

Alteration works at BYNG HOUSE

SOUTHPORT, metropolitan borough of S



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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SOUTHPORT, metropolitan borough of SEFTON

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Garry Miller Heritage CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 35 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as 'scholarship as its best' by *Country Life* (June 2003), and 'well analysed and presented' in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports works at Byng House, the Promenade, Southport, in the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton, Merseyside. Byng House was originally built around 1840 as a prestigious hotel but has subsequently been converted, altered and extended to form a 36-bed residential home. It is Grade II listed and stands within the Promenade Conservation Area.

An application has been submitted to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, on a retrospective basis for alteration works at Byng House. The heritage issue arising is the proposal's impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the listed building and (in respect of the external works only) that of the conservation area.

The Grade II designation of Byng House denotes it is of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. Its significance essentially derives from this intrinsic special interest, which is that of an Italianate former seafront hotel built around 1840 amid the early development of Southport as a prestigious resort and among the earliest buildings to appear on its Promenade. It is also of note for its historical associations with Southport benefactor William Atkinson.

This significance is embodied entirely in the surviving main block of the original building. Its modern extensions, although listed by virtue of being attached, do not possess special interest owing to their recent date and appearance and their significance is therefore low. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the property derives further significance from its prominent setting on the Promenade, in which it has a distinctive presence.

The significance of the conservation area is embodied in its traditional seaside resort character and appearance. This is contained primarily in the buildings and appearance of the Promenade and its vital relationship with the seafront gardens and Marine Lake, along with the grid pattern of streets populated by hotels, commercial buildings, guest houses, hotels and residences.

The alterations form part of phased interventions which are intended to increase the capacity of the home from 36 to 43 residents, as outlined in a pre-application enquiry on April 17 2023 (DC/2023/00535). The works relate entirely to a four-storey rear wing built in 2007 and have provided a further six bedrooms, but have been completed without consents in order to respond quickly to current and anticipated demand for more bed spaces, especially from the NHS. The remainder of the phased works, which affect the original building and other modern extensions, are to be the subject of a full planning and listed building consent submission in due course.

As the works relate entirely to the 2007 wing, and no historic fabric is lost or otherwise affected, the significance of the listed building is completely unharmed. In respect of the conservation area, the works involve changes to fenestration only and will not be seen in the public views which establish its character and appearance.

It is therefore concluded that the works sustain the significance of both the listed building and the conservation area. The works also deliver the significant public benefit of additional bed spaces at a time of need. The application is thus entirely in accordance with national planning guidance along with relevant local development plan policy, and merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application building is located on the Promenade at Southport, one of the communities within the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton, Merseyside. Byng House was originally built around 1840 as a prestigious hotel but has subsequently been converted, altered and extended to form a 36-bed residential home. The property is prominently situated on the Promenade and is a definitive element of its largely 19th century seafront streetscene.



Map 1. Location of the application property



1. Byng House was built as a hotel in the mid-19th century



2. It occupies a prominent position on the Promenade

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 The proposal

An application has been submitted to Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, on a retrospective basis for alteration works at Byng House.

3.2 Designations

Byng House is listed at Grade II, having been designated in 1972, and stands within the Promenade Conservation Area..

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage issue arising is the proposal's impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the listed building and (in respect of the external works only) that of the conservation area.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the listed building and conservation area, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. In accordance with paragraph 194, it is considered the level of detail presented is proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets, and is no more than is necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. Concise, proportionate descriptions of the listed building (Section 4) and conservation area (Section 5)

2. A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A review of the national and local heritage policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 7)
4. Analysis within this policy context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the listed building and conservation area (Section 8)

4: THE LISTED BUILDING

4.1 Overview

Former hotel of circa 1840 in Italianate style, altered and extended as residential home.

