship with it.

The windows to the upper storeys, which despite their renewal, contribute to the aesthetic appearance of the building.

The 17th century staircase, fireplaces, and timber framing

Rear gables to No. 22 Bridge Street

Of medium (moderate) significance and opportunity to change (highlighted in yellow)

Fixtures and fitting of historic importance that are either evident or are yet to be revealed, such as fireplaces.

The plan form to the attic.

Modern shopfronts, at street level, because of their relationship to Bridge Street and the listed buildings

Chimney breasts and fireplaces where they exist not mentioned above.

Of Low (limited) significance and of limited heritage value and opportunity to change (highlighted in green)

The warehouse

The link 19th century outrigger

Of Neutral or no significance with neither positive nor negative features, of detracting from the building and opportunity to change (highlighted in black)

Modern façade to Rows and modern fixtures and fittings, plaster, plasterwork and fixtures and fittings

Rows level interior

6.0 Impact of The Development Proposal on The Heritage Assets

6.1 The key test is whether the proposal, under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. The legislative requirements and local planning policy documents contain detailed criteria and guidance that must be adhered to. As a result, it is that matters of detail that will be crucial to this proposal in demonstrating that it has been carefully designed to sensitively fit within the building and will preserve the listed building's setting, the setting of adjacent listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area context. Based on our review of past decisions and the key planning policy tests, we consider the following matters of detail to be central to this proposal:

The main issue to be considered, is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest (or significance) of the listed building (a designated heritage asset) - No. 22 Bridge Street.

Impact on the setting of designated heritage assets - No. 20, 24 and 26 Bridge Street (Grade II), and Chester City Conservation Area.

Design and impact on non-designated heritage assets – Commonhall Social, and local character (layout, architectural style)

Key views

Amenity impact (on neighbours, and future occupants)

6.2 The reason for listing No. 22 Bridge Street is because of its 17th century origins as part of The Dutch House, and its relatively well preserved façade; the contribution it makes to the 17th century and later townscape of Chester and for the understanding of its contribution to the Rows. Its special features of note include its well-preserved 17th century timber frame, plus other decorative and functional features of that date.

6.3 The key matters to consider from this perspective, having looked at several options is: -

The building's significance as a vacant town house with Rows frontage and how that can be better revealed or understood.

The frontage to Bridge Street and Bridge Street Row

The present internal layout and the proposed internal layout

Present features of significance inside the building, such as the staircase, fireplaces, timber framing, surviving historic materials, and features

The historic burgage plot, its sequencing of development and previous extensions, or the appropriateness of altering later extensions.

Present modifications that detract from the building, such as its internal and external character at Rows level, the relationship with Commonhall Social, the lack of private amenity space, and general deterioration

6.4 The proposal includes the follows: -

Conversion to of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of 22 Bridge Street to 2 townhouses

Internal re-ordering

Repair and restoration works.

Insulation

The creation of 8no. hotel rooms in conjunction with Commonhall Street Social

The refurbishment and upgrading of the Commonhall Street Social terraced area including the demolition of existing toilet block and storage areas to the rear and removal of canopy and increase in height of cellar room roof.

Retention and refurbishment of existing, stand alone, ground floor shop.

Proposed communal bin store in rear alleyway serving adjacent properties.

Please also refer to Drawings A01 – A09 and SK10 – 22, plus photomontages SK23 - 25.

6.5 No. 20 Bridge Street Row, which is the Row to No. 22, can only be accessed from The Rows. The rear of the building is accessed via the shop at street level to No. 22 Bridge Street but can also be accessed from Commonhall Social 's private courtyard. There are three areas of phasing to No. 22 Bridge Street. These are the front block to Bridge Street, the secondary outriggers behind the four storey building, and the warehouse to the rear.

6.6 There are four staircases, the original and a modern steel staircase, both to the four storey part of the building, and a staircase that links the warehouse from the shop, and a stair that links the warehouse from Commonhall Social's rear courtyard. The rooms of the most aesthetic interest are the rooms to the storeys above the Rows. There is no amenity space to No. 22 Bridge Street and the rear of it is landlocked. The rear of No. 24, Suzie K, has private amenity space to the rear at Rows level.

