

FORMER CHAMBERS BUS DEPOT

HIA Addendum

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PURCELL 

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 BACKGROUND

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) update has been prepared to review revised proposals for the Former Chambers Bus Depot site in Bures St. Mary. A planning application (DC/22/00754) for conversion of the interwar bus depot to retail use on the ground floor with accommodation above, plus conversion of the brick house to the south to residential accommodation and the construction of new houses on the plot to the rear has been submitted and approved. A subsequent Discharge of Conditions Application (DC/23/01572) for Condition 43 (Demolition Strategy) was then submitted which included some changes to the level of demolition and design. However, there are no longer any retail providers who wish to take on the proposed retail unit and the scheme has been redesigned to instead convert the interwar depot into residential accommodation, with an increase of the number of residential units on the site from 10 to 14, including redistribution and redesign of the new houses on the rear plot.

This update addendum reviews the new scheme against the previously submitted scheme to assess if the impact of the proposals has changed. Please refer to the Heritage Statement prepared by Purcell, dated January 2022, issue 02, for a more detailed assessment of history and significance of the site, though summaries have been provided here for reference.

1.2 HERITAGE ASSETS

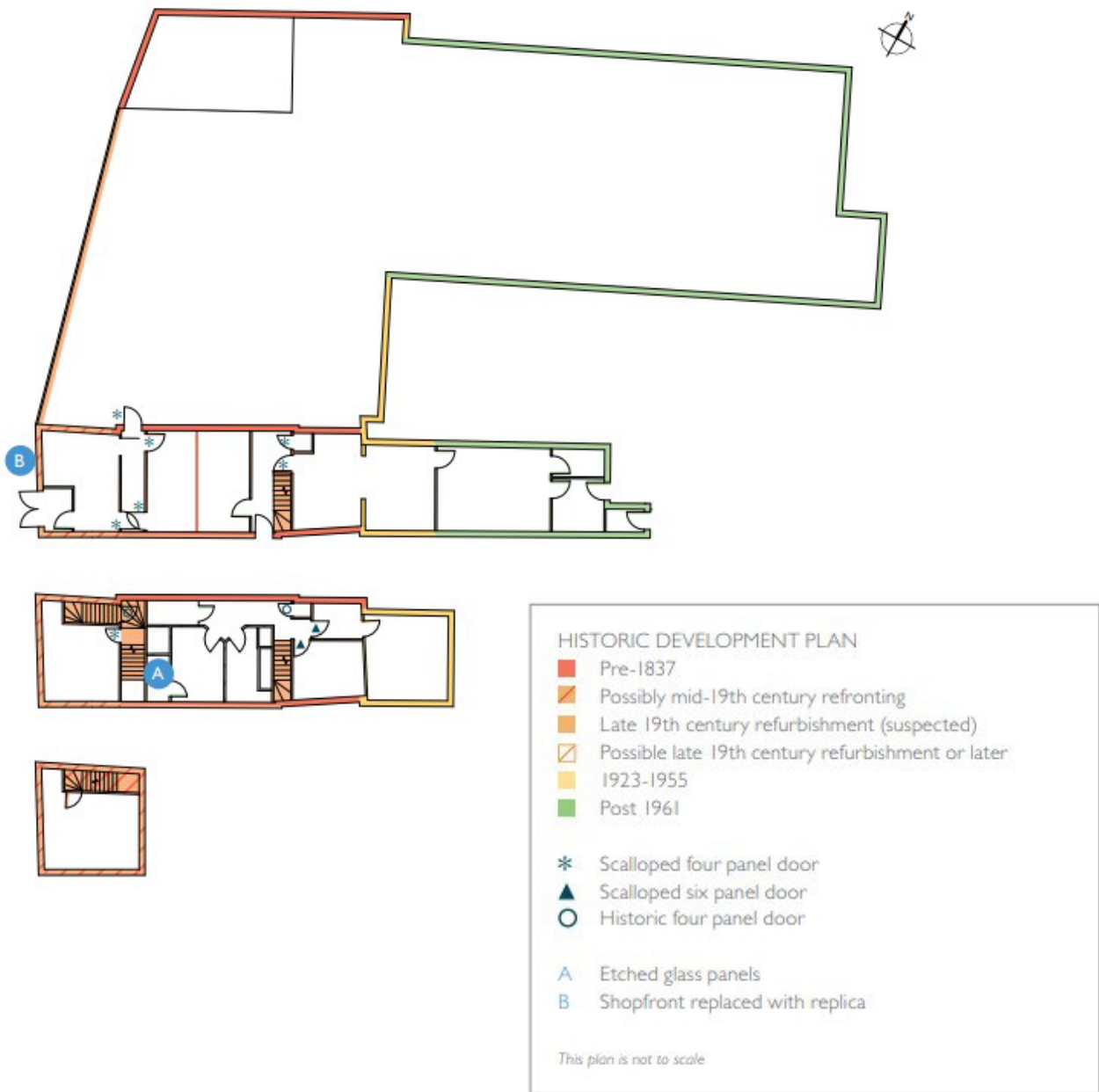
The former Chambers Bus Depot is located in the Bures St Mary Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of the Suffolk part of the large village of Bures. There are a number of listed buildings near the site. Additionally, the Conservation Officer reviewing the planning application noted in his consultation comments that he considers the former Bus Depot buildings fronting the street to be non-designated heritage assets.



