

## Barker-Mills Conservation

### Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment

37 Melville Street Ryde, Isle of Wight

Internal alterations to ground floor including removal of stair and installation of a floating floor (*Application 1*)



*37 Melville Street Photograph taken by the author December 2023*

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Version: NPBM 23/31 Final

Date: 22 January 2024

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## 1.0 Introduction and purpose of report

- 1.1 Barker-Mills Conservation is an independent, expert consultancy advising on the historic environment. Nigel Barker-Mills, the author of this report, trained as an architectural historian and has an honours degree and doctorate awarded by the University of Reading. Following appointment as a Fieldworker for the Accelerated Resurvey of the Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the county of Surrey, he was employed by Surrey County Council as a specialist historic environment officer advising on all aspects of the management of historic buildings and areas. He founded and subsequently chaired the Surrey Conservation Officers' Group and commissioned the first Buildings at Risk survey for the county. During his time in Surrey, he obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Building Conservation from the Architectural Association of London, which included preparing a thesis on the issues around education of construction professionals working on historic buildings.
- 1.2 In 2000 he joined the south-east region of English Heritage in the role of Historic Areas Adviser during which time he advised on new development and regeneration issues across Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Oxfordshire. He provided expert monitoring for the Heritage Lottery Fund on area grant schemes and was the national lead for English Heritage in Developing the "Building in Context Toolkit". This training programme, delivered by the national network of Architecture Centres in collaboration with the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), won a national planning award in 2008.
- 1.3 In 2009 Nigel joined the London Region of English Heritage (later Historic England) as Head of Partnerships and subsequently Head of Development Management, with responsibility for strategic relationships with the Greater London Authority and managing the London Historic Environment Record. In 2011-2 he was appointed Planning Director for the London Region, leading a team of 40 specialist Inspectors and advisers, including architects, planners and surveyors providing the statutory advice and grant assistance across the capital. He retired from Historic England in 2016.
- 1.4 Nigel is a full, founder, member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and has served on both the south-east branch, as Chairman and Secretary, and also the national committee. He was Chairman of the Editorial Board of "Context" the Journal of the IHBC for 6 years and to which he has contributed several articles. In 2014 he was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. In 2017 he was appointed Chair of the Heritage Advisory Group of the Canals and Rivers Trust. He was re-appointed as Chair of the Cultural Heritage Advisory Group in 2021.

- I.5 Nigel has been a member of several expert design panels, including those in Oxford and the London Borough of Haringey and has also published on architectural history and conservation. In 2015 he presented a paper at the 43rd Oxford Joint Planning Law Conference, an annual event organised by the Law Society, the Bar Council, the RTPI and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The paper on “Heritage Assets and their Setting” has been published in the *Journal of Planning and Environment Law: Occasional Papers No 43 (pub Sweet & Maxwell)*
- I.6 Barker-Mills Conservation has worked with clients across both public and private sectors including the Greater London Authority; the London Borough of Southwark; The Corporation of the City of London; Guildford Borough Council; Hart District Council and Historic England in both the south-east and the north-west regions. Private sector clients include the Gascoyne Cecil Estate; The *SS Great Britain* Trust and JCB. Recently Nigel prepared the draft Historic England Guidance on the Conservation of Georgian and Victorian Terraced Housing issued in July 2020 and he is currently working with Historic England the Dean and Chapter of St Paul’s Cathedral.
- I.7 This report has been commissioned by Caroline and Allan Bebbington and its purpose is to set out the heritage significance of 37 Melville Street in Ryde on the Isle of Wight. This enables the applicants to demonstrate the potential impact of their proposals upon heritage significance in accordance with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as amended 2023 (NPPF).
- I.8 This statement has been informed by the Historic England Advice Note on statements of heritage significance published 2019.<sup>1</sup> The statement is based upon mainly secondary sources but also includes primary information relating to the history and ownership of the building as well as information gained from a site visit undertaken on 1 December, 2023.
- I.9 The views expressed in this report are the true and professional judgement of the author and provided in accordance with the Code of Practice of his professional Institute; the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) of which he is a founder member.

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<sup>1</sup> Historic England 2019 *Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12*. Swindon. Historic England.

## 2.0 Significance

2.1 Significance is one of the guiding principles running through the historic environment section of the National Planning Policy Framework (as amended 2023). The NPPF defines significance as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest’. Such interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’ and it may derive ‘not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’.<sup>2</sup> Significance is what conservation sustains, and where appropriate enhances, in managing change to heritage assets.