6.7 Assessment of Heritage Impact of the proposed works.

Proposal	Features affected	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of Change	Heritage Impact	Justification
New Rows frontage and restoration the frontage for new residential use and conversion to two no. townhouse including internal reordering and demolition of small section of outrigger.	Bridge Street Row No. 22 Bridge Street Internal and external works including elements of 17 th century internal attic plan including demolition of part of a 19 th century outrigger	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	Modern shopfront of no heritage value; high value when assessed again whole building / conservation area. No 22 is high with some low aspects.	Moderate	Positive – no harm. Better reveals the Rows significance . There is a balance of no harm and negligible adverse re: reduction of outrigger wall. Overall, the proposals better reveals the building’s significance .	<p>The shopfront is traditional in style, utilising the existing openings currently in place. It replaces a modern poor quality shopfront, paying particular attention to articulating the entrance and allowing views into the building. The Rows frontage will be renewed in a traditional style and repainted for the residential use. This is a significant public benefit to a vacant Rows facade.</p> <p>This creates an active frontage to the Rows in conjunction with residential use which is a significant public benefit.</p> <p>The Rows frontage will allow for an entrance lobby for both apartments, staircase, and internal bike store. There is a good degree of separation between the entrance and bike store and the staircase will be designed so that it is visually subservient. The principle of residential development on Bridge Street Row west is well established with Rows frontages residential in character, with single front doors and separate windows.</p> <p>Kenney Moore identifies Bridge Street Row West in terms of commercial activity as” the most challenged of all the Rows. Retailing requires passing trade. The western row has very limited destination orientated passing trade”.</p> <p>Photos of Row properties on Bridge Street Row West demonstrate little commercial interest and although classed as Primary Shopping Areas, it is Watergate Street Rows, which are designated as secondary Shopping Areas, that are busier and have more commercial uses than Bridge Street Row West.</p>

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage Values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Repair and restoration works including insulation.	<p>The external facade cont....</p> <p>Internal</p>	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High with some low aspects	Minor	Overall positive – no harm	<p>Cont....</p> <p>The two nearby shop frontages on the Row remain closed to Rows access. The character of the Row, particularly close to the application site, is residential and includes No.'s 12 and 14 Bridge Street Row which have entrances to apartments. No. 16, 32 and 36 Bridge Street Row is in office use, but the frontage is domestic. This area of The Rows is not strongly commercial/retail in character, and the shopfront with residential access is a good design solution for No. 22 Bridge Street. The increased footfall arising from the conversion will increase the active frontage aspirations and improve natural surveillance. The residential use provided will promote overall commercial viability within the city as local shops benefit from the development. The frontage and rear gables will be sensitively restored, repairing any windows, and other timberwork. Render to rear will be repaired and repainted.</p> <p>The principle change is to create a legible plan whilst maximising light. There are no partitions of note apart from the attics which aren't being altered. The new plan is negligible harm – it is a relatively repetitive pattern of the plan form from the ground floor upwards and is the same in terms of proportions and scale, which is not harmful and is neutral in terms of change.</p> <p>There are heritage features that remain and those that do remain will be restored. These include the staircase.</p> <p>High standards of workmanship are needed to achieve effective insulation, careful jointing and sealing of the gaps is essential. This work relates to an upgrade of existing fabric, including encapsulation in situ. This will be largely hidden and will be breathable and in line with guidance from Historic England. This will involve an examination of the existing modern floors and upgrading of floor voids.</p>

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage Values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Repair and restoration works including insulation.	Internal	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High with some low aspects	Minor	Overall positive – no harm	<p>Cont... This will be subject to condition, but it is not considered that this will impinge on historic fabric. Rockwool is likely to be used which has good acoustic, thermal and fire performance, and little impact on the fabric. 100mm Woodfibre will be used on the internal side of the external walls with lime plaster finish. Woodwall pavoflex will be used to ceilings with a lime plaster finish. Insulation to the roof will use 50mm woodwall pavoflex, 40 mm Woodfibre board attached to the rafters with a lime plaster skim, unless plasterboard exists. Concrete roof tiles and metal sheeting will be replaced with reclaimed Welsh slate.</p> <p>Modern windows will be replaced with double glazing which will be a thermal and aesthetic net benefit. There would be a small adjustment to the dimensions because of the double glazing and the double pane may alter the appearance a little. In this instance the removal of modern single glazing and double glazing is considered a neutral change, and aesthetic benefit. No windows are affected to the frontage, as they will be secondary glazed. New double glazed doors will not detract from the building and will allow access into the enclosed garden area.</p> <p>Wet areas will use existing soil pipes and drainage runs will follow existing. Drainage and pipework have been minimised by the location on kitchens and bathrooms aligning with each other where possible in a logical arrangement. Soil pipes have been rationalised and pipework will be hidden behind the woodwall, and the timber framing will continue to be seen in the attic space. Pipework will also run under the floorboards and there will be minimum requirements to box in pipework. Ventilation will be by mechanical extraction vertically to the roof and channelled through floor ducts in ceilings of no features of interest. They will terminate with inconspicuous slate ventilation to the roof.</p>