Heritage Assets Plan. Grade I listed buildings are coloured red. Grade II* listed buildings are coloured yellow. Grade II listed buildings are coloured green. The Conservation Area boundary is shown as a blue line.

1.3 SUMMARY OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site is located in the centre of the village of Bures St Mary, which is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon period, and its central location means it is likely to have had buildings on in for centuries. The 1837 tithe map records three dwellings on the site, of which the central one survives. Whilst its red brick frontage appears nineteenth century, there is evidence of timber framing internally that suggests an earlier date. A dwelling to the south with a plastered symmetrical frontage occupied the area to the south that is now an open gap. The dwelling on the north end of the site was a jettied timber-framed building with cross wing and further additions to the rear. The front section was demolished when HC Chambers & Son, a saddlery and later bus company, took ownership of the site in around the late 1870s/early 1880s. Whilst the rear range was retained, an identical red brick gabled frontage was built to create a pair with the existing one, separated by a smaller pitched gabled structure. In the interwar period these late Victorian buildings and the older rear range were demolished and replaced with a steel framed bus depot building that incorporated a small, earlier structure to the north. The central historic building was extended eastwards in the interwar period and again in the later twentieth century. The rear part of the depot was rebuilt after the 1960s.



1.4 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Chambers Bus Depot is principally significant for its contribution to the Conservation Area both in terms of its streetscape value and its historical value in illustrating the industrial history, specifically relating to transport, in Bures. In addition, the mid-nineteenth century red brick facade conceals an older timber framed building, which is typical of the village. The evidential value of the pre-war sections of the building is high at a local level.

The old house was built piecemeal and the older parts have higher heritage values. The interiors retain historic features such as panelled doors, matchboard panelling, cornices, skirtings and a fireplace that contribute to its illustrative and aesthetic values, although the post-war extensions are modern and not of heritage value.

The main bus depot building is illustrative of typical, pre-fabricated industrial buildings made of steel framing and corrugated sheeting that started to become common after the First World War. Its folding doors and large area of glazing in the frontage is illustrative of its use as well as forming a unique elevation in Bures that is prominent on the street. The small, older building to the north has retained its historic footprint and some evidence of the interiors inside but it has been considerably altered, which has diminished its heritage values.

The site as a whole has a strong connection with HC Chambers & Son, which created the site as it is today. The connection is evident in the shop sign and the bus weathervane and contributes to its medium associative and communal values at a local level.

The sheds and other structures, whilst part of the Chambers development of the site, are not significant. The red brick boundary wall and remains of the wall of a lost outbuilding do have high illustrative value and medium evidential value at a local level.

The setting of the site in terms of the street layout and nearby historic buildings, especially the Maltings as another industrial survival, are important elements in the site’s setting that reflect the historic setting of the site and help the understanding of its significance. The modern housing behind does not make a positive contribution to the site’s setting.



2.0 REVISED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 SUMMARY OF REVISED PROPOSALS

This section lists the proposals, noting which elements are changes from the previous applications DC/22/00754 and DC/23/01572.

19th Century Single Storey Shop

- Demolition of this range but salvaging and reusing front elevation and shop front where possible (as DC/23/01572).
- Demolition of north wall of this range (retained in DC/23/01572).
- Rebuild of front range in the same design as existing with shop front (as DC/23/01572).
- Creating a residential unit within this range instead of this range being part of the retail unit (change from previous applications).
- Construction of a two storey element to the residential unit towards the east end of the range (first floor also previously proposed but design of this element now updated).

20th Century Bus Depot Building

- Change from retail unit to three residential units (new proposed use from previous applications. Level of demolition is the same but the rebuilt units do not extend as far east as previously proposed).
- Temporary removal of the bus depot doors for renovation and return to site (as previous applications).
- Demolition of the upper gable and rebuilding (demolition as previous proposals but frontage no longer requires an increase in height to the depot's ridge or glazing inserted into gable).
- Proposed brick wall and gateway to the rear of the units to enclose gardens (change from previous applications).

19th Century Three Storey Building

- Conversion to residential (as previous applications).
- Retention of front two ranges of the building, including internals of the very front range (as DC/22/00754 but second range proposed for removal in DC/23/01572).
- Demolition of the rear ranges of the building and rebuilding with residential accommodation (easternmost part of this range demolished as previous proposals. Third range from west was retained in DC/22/00754 is now also proposed for demolition. Exterior design of the new building has changed from previous proposals).

Site

- Construction of eight new houses (one above a car port) and two separate car ports on the rear plot (previously six houses and one car port. Design of new houses has changed).
- Reduction in size of parking area behind bus depot building and inclusion of one of the new houses in this location.