2.2 Any building, monument, site, place, area or landscape has the potential to be a heritage asset and as sites and society evolves over time, their interest will also evolve. All heritage assets have significance but this is on a sliding scale. It is the degree and nature of the significance that will determine the level and type of protection which will be appropriate under law and policy, including national or local designation, and which should inform future management. Where the identified heritage or cultural interest of a site meets defined criteria, it will then be eligible for designation, which at a national level includes Scheduling and Listing.<sup>3</sup>

2.3 37 Melville Street, Ryde has heritage interest that has justified its designation as a listed building in Grade II. The list entry is provided in *NPBM Appendix 1*. The building is also located within the Ryde Conservation Area which is a further Designated Heritage Asset.

### 2.4 *Ownership History*

Deeds of the property at Melville Street provided by the current owners commence with an Indenture and copy of a lease dated 1848, which conveys the land (then undeveloped) owned by James Player Lind to Mary Baker under a 999-year lease. This relates well to the suggest date of the building in the list description of c1840. The building (now numbers 36 and 37) is therefore probably c1850 if a construction period of a couple of years is factored in.

2.5 In 1873 the site was owned by Francis Harding Newman who assigned to Anna Jubb and Charles Greaves (described as being of the “Second Part” in Assignment) and Sarah Million (of the “third part”), a part of the premises in the lease described as Miriam Cottage formerly known as Vale Lodge, but then as Eastnor as the same

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<sup>2</sup> A variety of terms are used in designation criteria (for example, outstanding universal value for World Heritage Sites, national importance for scheduled monuments and special interest for listed buildings and conservation areas) but all of these refer to a heritage asset’s significance.

<sup>3</sup> Designated Heritage Asset comprise World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.

premises.<sup>4</sup> The reference to “a part” of the premises may be an indication that it was at this time the original building was subdivided, and there is evidence in the fabric that might support this interpretation. (See *paragraphs 2.09 - 2.10 below*)

- 2.6 The lease was again assigned in July 1911 when Thomas Blackmore granted William Spencer all that land formerly called Miriam Cottage, but then known as “Bishearne” 37 Melville Street. William Spencer died in 1931 so in the Assignment of the lease in 1937 he is described as “The Testator” in the history of property transfer section. When the lease was transferred in June of that year, 1937, William Arthur Spencer (of 2 Marlbro Villas, Western Road, Shanklin) acted as executor for William Spencer in carrying out the sale of the property to Bertram Henry Gatward of 20 and 21 Union Street Ryde, Jewellers Manager. Examination of the fabric of the building suggests that Gatward undertook significant renovations and extensions following his acquisition of the property and he lived in it with his small family until he died.
- 2.7 Before he died Gatward, then described as Retired Jeweller Manager, changed the ownership of the property from his sole possession to joint ownership with his “spinster daughter” Miss OC Gatward in 1968. This not only ensured her possession of the house on his death but presumably had financial advantages in terms of death duties and tax. The current owners purchased the property from the Gatward estate.

#### *The Plan and Evolution of the house*

- 2.8 The current plan form and fabric of the house offers clues as to its origins and subsequent evolution. It is pretty clear that numbers 36 and 37 were originally one property as suggested by the list description. The evidence supporting this is the consistent pitch and form of the roof, including eaves and ridgelines which includes the fragment of the original eaves now contained within the western side addition to number 37, which was once external. An internal inspection of the loft revealed that the space was formerly continuous with a common structure but later divided by the insertion of a cement block partition to act as a firebreak. The consistency of the pilaster piers to the ends of the building and the small pane sash windows where they survive also indicate they were built at the same time. These sashes do not have horns for example. The irregular spacing of the piers and the vertical joint up the stack could be indications of number 37 being a later addition, but internal features, combined with the documentary evidence suggest that this is highly unlikely.

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<sup>4</sup> This is contained in a later Assignment of 1937 which contains a history of the legal transfers relating to the property from its origins in 1848- See Appendix 2 Sources.