4.2 Historical summary

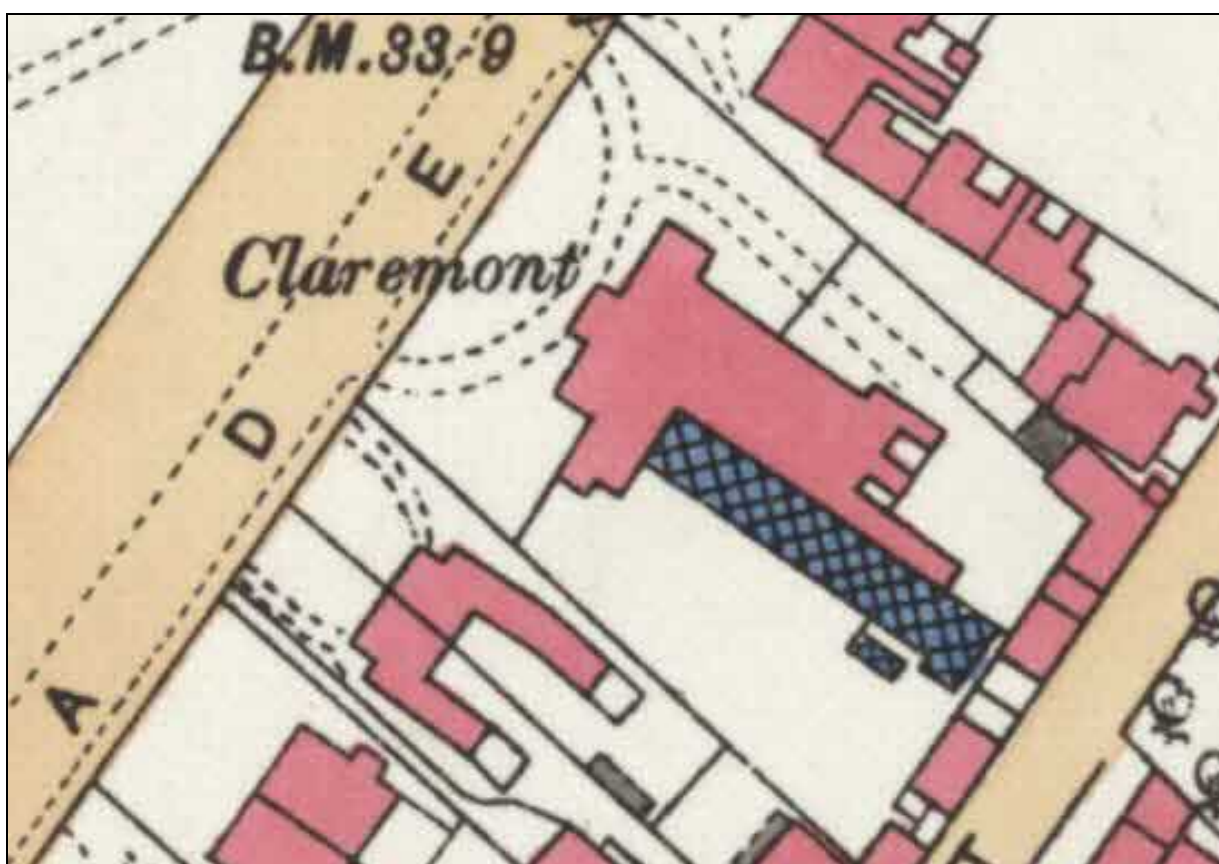
Originally named *Claremont*, Byng House was built as a prestigious hotel during the mid-19th century emergence of Southport as a prestigious resort. It dates from around 1840 and is one of a handful of properties along the Promenade recorded by the OS map of the middle of that decade (Map 2, following page). By the early 1860s it was the residence of William Atkinson, a Preston cotton manufacturer who became one of Southport's most generous benefactors, principally known for his foundation of the Atkinson Art Gallery and Library in 1878. The building was extended and altered at the rear during the later 19th century, with the 25-inch map of 1889 (Map 3) showing a long service wing and adjoining conservatory, further altered by the mid-1920s (Map 4). These elements were replaced by a large extension in the late 20th century, in turn superceded by the present four-storey rear wing in 2007.