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage Values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Demolition of small section of outrigger to facilitate amenity space to Townhouse 1	19 th century outrigger	Evidential Historic	Low	Minor	Neutral when assessed against overall benefits – negligible adverse.	<p>The loss of a small section of 19th century outrigger to facilitate private amenity space that is of less than substantial harm in terms of loss of a small area of historic fabric, which has been altered. The roof is not particularly historic or significant, having been subject to some repair in the 1970's. The rear outriggers are less significant than the main townhouse. The roof terrace or rear courtyard is a more contemporary feature that is typically found to similar properties in the vicinity, and there is demand for roof terraces to buildings that have little amenity space but are being converted back to high quality residential properties. A waterproof membrane with decking will form the floor.</p> <p>The internal courtyard, with retained side walls, created in lieu of the outrigger, is required to allow for a degree of privacy to the occupants of the townhouse. The principle is the same as to No. 24, and similar in scale to others in the vicinity. The principle should not be considered contentious and should be seen as innovative and imaginative, suitable for 21st century city living where private garden space is not proportionate to the size of the house. The setting of No. 20 and No. 24 will not be adversely affected. There are also local precedents of roof terraces behind listed buildings in the locality.</p> <p>In terms of the setting of No's 22, the outrigger links No. 22, and the warehouse but there is now access from Rows level to the warehouse. The outrigger is set hard up against the warehouse. There is no degree of space between this and No. 22. It severely compromises its presentation. The setting of No. 22 to the rear is of a jumble of outriggers and outbuildings that have been shoehorned into the site in the 19th century. There did not appear to be any regard to setting when this building was erected, relying on landgrab of vacant space to insert a density of buildings that does not allow the rear of these buildings any space.</p>

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage Values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage Impact	Justification
New timber sliding casement window to facilitate amenity space to Townhouse 2	Rear west attic window	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	The attic is high; the window is low.	Minor	Neutral no harm	– The sliding casement window replaces a modern casement. The frame and mechanism of opening will change but it will not fundamentally adversely affect the overall appearance of the rear when closes, and marginally when open. It provides an important and innovative indoor outdoor amenity space with very little alteration.
The creation of 8no. hotel rooms in conjunction with Commonhall Street Social	19 th century warehouse	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Low	Moderate	Positive no harm	– The warehouse presents as an unpretentious functional building, sandwiched between other buildings. It is not known whether it historically formed part of the use of No. 22. There is no firm evidence of its purpose, and no firm evidence of what premises the warehouse would have served if not the principal listed building. The warehouse retains a lower level of historic significance and some features of architectural interest, albeit not of high significance, rarity, or value. It is noted that the bulk of the warehouse’s footprint and structure is probably original, and the external character will be enhanced with new articulation to reflect blocked up windows and doors and refurbished windows with secondary glazing. Internally it has been heavily altered and the changes will not affect its character.
Refurb and upgrading of Commonhall Social terraced area.	Modern toilet block, storage areas and canopy	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Low	Moderate	Positive no harm	– This area has been altered and the removal of booths and the canopy which hides the warehouse façade to Commonhall Social courtyard, will be a positive benefit allowing the façade to be seen. A new bar and pizza kitchen does not affect the setting of the warehouse.

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage Values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Proposed communal bin store in rear alleyway serving adjacent properties.	Alley between No. 10 and 12 Commonhall Street-Commonhall Social is No. 10	Low	Low	Moderate	Positive – no harm	<p>Commercial bin storage has been a problem for many years in the city centre. In heritage terms the large commercial bins detract from the setting of listed buildings if there is no integrated storage solution.</p> <p>The bin bays are a positive solution to manage commercial bins and will tally with both the urban realm design principles and commercial bin management at Pierpoint Court and Feathers Lane. The removal of steel shutters to the alley is a significant aesthetic benefit to the alley and the setting of Commonhall Social.</p>

6.8 The most significant weight attached to the enhancement of the principal listed building, is that which fronts Bridge Street. In the order of heritage significance, this building is markedly more important than the outriggers or warehouse. The Framework makes clear the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, and such considerations form one of the core planning principles stated in that document.

6.9 The proposed enhancement to the principal listed building would be a benefit that can be weighed as set out in paragraph 202 and 206. In the balance, it is concluded that the enhancement to the principal listed building, by revealing the significance of the interior and the effect on the Rows and street level; as well as the reuse of No. 22 Bridge Street, a Grade II listed building associated with the townhouse use, carries substantial weight and, together with the other public benefits, the harm caused by the removal of a small section of outrigger for private amenity space would be outweighed. It is not necessary to consider the further alternative criteria in paragraph 201 as it has been demonstrated that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

6.10 It is concluded that the public benefits are as follows: -

No. 22 Bridge Street is a Grade II listed building of high significance that has not been used for several years. The financial reinvestment into these important buildings is a key public benefit.

The revealing of the features of importance to No. 22 is a key public benefit; the residential use allows for the building to be used in a way that best reveals its significance.

The Rows frontage is in a poor condition; an appropriate replacement is a key public benefit.