- 2.9 Internally there is clear evidence of former connections between what are now separate properties in the party wall between the two. There is a blocked opening behind the now exposed meters on the ground floor (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 8*) and similar evidence for an opening on the former first floor landing. The ground floor opening in the side wall of number 37 floor (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 4; 6; and 7*) is inserted through red brick walling that matches the wall above, where the current owners have inserted an opening to serve a new stair (this is to be subject of a separate application).
- 2.10 The entrance wing itself contains yellow stock brick at ground floor level floor (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 2 and 3*) which includes an entrance arch and it was clearly originally single storey. The original roof appears to have been mono-pitch with a parapet to the front and was almost certainly covered in slate. This fabric is later 19th Century and therefore the evidence suggests that the entrance into the ground floor of number 37 was formed at that time, if not later. There does not appear to be any evidence for an alternative earlier entrance into 37 which would suggest that it was constructed at the same time as 36, or shortly afterwards, as an independent or separate house.
- 2.11 The roof of the single storey entrance wing appears to have then been removed and a first floor placed above, presumably to provide a bathroom, based on the proportions of the space. It was probably constructed between the late 1930's/1940's and the 1950's under the new ownership of Bertram Gatward as it appears in a photograph of the property dating from the 1960's-70's. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 1*) Number 37 is clearly distinguished from number 36 by what appears to be relatively newer cement render or pebble dash which has been applied to provide a consistent appearance and masking the junction between the ground and first floors of the entrance addition. The former flat roof of the entrance addition has been enclosed by the current owners as part of their works to provide the new stair which will be the subject of a separate application.
- 2.12 The existence of blocked openings in the party wall with adjacent property are also evidence that when built, 37 was part of the adjacent property and probably provided accommodation that was ancillary to the main reception rooms in the house. One of these main rooms was signalled by the curved bay to the west of the entrance; but the other was enlarged by the addition of a canted bay window in the later 19th century, probably in the 1870's when Charles Greaves, Anna Jubb and Sarah Million acquired the lease of the property. Taking the documentary evidence and combining it with an assessment of the different brick in the entrance wing which is a later yellow stock, it is possible that it was at this time that number 37 was separated from the remainder of the building; in which case it was at that time that the former openings in the party wall would have been blocked and it would have

required a separate stair to access the first floor. This was placed between the front and rear rooms along the side of an existing brick partition. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 11*)

- 2.13 The internal fabric also provides evidence of a further phase of work to number 37 which is clearly of later 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> date. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 4; 6 and 7*) Close examination of the ground floor entrance reveals that the lathes used as the basis for the internal finish in the front room are “machined” and not hand sawn or “split”. The timber linings of the door are also of similar character and contrast with the currently exposed timber post of the party wall opposite. The lathes have been covered with a grey mortar and the finishing surface of the walls is also a light colour. However, in the rear room the internal finish is dense, cement- based plaster; suggesting that the ground floor rooms were wholly and partly refurbished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A photograph of the former stair (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 11*) shows it has a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century character. The form is simple with a closed string, steep rake and a handrail attached to the partition wall. The timber is machined and the upper landing is small with angled steps into the first- floor rooms which is further evidence for its later insertion.
- 2.14 Externally on the rear elevation and rear additions anomalies in the surface of the render suggest that significant refurbishment was also undertaken at that time. The rear wing at first and ground floor levels appears to show that it was extended and it was probably originally single storey, like the added entrance wing; it was then possibly raised to provide first floor accommodation which is now the rear bedroom of narrow proportions and with an internal skilling which has a very different character to the first-floor rooms of the main range.
- 2.15 The plan form of the building was also subsequently significantly altered when the first-floor bathroom was provided above the side entrance. This required a new opening in the west wall and the reconfiguration of the old partition on the first floor to provide the access from the landing. (*Drawing 539/VW/24/1 original layout*) This partition was moved north so it is attached to the south side of the chimney breast and the architrave of the door in this room is clearly 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This repositioning of the partition had the effect of reducing the depth of the front bedroom significantly.
- 2.16 In summary, the evolution of Number 37 appears to be as follows:
- *c1850* when built: Two rooms at ground and first floor levels connected to what is now number 36 providing ancillary accommodation;
  - *Late C19 c1870(?)*: single storey side entrance bay added, new entrance through the side wall and construction of stair between the two rooms, cutting through the first floor with a flimsy partition provided at that level. Blocking of party wall



openings and a single storey addition to the rear to provide kitchen/service room with possibly a bathroom above;

- *Early 20th Century between late 1930's/1940-1960*: first floor added above the entrance range to provide a bathroom, reducing the size of the existing front bedroom; first floor rear wing converted to additional bedroom. New fireplaces replacing older ones in the ground floor rooms and new stair. Internal finishes of the ground floor rooms extensively renewed, external render replaced at the front and side to disguise the additions and new roof slates;
- *21st century*: stair removed, partition removed on ground floor, flimsy first floor partition removed, side entrance roof raised to enclose former flat roof and extended to the south.

