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Heritage Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed residential extension of No 22 Hawthorn Road Belle Vue Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury Context:

Historical background

Ancient colonisation of the town we now know as Shrewsbury has been confirmed by a number of finds of prehistoric date from within and around the town, principally within the river loop which provided a low crossing point for this major watercourse. In the mid 7th century Shropshire became part of the Kingdom of Mercia which later in the 9th century was split between the Danes and the Kings of Wessex. Documentary history gives the earliest reference of Shrewsbury (Scrobbesbyrig) as a town in 901 AD, and Shropshire as a county recorded in 1006. The town must have been well established within the first millennia as the churches of St Mary's and St Chad's, were potentially founded in the late 7th or early 8th centuries. Medieval and post-medieval Shrewsbury has a number of entries in the Domesday Book of 1086, with the town and most of Shropshire in the ownership of Roger de Montgomery. At this time Shrewsbury was a key centre along the Welsh border with five churches and 252 houses listed in the town. The first castle was constructed in 1067 and consisted of a motte with inner and outer baileys. The defensive town walls, which provided a 2.2km-long circuit around the town, were commissioned by Henry II in 1218, and were largely completed by 1242). The abbey, mentioned in the Domesday Book, was founded in 1086, with extensive rebuilding taking place in the 14th century. By 1334 Shrewsbury was counted as the seventh most prosperous town in the country, its royal connections and location on the Welsh border underpinned its importance. The expansion of the woollen industry assisted by trade

along the River Severn brought great prosperity to the town enabling Merchants to build grand houses and guilds to similarly invest in impressive meeting halls. With business wealth attendant professional services required operating chambers and similarly hotels and inns catered for visitors and local residents. By the early 17th century, the modern-day street plan had been established as Shrewsbury was functioning as an important regional centre with much redevelopment occurring in the centre to satisfy the needs of trade and commerce and an expanding resident population.

Today Shrewsbury is a successful regional centre where the juxtaposition of a historic townscape with contemporary commercial and residential development creates an attractive environment which is self sustaining and attracts inward investment. A planning framework has evolved whereby the conservation of the town centre is supported by renewal and redevelopment of obsolete and unattractive sites and buildings allowing the town to showcase its history and make it viable and relevant in our own age. This has required a common vision by both developers and planners to strive to achieve the best standards of design and development building upon the legacy of earlier development and contributing to its evolution in a positive manner. The opportunities to demonstrate the latest fashions in architectural design and style together with technical innovation have long characterised Shrewsbury's townscape with contrasting building forms and imaginative use of materials securing great visual interest from near and afar.



Belle Vue

Evidence of Iron Age occupation has been found in Belle Vue but the suburb came about during Shrewsbury's golden age of commercial and industrial expansion during the 19th century. Wealthy industrialists created grand houses along the

principal road frontages with workers housing laid out as terraces in the backland areas.



"Belle Vue Road" (the [A5191](#), formerly the [A49](#)) runs through the middle of the area, which has many public houses such as The Grove, the Belle Vue Tavern, the Masonic Arms and the Boar's Head serving the densely packed residential area. Belle Vue maltings dominates the skyline, now converted into apartments. A

selection of small shops is dotted through the area, though many have become houses in recent decades. Streets branching off the Belle Vue Road include Greyfriars Road, Trinity Street, Havelock Road, South Hermitage, Belle Vue Gardens and Hawthorn Road.

The Site

No 22 Hawthorn Road forms one half of a late 19th century bay fronted villa of two full storeys plus attic accommodation, with a two-storey side extension to the right. On the southeast side a modest shallow pitch extension formed the entrance doorway and corridor to No 2. The property is constructed from a buff/red brick with rendered panels dentil eaves cornice set under a slate roof. A large garden extends to the rear with a parking area to the side. The property has been extended to the south side with a two-storey brick-built extension and to the rear with a single storey part glazed living room with seamed metal roofing.

The property occupies a prominent position on the curve of Hawthorn Road built for an expanding prosperous middle class in Shrewsbury who in the mid 19th century were relocating out of the historic core area into new development constructed in the former meadow areas surrounding the town. Developers would frequently buy tracts of land and sell to clients who would engage their own architects to design bespoke classicly based housing with a level of detail and architectural adornment depending on the client's wealth.

By 1881 No 22 had been constructed and the areas either side of Belle Vue Road well established as an attractive residential suburb of an expanding Shrewsbury.



The Proposal

It is proposed to further extend No 22 to the southeast side using the design reference of the extension to the northwest to create a balanced composition. The design detailing and materials to be used will be carefully selected to match the existing palette thus maintaining the overall character and appearance of the property.

Impact of the Proposal on no 22 Hawthorn Road

The existing narrow two storey side extension to No 22 is a somewhat clumsy and awkward addition to a strongly articulated architectural composition and detracts from the otherwise unified design. It appears unresolved as if it was something of an interim feature providing access into the property until such time as a larger extension could be provided.

The proposed addition resolves this architectural tension in a manner which gives a fitting closure to the design and actually enhances both properties. The attention to detail in replicating the extant modelling of No 22 and careful selection of materials will be critical to the overall success of the scheme.

Impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and heritage assets close by

It is considered that the implementation of this proposal will be a positive addition to the Hawthorn Road streetscene and an enhancement to the Conservation Area in this location. Although No 22 is positioned close to the corner of Hawthorn Road the addition with its set back and its deference to the main house will be a discreet amendment to this cherished scene.





