

Barker-Mills Conservation

Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment

Proposals for a front porch hood, replacement door and new stair
(application 2)

37 Melville Street Ryde, Isle of Wight



37 Melville Street Photograph taken by the author December 2023

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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 2019.¹ The statement is based upon primarily 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.

2.0 Significance

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

- 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’.² 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.³
- 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 premises.⁴ The reference to “a part” of the premises may be an

² 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.

³ 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. NPPF Annex 2 Glossary p66.

⁴ 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.

indication that 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. 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.
- 2.9 Internally there is clear evidence of former connections between what are now separate properties in the party wall between the two. The entrance wing itself contains yellow stock brick at ground floor level floor (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 4; 5 and 6*) 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.

- 2.10 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. 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.
- 2.11 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 partition.
- 2.13 The plan form of the building was also 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 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 20th Century. This repositioning of the partition had the effect of reducing the depth of the front bedroom significantly.
- 2.14 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. It appears that originally the single storey entrance wing and rear wings were separate but at a later stage they were linked by the addition of a simple lean to roof providing covered access to

the rear to link with the kitchen/service room which possibly had a bathroom above before being converted into a bedroom;

- *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 and/or Planning Permission. 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 second. 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 second application(s) relate to the alterations carried out primarily in the added entrance bay to the west end of the house. Some of those works require planning permission in addition to Listed building Consent. In summary the proposals in this second application are for:

- retention of new timber porch/hood;
- new timber panelled and part glazed external door;
- new raised floor in the stair hall;
- removal of former lean to roof for installation of new stair;
- formation of new roof over stair hall enclosing remains of former eaves;
- Insertion of a new stair;
- formation of new opening at first floor to provide access to first floor;

- enclosure/ infill addition to side elevation - currently this is upvc

3.3 *Retention of the timber porch/hood*

The porch is a modestly scaled addition to the front of the building, located in the re-entrant angle between the original house and the later entrance bay added to the west end. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 2*) It is hipped, appearing as a small pyramid with exposed rafter feet. The timber structure below is of simple square section. The addition is modestly scaled, functional and does not cause any harm to the architectural or historic interest of the building.

3.4 *New timber panelled and part glazed door*

In the photograph of the house in the 1960-70's the entrance door was recessed within the added wing. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 1*) subsequently the door was re-located further forward. The current door is a modern replacement installed by the current owners without permission. It attempts to replicate a traditional panelled and part glazed door but is a composite made with upvc. The proposal is to remove this door and re-instate a timber part glazed door of traditional design with solid lower panels. This would be more sympathetic to the traditional materials found on properties of this age and type.

3.5 *New raised floor in the stair hall.*

The entrance hall leading from the door originally connected through to the entrance door on the north side of the rear wing constructed probably in the later 19th century. The rear section of the passage is now occupied by the new stair (see below) but the north section of the hall remains. This is lower than the internal levels in the house and is currently paved with slabs. It is therefore proposed to construct a floating floor over the top to provide a consistent level and insulation. There is no existing joinery at the base of the walls so simple skirtings will be provided.

3.6 *Removal of former lean-to roof for installation of stair.*

The evidence for the former roof is the diagonal line across the yellow stock brick above an arch over what was probably a rear door in the entrance range. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 4 and 5*) The roof was attached to the side wall of the historic house below first level between the front and rear extensions that projected west of the original line of the building. It was clearly an ad-hoc addition to provide cover for the link between the entrance and the kitchen wing to the rear. The removed fabric is not of architectural or historic interest.

3.7 *Formation of the new roof over the stair hall enclosing the remains of the former eaves*

The new roof is a timber structure that has been engineered to go above the existing flat roof of the entrance wing and to maintain the integrity of the hipped section of roof between the front and rear additions. The new structure encloses a small section of the historic eaves (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photographs 4 and 6*) which will remain appreciable as a sloping section or skilling between the new ceiling and the existing side wall of the building.

3.8 *Insertion of the new stair*

The new stair has been constructed with timber strings and treads and boarded risers. These will be painted or stained to provide a consistent finish. Handrails will be attached to the existing walls either side in the traditional manner. The stair turns at the top to access the rear first floor room. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 9*)

3.9 *Formation of a new opening at first floor*

This opening has already been formed by removing a section of original brickwork. Work has not progressed any further. The intention is to provide timber liners and a timber lintel in place of the concrete one that has been installed. The interior and exterior walls will be provided with simple architraves to match the historic profiles of those around the ground floor window.

3.10 *Enclosure/infill addition to side elevation*

This has already been carried out with timber studwork, faced with upvc boarding. The use of this material is not sympathetic so it will be replaced either with painted weatherboarding or with painted render.

3.11 The eaves to the front and side of the west end of the house have been enclosed in upvc. This will be removed and the existing eaves repaired or reinstated in matching timber with a painted finish, like for like, where it has decayed beyond repair.

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 adapt the building in a sensitive manner.

4.2 *Retention of new timber porch/hood*

This proposal is modestly scaled and uses traditional materials. It plays a practical role in providing shelter when entering and existing the house. No historic fabric has been removed and the evolution of the house remains legible. There is therefore no harm to the special architectural or historic character of the building.