### 3.0 Proposals

#### *Background*

- 3.1 The owners of the property have carried out some alterations which they have been advised by the Local Planning Authority (IOW Council) require Listed Building Consent. This consent cannot be granted retrospectively. The Council has also expressed concern about the impact of some of the work upon the heritage significance of the building. The owners have therefore commissioned this report to establish a good understanding of the significance of the building which has been used to inform their current proposals for the property. These will be submitted in three applications, of which this is the first. This is to both rectify the earlier failure to seek consent and also to address the Council's concerns regarding their impact. Each application is organised into a logical package of work which can be implemented in phases. This approach also enables the Council to be satisfied that any permitted works have been carried out appropriately.
- 3.2 The proposals in this application relate to the alterations carried out primarily on the ground floor in the two reception rooms. In summary the proposals are for:
- Insertion of a new partition along the line of an historic wall and doorway which has been removed. The partition is to comprise a nib at one end and a down-stand which will contain folding, panelled doors; the doors to fold back to one side to allow for meter cupboard at the other (*see below*);
  - Removal of 20th century stair formerly placed between the two reception rooms;
  - Removal of 20th Century picture rail from the front reception room;
  - Retention of a floating laminate floor, although reconfigured to provide an edge and threshold detail beneath the folding doors;

- Installation of new skirting boards of traditional scale but simple profile;
- Removal of later infill and mid-20th Century fireplace surrounds in the two chimney breasts; to be replaced with reclaimed, Victorian style, cast iron fireplaces;
- The creation of two tiled hearth areas in front of the fireplaces at current floor level;
- Retention of a new plaster board and plastered ceiling;
- Making good the staircase opening above the new ceiling on the first floor with reclaimed pine floor boards;
- Installation of internal wooden shutters to the ground and first floor windows on the “front” rooms at ground and first floors;
- Creation of a cupboard enclosure for the meters formerly under the stairs;

#### 4.0 Impact of proposals upon significance

4.1 The proposals have been informed by an assessment of the significance of the existing building which has identified the probable historic plan form of the building and the phases of later adaptation. Using that understanding, the proposals seek to re-instate what is believed to be the proportions of the two reception rooms in the 19th century before significant alterations were carried out in the 20th Century. (See drawings by V Warren (Refs 539/VW/24/1; 24/2; and 24/3).

#### 4.2 *New Partition*

The existing fabric of the side walls of the “front” room shows evidence for earlier partitioning, one of which appears to have been historic. It appears to have been single skin, red orange brick. Traditionally the plan form for houses of this type and age would have been cellular and in this case the plan at ground floor would almost certainly have been two rooms, each with its own chimney breast and lit by a sash window. The subsequent insertion of a staircase accessed from the side entrance involved the addition of another partition and the reduction of the volume of the “rear room”. The proposal is therefore to reinstate a partition along the historic line in the form of a nib with a down-stand of approx. 1m which will frame an opening that contains folding doors of traditional panelled design. The historic plan form will therefore once again be legible, but the folding doors provide flexibility for the owners. Historically, there was a door between the two rooms, which appears from photographs to have been to the west, immediately adjacent to the inserted entrance, so the proposals would effectively represent an enlargement of that opening.

#### 4.3 *Removal of the stair*

The former stair (*Appendix NPBM Photograph 11*) was almost certainly a later insertion into the building carried out when it was separated off from the adjacent house. As the list description notes, the small “entrance- wing” was added to the west which facilitated the later, side entrance. The rake of the stair and the cramped nature of the upper landing all point to it being a later insertion into an existing building; as does the ad-hoc nature of the partitions to one side that formerly enclosed it at first and ground floor levels. The stair that has been removed is clearly of later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> Century date and had no architectural interest; its removal returns the volume of the rear room to something closer to its earlier historic form. The stair was possibly as late as the 1930’s as number 37 was purchased at that time by Bertram Gatwood who carried out significant alterations which were intended to bring the property up to more modern standards.

#### 4.4 *Removal of the picture rail*

The evidence for the picture rail in the “front” ground floor room (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 5*) indicates that it was almost certainly part of the 1930’s refurbishment of the property. The proportions of the rear of the rail which can be seen on the surface of the wall and the small nail holes where it was fixed are important indicators of its likely date. The owners report that the profile of the rail was simple and this is shown in the photograph. That profile is replicated in surviving joinery upstairs and that joinery is clearly 20<sup>th</sup> Century in date. The ground floor rooms of number 37 were always modest in terms of architectural character and scale and there is no evidence for dado rails or significant architraves and skirtings. The position of the picture rail relative to the window indicates that it was a later addition and the contrasting profiles of the window architrave with the that of the picture rail also add weight to this interpretation. Permanent removal of the rail will not harm the special interest of the building; that is the reason why it has been listed, so it is unlikely to have required consent.