Reference to National and Local Planning Policy

The significance of a heritage asset is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) most recently amended December 2023. It refers to four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The setting of the heritage asset can also contribute to its significance. Setting is also defined in the NPPF as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

Historic England further advises in *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3* (Revised December 2017) that an informed approach should be taken to the assessment of impacts on setting and significance. Such information can include more abstract and historical associations such as how an asset is perceived or linkages to other features in a landscape beyond the immediate boundary of the site.

The assessments of setting and significance are cross referenced to the four main elements of special significance identified in the NPPF.

The NPPF requires any impact involving harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described in paragraphs 199 to 202 of the Framework.

Paragraph 199 states that:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF further states that:

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

-grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional. Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”*

Paragraph 201 of the NPPF further describes the assessment for cases where there is less than substantial harm as follows:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.”

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF outlines the approach to be taken towards non-designated heritage assets, as follows:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

Paragraph 205 of the NPPF makes provision for the recording of heritage assets that are likely to be demolished or destroyed by development.

Paragraphs 206 and 207 advise on development affecting conservation areas and World Heritage Sites.

The decision maker is required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of

special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The decision maker must also give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building.

The decision maker is required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The decision maker must also give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of those objectives. There is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm the character and appearance of a conservation area, though the presumption can be overcome in certain circumstances.

The decision maker is required to by section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The decision maker must also give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building.

The NPPF is in Shropshire cross referenced to the SHROPSHIRE CORE STRATEGY

The Strategy outlines the Spatial Vision of the Council towards development within the outstanding historic and natural landscape of the County. It describes the character, quality and diversity of Shropshire's natural and historic environment as the County's greatest asset which must be protected, restored and enhanced through the consideration of proposals for conservation and development which impacts on this environment.

In particular as Policy CS 17 outlines, it requires that the quality of the landscape, geodiversity and core areas of biodiversity such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, Meres and Mosses, and Severn Valley corridor must be maintained and managed in a proactive and sustainable manner.

Both designated and non-designated historic buildings, sites and landscapes are recognised for their importance to Shropshire's character, its communities, its economy, its culture and its sense of place.

Policy CS6: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Sets out how this may be achieved: -

To create sustainable places, development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles, to achieve an inclusive and accessible environment which respects and enhances local distinctiveness, and which mitigates and adapts to climate change. This will be achieved by:

- Requiring all development proposals, including changes to existing buildings, to achieve criteria set out in the sustainability checklist. This will ensure that sustainable design and construction principles are incorporated within new development, and that resource and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation are adequately addressed and improved where possible. The checklist will be developed as part of a Sustainable Design SPD;
- Requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car-based travel to be reduced;

And ensuring that all development:

- Is designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in

accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11

- Protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character including scale, pattern and density, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate;
- Contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities, including safeguarding residential and local amenity and the achievement of local standards for the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- Is designed to a high quality, consistent with national good practice standards, including appropriate landscaping and car parking provision and taking account of site characteristics such as land stability and ground contamination.
- Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water.
- Ensures that there is capacity and availability of infrastructure to serve any new development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS8.

Proposals resulting in the loss of existing facilities, services or amenities will be resisted unless provision is made for equivalent or improved provision, or it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing facility, service or amenity is not viable over the long term.

The approach is reasoned in the EXPLANATION:-

Sustainable design reflects peoples changing needs over time and requires the consideration of different needs within the local community.

Development should take into account changing needs over the lifetime of the development, incorporating specific accessibility and design features, such as Homes for Life and Lifetime Home Standards to ensure the needs of Shropshire's ageing and disabled population are addressed, as outlined in

Policy CS11.

The quality and local distinctiveness of Shropshire's townscapes and landscapes are important assets. They have a direct impact on quality of life and are an important influence on the local economy in terms of attracting investment and boosting Shropshire's image as a tourist destination.

The Council will ensure new development complements and relates to its surroundings, not only in terms of how it looks, but the way it functions, to maintain and enhance the quality of Shropshire's environment as an attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable place in which to live and work.

There are a substantial number of designated heritage assets in Shropshire. This reflects the special architectural and historical interest of the county and means that such assets require careful consideration and management where change is proposed.

Development should be sensitive to these valued features and make a positive contribution to the overall appearance and environmental quality of the area through the use of appropriate good quality locally sourced materials; the support and encouragement of traditional skills; the protection of heritage assets and the protection of important buildings, trees and environmental networks. Particular regard should be paid to Village and Town Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals.

High quality design will be expected in all new developments to ensure that the development is appropriate to its setting and surroundings and to ensure that local character is reflected. Appropriate landscaping and tree planting will form an integral part of any proposal to ensure that development is better assimilated into its surroundings. Developments should also include room for appropriate vehicular access (including for waste and emergency vehicles), suitable provision of car and cycle parking as well as footpaths and cyclepaths (where appropriate) and linked where possible, to the existing network.

These principles are further emphasised in the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan Adopted Plan 17th December 2015

In particular policy MD2 Sustainable Design.

Further to Policy CS6, for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it is required to:

1. Respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, both in terms of visual appearance and how a place functions, as set out in Community Led Plans, Town or Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans and Place Plans.
2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by:
 - i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement;
 - ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and
 - iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and
 - iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12.
3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions, which take reference from and reinforce distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place but avoid reproducing these characteristics in an incoherent and detrimental style.

Conclusion

It is considered that this proposal accords with the objectives and aspirations for development affecting recognised heritage assets and sensitive historic locations as set out in both national and local legislative frameworks.

The overall impact of this scheme constitutes a discreet change to the established scene which will enhance the architectural form and appearance of No 22 Hawthorn Road. It will also reinforce the distinct character of the Victorian expansion of residential development into the Belle Vue area, which reflects the historical and contemporary evolution of the story of Shrewsbury.

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