4.3 *New timber panelled and part glazed external door*

The owners were seeking to improve the appearance of the property by replacing the door, although they now understand and acknowledge that the materials chosen are not appropriate for a building of this age and type. They are therefore proposing to reinstate a traditionally designed part glazed and panelled door with a painted finish. This will remove the harm arising from the current door and is a more sensitive approach.

4.4. *New raised floor in former external space now the stair hall*

The proposed raising of the floor level to improve the insulation and provide a consistent level internally will not involve the removal of any historic fabric. It is also a reversible intervention. There are no architectural features or historic joinery associated with the space and therefore no harm to the special interest of Number 37.

4.5 *Removal of former lean to roof for installation of new stair*

The roof has already been removed. The fabric that has been taken away was 20th century in date and it was an ad-hoc addition of no significance. There has therefore been no harm caused to the special interest of the property.

4.6 *Formation of new roof over stair hall enclosing remains of former eaves and infill addition*

The new addition between the two westward projections of the later wings of the house does not affect the legibility of the historic plan form of the building. The current external material will be replaced with a more sensitive treatment and no historic fabric is to be lost or affected. The addition is not prominent visually, it does not dominate or distract from the existing house and therefore causes no harm to the special interest of the building.

4.7 *Insertion of a new stair and formation of new opening at first floor to provide access to first floor*

The insertion of the stair itself does not involve the loss of any historic fabric and it is constructed of timber. It is a simple design, consistent with the scale and status of the property. It is required to provide safe access to the upper floor of the property to replace the earlier stair that ran between the two ground floor rooms of the house. That stair was itself a later insertion that because of the constraints of the existing plan had to be steep and provided sub-standard access. The replacement of the stair and the formation of a new access into the first floor into the rear room does require the loss of a section of historic fabric, which is the orange-red brickwork of the old external wall. The section of internal finish that has also been removed is later in date and relates to a previous refurbishment. (*Appendix NPBM 3 Photograph 10; 11 and 12*)

4.8 *The loss of the brickwork does represent some limited harm to the special interest of the property, although placing the stair in the later addition at the west end of the*

house continues the tradition of alterations in this location. The historic plan form and ability to understand the evolution of the house will largely remain.

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

- 4.7.1 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.
- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 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, although they do involve the loss of some historic fabric in one location. That fabric consists of standard brickwork. The principal spaces of the original house are contained in Number 36 and remain unaffected and the evolution of the plan form of the 1850’s section of number 37 also remains legible.

Assessment of the impact of the proposals upon the Conservation Area

- 4.12 The proposals within this second application include external additions and alteration that require planning permission. Therefore, the test regarding the preservation and

enhancement of the special character or appearance of the conservation area is engaged. The Ryde conservation Area was designated by the IOW Council in December 1969 and its boundaries extended in 1999. It adjoins The St John's Ryde Conservation Area. The conservation area has been formally appraised in a report adopted in April 2011.

- 4.13 The conservation area is extensive and includes different character areas. The overarching summary of special interest states:

"...it encompasses a large proportion of the town's built environment and a mile (1.6 km) of coastline: the sea, sands and foreshore are together designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area includes the historic core and commercial centre of Ryde which grew to prominence in the early 19th century and the residential areas east and west of this historic core, a collection of Regency and Victorian architecture which help to give Ryde a distinctive sense of place. Also included in the conservation area is Ryde Cemetery to the south west of the town." Para 2.3.

37 Melville Street is therefore one of the Collection of Regency and Victorian buildings which help to give Ryde a distinctive sense of place.

- 4.14 The origins of the building (36-7 Melville Street) as set out in the deeds clearly relate to what is described as the division of the Player estate in the mid-19th Century which as noted in the appraisal was:

"...two families, the Linds and the Brigstockes, owned much of the town between them: Ryde essentially was designed and built by the Players, the Linds and the Brigstockes, who, by granting leases, controlled the way buildings appeared and how they were positioned (elevations had to be approved by the landlord in terms of height, distance from pavement, materials for construction, etc.)." Para 4.10

- 4.15 36-7 is located in Character Area 3: Regency and Victorian Housing, although close to the boundary with Character Area 2 The Historic Commercial Centre. The special character and appearance of Character Area 3 is summarised as:

"This area incorporates an eclectic mix of finely proportioned Regency and Victorian housing, mainly two or three storey in height, mainly constructed in stone or buff coloured brick or rendered in stucco. Classically fronted Regency terraces sit beside Italianate style facades, sited within generous gardens which contribute to the overall feeling of openness. The unifying linear street pattern enables clear views across Ryde with occasional glimpses of the sea." (Summary box page 24.)