#### 4.5 *Retention of the floating floor*

The current floor has been installed on top of the earlier floor. The rear wing of the property (the current kitchen) has a concrete floor that is higher than the historic level. The evidence of earlier skirting boards associated with the existing, earlier floor (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 5; 6 and 11*) shows that there was no sophistication to the joinery and the form of the skirting is simple with a moulded top that appears to date from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest. This is a type of feature commonly associated with service rooms or those of lesser status. In the rear room, the skirting was clearly 20<sup>th</sup> century.

4.6 The raised level of the new floor has a small impact upon the volume of the rooms in that the floor to ceiling height is slightly reduced, but this does not appear incongruous. The floor has been installed on top of the earlier surface so it is reversible and has not involved the loss of any fabric of significance. The proposal is to retain the floor but to amend its design to provide for an edge detail along the line of the reinstated partition with a “threshold” underneath the folding doors. This would visually emphasise the former plan. It is also proposed to provide an edge detail to the proposed hearths of the fireplaces (*see below*) which will again emphasize the individual floor plan of each room.

#### 4.7 *Fireplaces*

The current fireplaces in the ground floor rooms are clearly Post-War, and either 1940's or 1950's in date. They replace what would have been earlier metal fireplaces of traditional character. They are entirely standard features of very limited interest, if any, and their removal would not affect the significance of the building and would, therefore, not require consent. It is proposed to replace the fireplaces with metal ones of traditional, Victorian or Edwardian character which are intended to be more sympathetic to the former architectural and historic character of the building. (*Appendix NPBM 3 photograph 8*) The fireplaces will be provided with tiled hearths again in the traditional manner which would be level with the floor as was also traditional. Fireplaces were often standard items chosen from catalogues produced by manufacturers in the Victorian period, so this approach is in historic terms an authentic one. The change would be a heritage benefit.

#### 4.8 *Ceiling*

The former ceiling was lath and plaster and although generally in fair condition had been affected by insertion of partitions and alterations for the introduction of services. The ceiling was taken down and has been replaced with plasterboard. The plaster board has then been skimmed with a finishing coat so that when painted, it appears consistent and follows the traditional approach of two or three layers of plaster with a finishing coat. The loss of the lath and plaster has caused some harm to the historic integrity of the building although this is at the low end of the less than substantial spectrum.

#### 4.9 *Staircase opening*

The former opening for the staircase at first floor level has been temporarily infilled with chipboard panel awaiting clarification of the way forward. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 9*) It is proposed to permanently infill the opening and to do so with reclaimed pine timber floorboards of 19th century character. This would be historically more authentic and the existence of the former opening would still be

legible represented by the joints between the inserted boards and the existing floor, should that be regarded as important.

4.10 *Installation of internal wooden shutters to the ground and first floor windows on the “front” rooms*

Shutters are a traditional feature of 18th and 19th Century buildings which are usually associated with sash windows. The existing windows at ground and first floor on the front of the property are historic, single glazed, small pane sashes containing some historic glass. It is proposed to simply refurbish them to ensure that they operate as efficiently as possible and therefore improve their environmental performance sympathetically. The addition of shutters will also help with environmental performance as identified in Historic England guidance and will also provide added security. The proposal is therefore a heritage benefit.

4.11 *Creation of a cupboard enclosure for the meters formerly under the stairs*

The former staircase which was inserted into the building was provided with an enclosed space under its flight. The provision of gas and other services utilised this space for meters. The removal of the stair has exposed the meters so it is proposed to simply enclose them within a cupboard as they are unsightly. The provision of cupboard is not usually a matter that is subject of listed building consent unless historic fabric of significance is to be affected. This is not the case here as the surrounding fabric is all 20th century, but for the sake of being comprehensive the proposal has been included within this application.

*Assessment of the impact of the proposals against Historic England Selection Guidance*

4.12 The relevant selection guide for 37 Melville Road is “Domestic 2: Town Houses” 2nd edition (published 2017). The term ‘town house’ is an imprecise one. It traditionally implied a one-off design of considerable grandeur, but is now often used to encompass town dwellings at the ‘polite’ end of the spectrum, whether individual houses or terraces. The architecture of 36-37 places it within this end of the spectrum. There is a significant growth in the number of houses both built and surviving after 1850. The increased availability of building materials delivered by train, and greater mechanisation in the building trades, combined to create even greater standardisation across the country; allied to these developments was the professionalisation of the building trade and the emergence of the local architect.