2.2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The impact will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Magnitude of Impact Definition

High Beneficial: The development considerably enhances the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

Medium Beneficial: The development enhances to a clearly discernible extent the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

Low Beneficial: The development enhances to a minor extent the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

Negligible: The development does not affect the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

Low Adverse: The development harms to a minor extent the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

Medium Adverse: The development harms to a clearly discernible extent the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

High Adverse: The development severely harms the heritage asset, views of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

2.3 UPDATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.3.1 19th Century Single Storey Shop

The proposals for the single storey range remain much the same as in the previous two planning applications, with the range demolished, due to poor condition, but rebuilt to the same design with the shop front, using salvaged materials where possible. In this regard the impact assessment remains the same. The medium beneficial impact to the setting stated in the HIA report, derived from the reanimation and improved condition/appearance of this shop front, still applies.

The redesigned two storey range will be in brick, as was previously proposed, and with a traditional design, though without a window as previously proposed. The ridge height of the two-storey element is lower in the revised proposals and comfortably mirrors the pitch of the single storey range in front, therefore there is likely to be a slightly reduced visual impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and surrounding Listed Buildings compared to the previous scheme.

Overall, the changes to the design of the shop range have a negligible impact on the setting of the heritage assets in the vicinity.

2.3.2 20th Century Bus Depot Building

The change in use of the bus depot building from retail to residential use means that the footprint of the new building is reduced at the rear and the ridge height of the building does not have to be raised. The reduction of volume of the building means that the view of the building from the street remains the same as at present. The gable above the depot doors will also retain its current appearance, compared with previous proposals for the insertion of glazing. These changes to the design will maintain the current character of the Conservation Area without the need for elements of modern design being added into the streetscape. This has a medium beneficial improvement in the impact compared to the previous scheme.

The design of the rear elevation of the bus depot, in brick with a columned balcony level and a regular pattern of double doors on the first floor, is a traditional design with something of a warehouse feel to it. This responds better to the traditional character of other buildings within the Conservation Area than the modern design of the retail scheme. Additionally, the red brick wall surrounding the new gardens, with an arch over the gated entrance, gives the impression of a working yard to the rear of the warehouse building and the name Chambers Yard in the arch is a positive nod to the history of the site.

Overall, the changes to the design are a positive improvement in terms of visual impact on the Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings.

2.3.3 19th Century Three Storey Building

In DC/22/00754 the front three sections of the three storey building were proposed for retention. In DC/23/01572, only the front section to the street was proposed for retention. The revised proposals are for the retention of the front two sections of the building. While this is not as much retention as the original (approved) application, it is an improvement in terms of heritage impact compared to the scheme presented in DC/23/01572. Additionally, the revised proposals retain the current window and door arrangement on the south elevation of the second section of the range, as opposed to the original scheme at DC/22/00754 which altered the door and fenestration pattern.

The revised proposal is for this section of the building to be rendered, which does have a low adverse impact in terms of covering over the original brick external walls which have a pleasant patina. However, rendered elevations are not uncommon within the setting and therefore this treatment is an appropriate one in the context of the Conservation Area. Additionally, the proposal to include a painted sign in a traditional style on the south elevation is another positive nod to the historic commercial character of the site.

The revised extension to the rear is in contrasting red brick, with a slate roof, and steps down in height from the front two sections of the range. This helps to show this element as a new addition, which steps down in height from the historic ranges to the west in a similar manner to the existing buildings. The traditional style of the new range is appropriate for the setting of the Conservation area.

Overall, the revised proposals, while having a slight adverse impact from the rendering over of the red brick, have a medium positive impact compared to the DC/23/01572 scheme which involved more demolition. The revised design of the alterations is appropriate for the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

2.3.4 Site

The change of use of the bus depot building from retail use to residential has altered the requirement for car parking to the rear of the shop, meaning that car parking spaces have been reduced here (though several retained in this location which is discreetly hidden from view of the street). This has created the opportunity to move one of the proposed new dwellings to the northern end of the former shop car park. Additionally, the layout of the other buildings on the site has been spread out slightly and broken up into different blocks, rather than larger ranges in the previous scheme, which may give a less dense appearance to the site. The 'almshouses' to the east end of the site are also designed as single storey as opposed to the two storey houses previously proposed. These changes to the scale and massing of the new buildings will have a low to medium beneficial impact on the setting of the Conservation Area when compared to the previous scheme. The new buildings are designed in a traditional style, which was the case in the previous scheme, and this is an appropriate approach for the setting of the Conservation Area.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

The revised design proposals for the former Chambers bus depot site have resulted in fewer changes to the appearance of the historic building, including removing the requirement for modern glazing and raised roof levels on the street frontage. The traditional style of design for the revised rear elevations of the bus depot building, in a suitable warehouse style, and for the revised new houses is an appropriate design response to the traditional character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in the setting. The revised scale and massing of the new buildings to the rear is also likely to have a reduced visual impact on the setting. Overall, the changes are positive in terms of heritage impact on the heritage assets.