- 4.16 The appraisal notes that most of the buildings in this area date from between the early and later 19th century and were constructed in response to the growing popularity of Ryde. Melville Street is identified in the appraisal in paragraphs 21.1; 21.3; 22.7; and 22.13 and it is stated it contains notable examples of buildings that are important to the history of the town, but 36-7 is not specifically singled out.
- 4.17 The proposed external additions to the property are modest and will not affect the key characteristics of the building or its relationship with the street. There will be no change to grid pattern, no alteration to the density of development and no alteration to the boundary. The materials used for the alterations do require replacement in two instances in order to maintain the distinctive character and appearance of this part of the conservation areas which relies in part on a limited palette including painted stucco or render, slate, and timber for windows and doors.
- 4.18 Subject to replacing the inappropriate plastic currently used, the proposed external alterations will preserve the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

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. Section 72 has a similar requirement with regard to conservation areas.
- 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.⁵
- 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 1990⁶. 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.⁷ 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.⁸
- 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 a section of historic brickwork at first floor level in the side wall of the rear room. The corresponding section of internal plasterwork is later and of less significance. This does cause some harm to the special interest of the building and therefore has to be justified. The principal justification is that the conservation of designated heritage assets is a public benefit. The buildings have been identified on the basis of national criteria and they therefore represent a public resource. The majority of that resource is in private hands and has to remain in use in order to generate the funds for maintenance and repair. This means that in certain cases adaptation has to be undertaken to ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose and will remain attractive for future users. Issues such as poor circulation, including steep staircases makes buildings less attractive particularly for residential use. However, where these features have significance then they have to be retained. The stair in number 37 was not of significance and the proposed replacement is in a logical location that minimises impact and helps to facilitate the restoration of the earlier volume of the ground floor rooms in the more historic part of the house.

⁵ NPPF paragraph 195 page 57,

⁶ NPPF paragraph 195 page 57, footnote 71

⁷ NPPF paragraph 201, page 58

⁸ NPPF paragraph 205, page 59

- 5.6 Other elements of the proposals do not cause harm in principle, although the manner in which they have been carried out has not been as sympathetic to the special character of the building. 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 immediately halted construction and have sought expert advice. As a result, it is now proposed to remove the composite door and replace it with one of traditional design using traditional materials. It is also proposed to remove the plastic cladding and replace it with a more appropriate finish and the plastic eaves cladding is also to be removed and a repair using traditional materials and techniques will be undertaken. These amendments to the existing situation will result in the special character and appearance of the Ryde Conservation Area being preserved.

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 second 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 provision of a new stair to overcome the substandard stair that had been inserted into the property when it was subdivided. The location chosen is logical in that a new stair hall can be created between existing later additions whilst retaining the earlier entrance at ground floor level through the side of the building.
- 6.3 The new stair does, however require a new access to be provided at first floor level through the side wall of the rear room which involves the limited loss of some historic brickwork. This causes a low level of harm to the special interest of the building. The harm will be minimised by the use of traditionally profiled architraves to the opening and the use of a timber panelled door to reflect the design and age of other surviving elements of joinery in the building.
- 6.6 Despite this minimising of harm, it has to be justified. That justification is that the conservation and economic use of listed buildings is a public benefit. The best use of this 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. Issues such as circulation and sub-standard stairs make the building less

attractive to future occupiers. If not addressed 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

Historic England Guidance:

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

Listing Selection Guide: Domestic 2: Town Houses December 2017

Ryde Conservation Area Appraisal Adopted April 2011 Isle of Wight Council

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 26th 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. At this time the boundary between 37 and the house to the right was low and green.



Photograph 2: The front elevation with the small pyramidal hipped porch roof on a simple timber support in the re-entrant angle between the earlier part of the house and the later added entrance extension. Photograph by the author 2023



Photograph 3: New composite door and frame to be removed and replaced with timber panelled and part glazed door of traditional design



Photograph 4: 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. The foil backed insulation and timber studwork to the left represent the addition or infill between the rear of the front extension and the front of the added wing to the rear of the house.



Photograph 5: 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.



Photograph 6: Detail of the new roof constructed above the flat roof of the former bathroom addition, the earlier eaves of the main house can be seen to the right and the felt edge of the flat roof is to the centre both now enclosed within the new roof.



Photograph 7: Studwork for the new infill extension being constructed.



Photograph 8: Studwork of infill extension fitted between the existing eaves of the two extensions either side. External upvc weatherboarding to be replaced with traditional painted timber weatherboarding



Photograph 9: New stair constructed within the former alley space between the front and rear extensions which has now been enclosed by the infill addition



Photograph 10: New opening into the side wall at first floor level providing access from the new stair.



Photograph 11: Section across the newly formed opening at first floor revealing the construction. The red-orange brick with white lime mortar is the historic external wall. To the right is timber studwork of square section with a machine cut finish and sawn lathes. The internal plaster finish is one coat and without hair reinforcement. The mortar is a different mix to that used for the wall and the nature of the construction indicates that it is probably a later 19th century or early 20th century refurbishment.



Photograph 12: Detail of internal finish to the ground floor front room, west wall where the door frame had been removed. Note the internal studwork attached to the historic brickwork by lime mortar dabs and the evidence of the traditional 3-layer finish: the base coat of rough plaster with reinforcement pressed into the lathes; the second, thinner scratch coat; and then the very thin, lighter colour finishing coat. The colour and textures of these plasters and mortars contrast with the finish on the first-floor rear room (Photograph 11) and support the suggestion that the first floor rear room has been internally refurbished.