4.13 Numbers 36-7 are in many ways examples of the greater standardisation of house plans and finishes that occurred in the middle of the 19th century. The selection guidance notes that when considering interiors, the plan can be important but also the survival of features including staircases; fireplaces; decorative plasterwork;

joinery: doors, architraves, panelling, shutters and so forth; built-in cupboards or shelved niches can all add to significance. As a result of previous alteration and refurbishment very few of these types of features survived in number 37. Where they do survive, for example the internal window architraves they are of relatively simple and standard form.

- 4.14 Even though modest and standard, these features remain of significance. Historic England advise that internally, the loss of major elements such as the staircase, or the room plan of the principal floors, or the stripping out of internal features, will undermine the case for listing. Alterations to the less prominent parts of a house, such as bedrooms and service areas, may have less of an impact than alterations to the principal spaces. The alterations proposed for 37 do not involve the loss of major elements of significance, for example the staircase that has been removed was a later replacement, and the principal spaces of the original house are contained in Number 36.

## 5.0 Historic Environment Legislation and Policy

- 5.1 Where any development has the potential to affect the historic environment and its heritage assets the legislative framework includes the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In particular Section 16 which requires a local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses when considering applications for listed building consent. Section 66 of the 1990 Act also states that in the exercise of their planning functions a local planning authority shall have the same special regard.
- 5.2 An application for listed building consent is required, in general terms, for all works of demolition, alteration or extension to a listed building that affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The requirement applies to all types of works and to all parts of those buildings covered by the listing protection (including objects or structures fixed to the listed building, and to objects or structures within the curtilage, such as outbuildings), provided the works affect the character of the building as a building of special interest. (*Emphasis added*) The special interest of the building provides the justification for the listing and therefore works which do not affect that character do not require consent.
- 5.3 The application of this statutory duty informs the approach to the Historic Environment set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance. In the NPPF (December 2023) it is recognised that protection and enhancement of our built and historic

environment is an essential element of the environmental role of sustainable development and the Government's objective is the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.<sup>5</sup>

- 5.4 The principles and policies set out in Section 16 of the NPPF (December 2023) are explicitly linked to the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities under the heritage related consent regimes of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990<sup>6</sup>. It is made clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and therefore their significance should be sustained and enhanced. The starting point is a good understanding of the significance of an asset and that understanding should be used to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage assets' conservation and any aspect of the proposal.<sup>7</sup> If harm cannot be avoided it has to be clearly and convincingly justified. The greater the extent of harm the greater the justification required and the more significant the heritage asset the greater the weight to be given to its conservation.<sup>8</sup>
- 5.5 The elements of the works that have been carried out which affect the special interest of the building are primarily the removal of what was probably an historic partition on the ground floor. The legibility of the historic plan form was therefore harmed. The removal of the staircase did not involve loss of historic fabric, but its removal does affect an appreciation of the history of later alteration and subdivision of the building. However, evidence of that later alteration and subdivision remains in the form of the side entrance and the infilled openings on ground and first floors. The removal of the ground floor ceiling did involve the loss of historic fabric, albeit of a standard character.
- 5.6 Upon notification by the Council that the building was listed and therefore consent was required for some of the works that had been carried out, the owners immediately halted construction and have sought expert advice. They now understand the required framework and approach for sustaining listed buildings and have therefore amended their proposals to minimise the conflict between the need for flexible accommodation that ensures the building remains viable as a family house and the need to ensure that the surviving elements of the historic plan form which are important remain legible. Therefore, they propose to have folding doors and a wall nib with a down-stand that enables the two spaces to be either used separately, as historically, or as one larger space.