The ability to provide a viable sustainable reuse of all the listed buildings is the optimum viable use in a challenging retail market in a prime city centre location. A residential use will generate significant financial investment and an active frontage to the Rows. This should be read in conjunction with repair and restoration of all the listed buildings affected by the proposal.



View 05 - Before



View 05 -After

SK25 22 BRIDGE STREET - Photomontage 05
OPENHOME: August 2025

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Fig 17. The existing and proposed Rows façade which better articulates the entrance.



Fig 18. Domestic frontages on Bridge Street West



View 01 - Before



View 01 - After

SK25 22 BRIDGE STREET - Photomontage 01
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View 02 - Before



View 02 - After

SK24 22 BRIDGE STREET - Photomontage 02
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Fig 19. The proposed outdoor courtyard to Townhouse 1, following the demolition of a small section of outrigger. This creates a degree of space between the residential and industrial character to the rear. Note the garden space to No. 24, Suzie K.



Fig 20. Roof terraces to the rear of Bridge Street and Watergate Street. Note roof terraces in the vicinity arrowed in yellow. All of these are listed buildings.



Fig 21. Aerial photo of White Friars and the rear of Bridge Street. Note roof terraces in the vicinity arrowed in yellow. All of these are listed buildings.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 No. 22 Bridge Street, the Rows, and the conservation area are of high significance and are designated heritage assets. Great weight has been given to the conservation of these designated heritage assets.
- 7.2 The desirability of preserving the building or its setting has been assessed upon a clear understanding of the baseline heritage significance. This has established the extent of the assessed harm and the heritage value of the assets in question, as well as identifying opportunities where proposals better reveal the assets significance. There has been a proper balancing of harm vs benefits, and overall, there is a net beneficial gain. This is because there are benefits to other heritage assets that would not prevent harm being sustained by the heritage asset in question but are enough to outweigh that harm when the balance is struck. Other planning benefits are weighty enough to outbalance the harm to the heritage asset.
- 7.3 The concept and scale of public benefits is broad and in the context of heritage assessment is not restricted to heritage benefits. The use of the building and spaces within them allow for innovative proposals that strike a balance between conserving the listed building, the setting of the warehouse, which is listed by virtue of forming part of the listing to No. 22, and better revealing aspects of the building's significance and supporting local economic growth in the city centre, as in the hotel use to the warehouse associated with Commonhall Social. It is considered to secure the heritage asset's optimum viable use.
- 7.4 Whilst the loss of any part of a listed building should be considered an exceptional event, the balance in this case lies in a small section of outrigger being removed to secure the significantly more important aim of enhancing the principal listed building. The enhancement and revealing the significance of the interior and frontage, and repairs to The Rows is a substantial public benefit and the other benefits of the provision of hotel, and residential use, plus commercial bin store management in the city centre add further weight in favour of the scheme. That scheme must be delivered as a whole, and a condition is employed to ensure that the benefits are realised and not just the harm. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the proposals are a positive and sensitive intervention to No. 22 Bridge Street, and the Rows, and Commonhall Social, which will preserve and enhance the special interest of these buildings and will promote footfall and ambience and would not cause overall harm to the Rows which has a positive effect on the building and Bridge Street. It would be a highly positive experience on The Rows. It would allow for a better appreciation and understanding of the special architectural and historic interest of the Rows and is an evolutionary process of Rows use. This is in accordance with Policy CH5 – Chester conservation areas and DM 46 – listed buildings.

- 7.5 The proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of conservation area, and its special architectural and historic interest. The impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the conservation area would be neutral and in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. and would be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and local plan policies.
- 7.6 The proposals comply with policies CH1 – Chester settlement area, in terms of supporting mixed use regeneration; CH5 – Chester Conservation Areas – the proposals have been sensitively designed, high quality materials are used; the changes are low key, positive, and not visually intrusive or unsightly, nor does it adversely affect the architectural character or unity of the building group. The proposals comply with Policy CH6 – Chester Key views, landmarks and gateways and historic skyline. It complies with DM3 – Design, character, and visual amenity, by achieving a high quality of design, and sympathetic to the characteristics of the site, enhancing local distinctiveness in a contemporary way. It provides a new residential and hotel use, and enhances viability, vitality, and pedestrian footfall, and overall complies with DM 46 – conservation areas and DM 47 – listed buildings.

Appendices

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/vch--ches>

https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/key_social_economic_and_environmental_planning_evidence_base/chester_characterisation_study

<http://chester.westcheshiregrowth.co.uk/projects/the-rows/rows-conservation-management-plan/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-industrial/heag134-industrial-buildings-lsg/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/behind-the-veneer-south-shoreditch/behind-the-veneer/>

<https://www.engineersgallery.com/types-of-flat-belt-drives/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/storehouses-of-empire/storehouses-of-empire/>

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