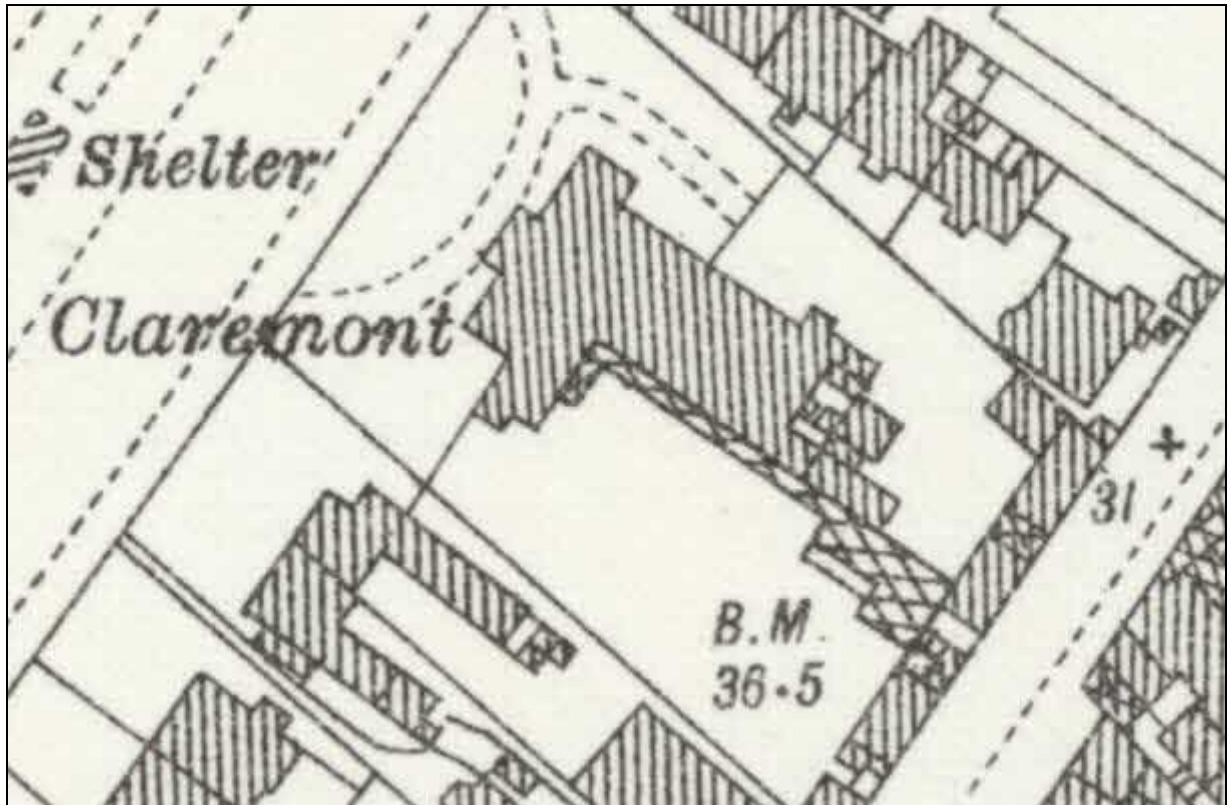
3. *Claremont (left) around 1900*



Map 2. The building is recorded on the six-inch OS map surveyed 1845-1846



Map 3. Alterations at the rear and a large conservatory appear on the 25-inch edition of 1889



Map 4. Further alterations at the rear had occurred by 1926-1927

4.3 List description

The National Heritage List for England description of the building, which dates probably from the resurvey of the 1980s, reads:

Shown on OS Map as Byng House. House, now part of convalescent home. 1840-41; altered, and greatly extended to the rear in the late C20. White painted stucco, hipped slate roof. Classical style. Double-fronted plan with small side wings. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys; 3 bays. Symmetrical, the outer bays slightly raised; with a plinth, prominent eaves cornice (coved and bracketed over the outer bays). The centre has a square-headed doorway and round-headed side-windows protected by a tetrastyle Ionic porch with corniced entablature and balustraded parapet which forms a balcony. At first floor a French window set in a wide pedimented architrave with Ionic columns, and at second floor above this a cantilevered balcony with bowed iron railings and a window of 3 small round-headed lights. The outer bays have 2-storey canted bay windows with 1/1 and 2/2 sashes, prominent cornices to both levels and balustraded parapets, and 2-light casements at second floor. Shallow hipped roof with 2 tall chimney stacks. Single-storey side wings, each with a raised panel containing a 2/2 sash with arched upper panes. Return sides similar but simpler. Very large late C20 extension to rear. INTERIOR: large dog-legged flying staircase with cast-iron balusters.

4.4 Further analysis

The interest of the listed building is obtained solely in the surviving element of the original building, which occupies the front of the site. Shorn of its original service wing, this is the main residential block of the former hotel, a prominent three-storey Italianate composition. Attached to it are three modern elements.

The large 2007 four-storey extension which is the largest element of the site, and occupies the position of the original rear service wing and the late 20th century extension which first replaced it

The single storey Frankenberger wing, at right angles to the rear wing

A single-storey conservatory, probably 1990s, on the south side of the original building

Although all these elements are encompassed by the listing by virtue of being attached to the original 19th century property, they do not intrinsically possess the special architectural or historic interest that is the requirement of designation. Hence they do not merit planning consideration under the same terms as the original building.