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<sup>5</sup>NPPF paragraph 195 page 57,

<sup>6</sup> NPPF paragraph 195 page 57, footnote 71

<sup>7</sup> NPPF paragraph 201, page 58

<sup>8</sup> NPPF paragraph 205, page 59

## 6.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 The property has been altered without consent and the owners are now seeking to rectify that situation as far as possible. This is the first of what will be three applications that will seek to address the concerns raised by the Council regarding the impact of work that has been carried out. The owners understand that listed building consent cannot be granted retrospectively, but they are seeking to actively engage with the Council and resolve the issues raised as far as possible.
- 6.2 This application concerns the internal works that have been partly implemented on the ground floor. The proposal is to re-establish the former cellular ground floor plan by inserting a partition containing folding doors that can enable the flexible use of the space. The current laminate floor will be adapted to provide a threshold detail under the doors. In addition, it is proposed to remove the 20th Century fireplace surrounds which are of no architectural interest and to replace them with salvaged Victorian traditionally style examples. These will be provided with tiled hearths which are traditional. This alteration re-establishes a more sympathetic character and is an enhancement to the architectural interest of the building. The combination of folding panelled doors and traditionally detailed skirtings and fireplaces will result in a sympathetic and more sensitive adaptation.
- 6.3 The permanent removal of the stair reverses an insertion that affected the original historic plan form of the building and involves a feature that was poorly executed and difficult to use. The fabric of the stair that has been removed was not of intrinsic architectural interest and the impact is therefore upon the historic interest of the building and the ability to understand its later adaptation. That impact is mitigated by the retention of the later inserted side entrance and the existence of the infilled openings in the party wall, both of which enable the later adaptation to be understood and appreciated. These, along with the photograph of the former stair and the ability to still identify the first floor opening in the floorboards minimise the impact of the removal on the historic interest of the building. It should also be noted that the building is listed as a house of c1840 and these alterations, whilst of limited historic interest are not intrinsically significant.
- 6.4 The removal of the picture rail does not involve significant historic fabric and the addition of the floating floor is similarly of low impact. It has been inserted on top of the earlier floor and is reversible. The joinery details at the foot of the existing entrance door will have to be amended but the fabric is not of historic or indeed great architectural significance.



- 6.5 There is one element of the work that does affect historic fabric, which is the removal of the lath and plaster ceiling and the plasterboard replacement. The fabric removed was of standard character, but nevertheless it was of some significance and has to be justified. That justification is principally that the past insertions and alterations has previously affected its appearance and the need for updated lighting conforming to modern standard involved further intervention. The decision was therefore taken to replace the ceiling but to finish it with a surface plaster coat in the traditional manner. This minimises the visual impact of the replacement.
- 6.6 The proposals also involve some heritage benefits in the enhancements to the fireplaces and they enable the building to be adapted to modern family living both for the current owners but also for future owners. The best use of the building is residential and to ensure that this use is attractive to future owners or occupiers, reasonable steps have to be taken to address changing lifestyles and expectations. If not, the building will not be an attractive proposition for future owners and will therefore not generate the investment required for its maintenance and repair.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix NPBM I: NHLE Entry

#### Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: II

List Entry Number: **1221623**

Date first listed: **18-May-1972**

List Entry Name: **36 AND 37, MELVILLE STREET**

Statutory Address 1: **36 AND 37, MELVILLE STREET**

#### Location

Statutory Address: **36 AND 37, MELVILLE STREET**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Isle of Wight (Unitary Authority)**

Parish: **Ryde**

National Grid Reference: **SZ 59692 92503**

#### Details

MELVILLE STREET 1. 1577 (South Side) Nos 36 & 37 SZ 5992 3/265 II GV 2. Circa 1840. Semi-detached, originally probably one house. Two storeys cement rendered painted. Band between storeys on No 37 which has a narrower frontage flanked by pilaster strips. No 36 has superimposed bay windows of three lights each to East, added later, sash, later glazing bars, block sills,

moulded cornice to ground floor. One recessed sash window, glazing bars intact: centre of first floor and to West: two windows in shallow bow through both storeys with band between, recessed, sash, glazing bars intact, block sills. Central recessed panelled and glazed door with semi-circular fanlight. No 37 is of one window, glazing bars intact with a small two storeyed entrance wing added to West. Nos 35 to 39 (consec) form a group. Listing NGR: SZ5969292503

### **Legacy**

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **413452**

Legacy System: **LBS**

### **Legal**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

## **Appendix NPBM 2: Sources Secondary**

Historic England Guidance:

Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2. February 2016

Listing Selection Guide: Domestic 2: Town Houses December 2017

**Primary Sources: Indenture and Copy of a Lease** 26th September 1848 Between James Player Lind of Ryde and Mary Baker, spinster (lessee) granting 999 years lease of land between that owned by William Harris to the east and Miss Fenton to the west. The plot 50t wide and 100ft deep, the land to the south owned by James Player Lind.

Witnessed by Thos Hearn Solicitor and copy by Fardells

### **Assignment**

25 June 1937 between William Arthur Spencer of No 2 Marlbro Villas, Western Road Shanklin (The Vendor) and Bertram Henry Gatward of 20 and 21 Union Street Ryde, Jewellers Manager (The Purchaser) This contains details of the Lease of 26<sup>th</sup> September (above) but also details of an Assignment: 17 January 1873 made between Francis Harding Newman (of the first part) and Anna Jubb and Charles Greaves of the Second Part and Sarah Million of the third part, a part of the premises in the lease described as Miriam Cottage formerly known as Vale Lodge, but then as Eastnor as the same premises (this an indication of when it was first divided?)

Also describes a second assignment 18 July 1911 between Thomas Blackmore and William Spencer (The Testator) all that land formerly called Miriam Cottage but then known as "Bishearne" 37 Melville Street

The Testator (William Spencer) died 23 April 1931 by his will of 1926 appointed the vendor (Wm Arthur Spencer) and George Henry Harvey to be executors. George Henry Harvey died 13 January 1935

### **Deed of Gift**

18 June 1968 from B H Gatward (retired Jeweller Manager) to BH Gatward and Miss OC Gatward (going from single to joint ownership) of number 37 Melville Street His spinster daughter.

### Appendix NPBM 3: Photographs of the Site



Photograph 1: 37 Melville Road in the 1960's-70's. The exterior finish is relatively new although has signs of weathering. Note the different roof tiles and the consistent render finish of the stacks



**Photograph 2:** Interior rear (south) wall of the first floor added storey above the west entrance bay. Note the line of the original single storey roof above the arched entrance and the black bitumen coating to what was the rear of the parapet. The old external downpipe to the added floor is now encased within the building



**Photograph 3:** Detail of the former pitch roof detail over the entrance bay and the rear of the parapet with the later downpipe diverted through the wall above the former roof. Note the thick cement render over the brickwork added to cover up the junction between the different storeys.





**Photograph 4:** Interior Ground Floor west entrance south jamb showing line of former stair partition and the modern nature of the door linings. Note also the red brick wall fabric which is distinct from the yellow stock brick of the added entrance bay beyond (painted over).



Photograph 5: Interior Ground Floor looking north. Note the line of what was the historic partition to the north of the inserted side entrance. Note also lack of the line of a picture rail above the entrance door and the different line of the vanished picture rail in the rear room. The laminate floor is being laid over the earlier stained floorboards and encasing the existing skirting.



Photograph 6: Ground floor interior north of the side entrance. Note the line of the architrave removed from the door- the original partition did not extend this far- and other evidence shows this was where the door into the north room was sited. Note also the regularity of the exposed lathe ends and the nature of the finishing coat of plaster. Also note the profile of the small section of the skirting above the laminate floor which is not typical mid-19<sup>th</sup> form but rather that used from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century right up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> and evidence that the room has been refurbished



**Photograph 7:** Ground floor interior north side of the entrance upper section. Note exposed ends of lathes at the very top- clearly modern. Note also the reduced width of the exposed fabric representing the extent of the partition structure above the former doorway itself that has been removed and the line of the rear surface of the plaster formerly abutting the architrave of that door into the living room.



**Photograph 8:** Interior ground floor looking north. Note the slot in the floorboards marking the line of the former partition and where it terminates. The existing flooring extends continuously to the west indicating the position of the former doorway. Note also the cement rich render exposed to the south of the chimney breast in the rear (dining) room following the removal of shelving. Both chimney breasts were obviously re plastered (or rendered) following insertion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century fireplaces.



**Photograph 9:** Interior first floor. Temporary infill of former stair opening. Doorway is the remains of the historic first floor partition space beyond was in the former bedroom now provides access to the bathroom to the west



Photograph 10: Interior first floor north bedroom looking south to the new partition attached to the chimney breast with the modern door opening under the glazed transom light. The original partition is beyond leading to the first-floor south bedroom.



**Photograph 11:** Interior former stair now removed. Note the steep pitch because it had to be inserted in a restricted space between the new western entrance and the blocked opening at first floor level in order to be able to serve the existing bedroom doorways. The landing is therefore effectively in the form of an enlarged upper step and attached to the restricted area above the former connecting door between the two properties. It could not block the existing opening between the two rooms and it is therefore more akin to a ladder with a closed string and no balustrade, being enclosed between an existing and an inserted partition. The existing partition was brick which is seen exposed in this photograph and the later partition to the south was very thin and timber.