4. Plan showing the elements of the site: A: the original Byng House; B: 2007 four-storey extension; C: single-storey Frankenberger Wing; D: single-storey conservatory



5. The main residential block of the original building, with the 2007 wing to rear



6. A glass link separates the original building from the wing: view from within the site



7. The single storey Frankenburger wing, at right angles to the 2007 wing



8. The probably 1990s conservatory

5: promenade conservation area

5.1 Overview

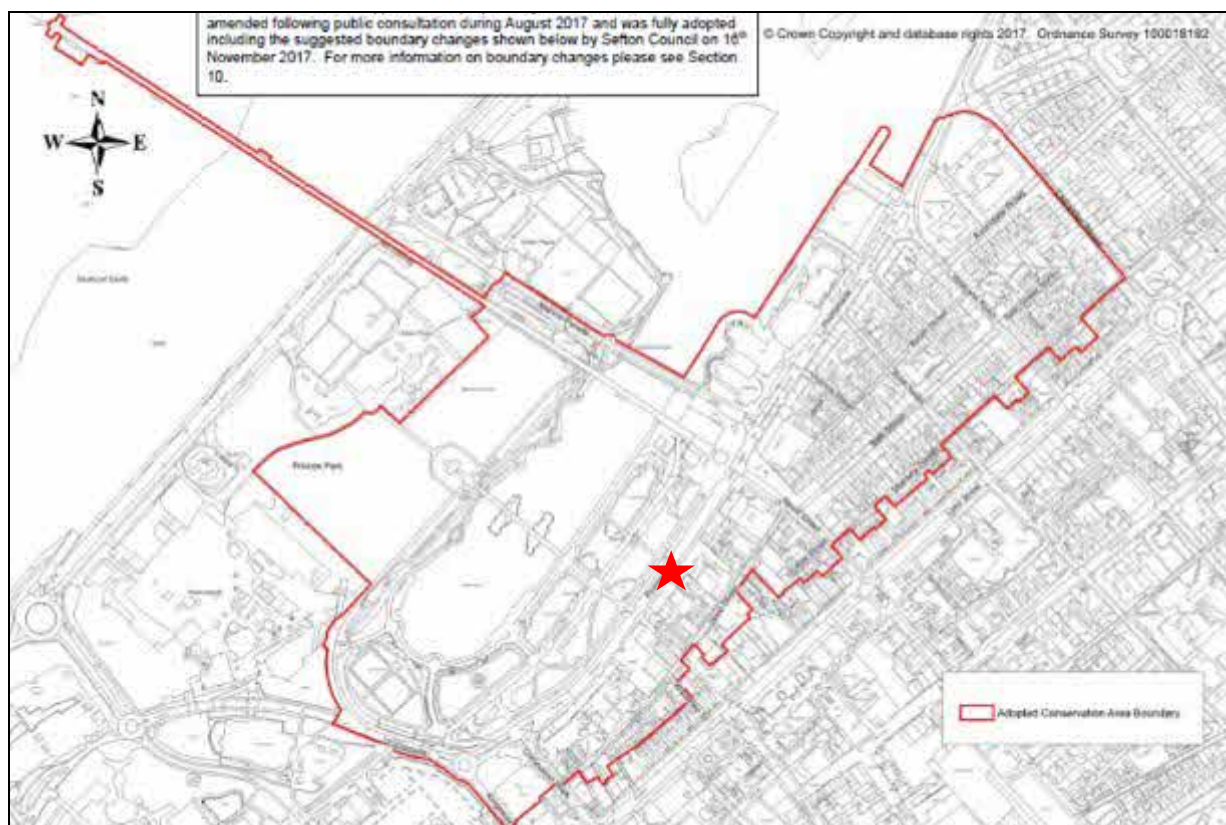
Promenade Conservation Area is located northwest of Southport town centre, with the coast to the northwest and the boundary of Lord Street Conservation Area to the southeast. The application building stands just south of the centre of the conservation area.

5.2 Summary of special interest

The special interest of the conservation area was identified in the character appraisal adopted by Sefton MBC in November 2017. Its chief interest is in its traditional seaside resort character. The Promenade is the primary street, running centrally through the area, southwest to northeast, with the Pier near its centre. To its seaward side, the Promenade overlooks the seafront gardens and Marine Lake, a vitally-important relationship, while to landward side is a mix of commercial properties, guest houses, hotels and residences laid out on a grid pattern. Off the Promenade, the commercial side streets vary enormously in character from spacious, primary thoroughfares to service roads such as West Street, which runs to the rear of the application building.

5.3 Contribution of the application building

The original 19th century main block of Byng House is denoted in the appraisal as being of critical importance to the conservation area. The contribution of the modern rear wing, Frankenberger Wing and conservatory is described as neutral.



Map 5. Location of the application building within the conservation area



9. Graphic from conservation area appraisal showing how the original building (shaded red) is of crucial importance, while the extensions (green) are neutral

6: summary of significance

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting

6.2 The listed building

The Grade II designation of Byng House denotes it is of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. Its significance essentially derives from this intrinsic special interest, which is that of an Italianate former seafront hotel built around 1840 amid the early development of Southport as a prestigious resort and among the earliest buildings to appear on its Promenade. It is also of note for its historical associations with Southport benefactor William Atkinson. This significance is embodied entirely in the surviving main block of the original building. The modern extensions, although listed, do not possess special interest owing to their recent date and appearance and their significance is therefore low. In addition to its intrinsic interest, the property derives further significance from its prominent setting on the promenade, in which it has a distinctive presence.

6.3 Promenade Conservation Area

The significance of the conservation area is embodied in its traditional seaside resort character and appearance. This is embodied primarily in the buildings and appearance of the Promenade and its vital relationship with the seafront gardens and Marine Lake, along with the grid pattern of streets populated by hotels, commercial buildings, guest houses, hotels and residences. Away from the Promenade the character becomes less spacious, with its minor and service streets being of secondary importance and interest. Although the significance of the conservation area resides in the local (i.e. Sefton) context primarily, it contains a number of buildings that are listed as being of national importance, including the application property.

7: planning policy context

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 (1) requires LPAs to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area.

7.2 Relevant policies

Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised July 2021) provides the guidance on how the statutory duties are to be put into practice. Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and
The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘great weight’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; and that significance can be lost through development within its setting.

Locally, development affecting the historic environment is controlled by policies of the Sefton Local Plan, adopted 2017. Policy NH9 relates to heritage assets and states that the council will seek to protect their significance and their settings. Under Policy NH11, works to listed buildings will only be permitted where any alterations preserve historic fabric or features and/or its setting, and any new additions respect their special architectural or historic interest. Regarding conservation areas, Policy NH12 states that development will only be permitted where the proposal is of high quality and preserves or enhances their character or appearance.

8: impact of the proposal

8.1 Background

The alterations form part of phased interventions which are intended to increase the capacity of the home from 36 to 43 residents, as outlined in a pre-application enquiry on April 17 2023 (DC/2023/00535). The works relate entirely to the 2007 wing and have provided a further six bedrooms, but have been completed without consents in order to respond quickly to current and anticipated demand for more bed spaces, especially from the NHS. The remainder of the phased works, which affect the original building, Frankenberger wing and conservatory, are to be the subject of a full planning and listed building consent submission in due course.

8.2 Summary of the works

The works occur entirely within the existing envelope of the 2007 wing, with no additional floor area created. Prior to the alterations, a ground floor open plan dining and lounge area existed, enclosed by a perimeter corridor which also provided access to external amenity space. The dining and lounge functions have now been relocated to other existing day spaces in the original building, allowing six new bedrooms (numbers 5-10) to be created in the 2007 wing. Where necessary, existing structural openings have been used for replacement fenestration and a new opening formed in room 10, arrangements which include doors to provide direct access from the new bedrooms to the amenity space. Additionally, rooms 21 and 22 on the third floor are to be converted from existing use as a store and sluice room to another bedroom, involving no external impact. A glazed partition separating the lounge/dining area from the corridor has been dismantled. No historic fabric has been affected: the interventions affect the 2007 structure in their entirety.

8.3 Their impact

a. On the listed building. The significance of the listed building resides entirely in its original 19th century main block. As the works relate entirely to the 2007 wing, and no historic fabric is lost or otherwise affected, the significance of the listed building is completely unharmed.

b. On the conservation area. Only the external elements of the works potentially affect the conservation area. These external works are restricted only the changes to fenestration and additional ground floor opening as cited above. These changes are not visible in any of the public views that define the character and appearance of the

conservation area and the contribution made by Byng House to it. They will be seen only from the amenity space and glimpsed from the upper floor of the adjacent property to the southwest, when trees are not in leaf. These views are private in their entirety and hence the character and appearance of the conservation area, as publicly experienced, will remain entirely unchanged.



10. The former corridor facing the amenity space, with altered fenestration

8.4 Conclusion

For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the works sustain the significance of both the listed building and the conservation area. The works also deliver the significant public benefit of additional bed spaces at a time of need. The application is thus entirely in accordance with national planning guidance along with relevant local development plan policy, and hence merits approval without delay.