

# Planning & Heritage Impact Statement

## Proposed Replacement Side Extension & External Alterations 3 Downfield Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2TG

Project Ref. – H036

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planning ■ design ■ development

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Prepared on behalf of:

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# Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

This Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants and accompanies their Householder planning application with proposals to demolish an existing side extension, construct a replacement and carry out various alterations to the exterior of the building.

These works are all part of their intention to update the accommodation and upgrade the thermal performance of the dwelling to make it fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century living.

The purpose of the statement is to provide an overview of the proposals and consider them within the context of planning and heritage policy. This follows the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework (para. 200) which requires applicants to:

"... Describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance".

The document should be read in tandem with the Design & Access Statement, and drawings produced by Bradley Van Der Straeten Architects.

## 1.2 Location

The property is located within the suburban neighbourhood of Clifton, 80m southeast of the public open space at Clifton Down. The site sits on a sloping hillside facing the northwest side of the road. It is centred on National Grid Reference ST 57155 74366.

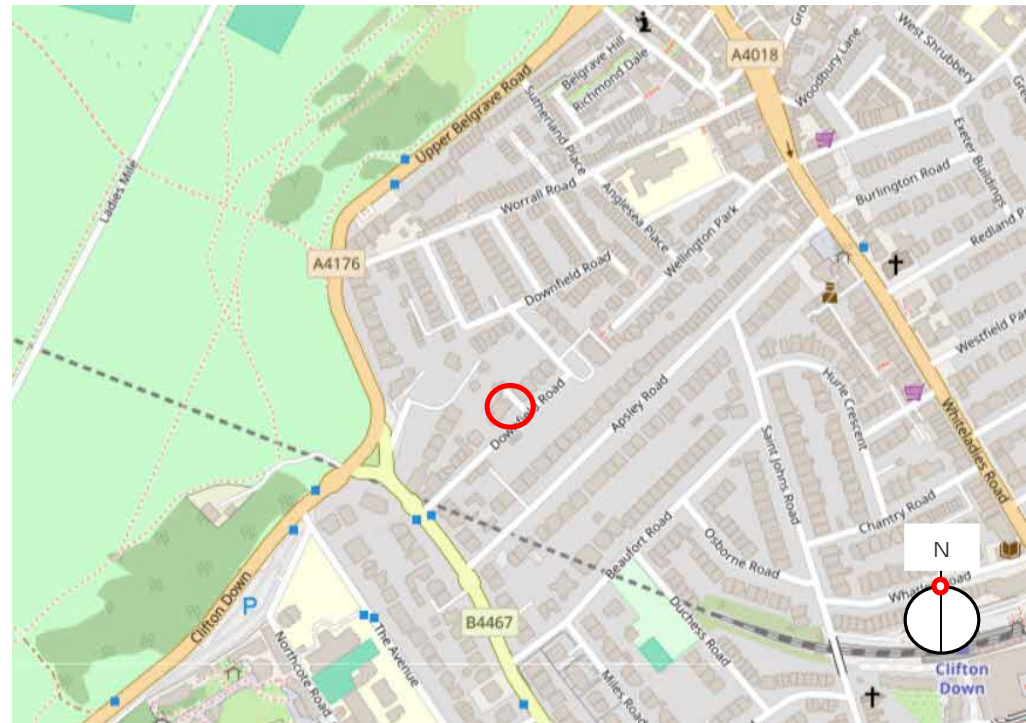


Figure 1. The site location in Clifton, a short distance southeast of Clifton Down.

## The Site & Context

### 2.1 Local Context

The Clifton neighbourhood was extensively developed west of Whiteladies Road and to the south of The Downs in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century when large detached and semi-detached villas were built. Many of the larger houses have since been converted to flats and subsequent infill development has resulted in the period buildings being inter-mixed with more modern development.

As seen today, the area is characterised by a range of period-style buildings which comprise rubblestone elevations with Bathstone dressings along with tile or slated covered pitched roofs. A unifying attribute is the use of locally quarried rubblestone and ashlar.

Many of the buildings sit in plots surrounded by gardens at the front and rear. Along with the mature street trees, the soft landscaped setting gives the impression of a verdant Victorian suburb.

The quality of some of the buildings has resulted in some being statutorily or locally listed (figure 2).

Contrasting the prevailing character of the area, there are some notable modern infill developments, such as the award winning-dance studio associated with the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and the recently updated no. 1 Downside Road with its metal-clad third floor extension.

The quality of the context has led to it being designated as part of a conservation area, the application site falling into Whiteladies Road.

### 2.2 No. 3 Downfield Road

The site comprises a large residential plot in which sits a substantial detached dwelling that dates from the late 1860s. On its boundaries are high a mix of walls, hedges and/or railings.

It is accessed via gated vehicular entrances off the road frontage and driveways that lead up to the front and side of the building where there are two separate garages. The building is then accessed via an entrance on the northeast side elevation.

The building is arranged over four floors, the upper level being the attic storey that sits within the roof void.

The building is faced in Dolomitic Conglomerate, a coarse-grained rock that contains fragments of Carboniferous Limestone. It is likely the material is from local outcrops from eastern Clifton or was transported from Clevedon by boat up the River Avon.

Various Bathstone features and dressings, such as window surrounds, quoins, banding and corncicing add to the character of the building. These are complemented by the larger, vertically proportioned timber sash windows.

The building's pitched roofs, which due to their shallow ptiches, can only be glimpsed form the street level are covered with modern concrete tiles. Within the roof pitches are modern dormer windows and atop the building is a clererstory that was added in 1998.

The property has throughout its life been extended along with several significant modifications and alterations. Nevertheless, as seen today the building retains its inherant character.

The building is locally distinct and has some architectural and historic interest as one of the larger period houses in the area (figure 3). When considered as a whole, the formality and grandeur of the villa along with its setting makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as a background building.

Images of the site and context are included as photos 1-12.



Figure 2. Map extract showing the site and designated heritage assets, the Grade II listed Deerhurst (purple) and locally listed buildings (orange). The whole area is covered by conservation area designation, either in Whiteladies Road, Clifton or The Downs.



Figure 3. No. 3 Downfield Road seen in context with its modern clerestory roof and southwest side extension (c.1998).





Photo 5. The eaves with stone corbels above which is a 20<sup>th</sup> century dormer window. Behind this is the clerestory that was added c. 1998.



Photos 1-4. Street scene views of the property where it is seen set behind the front boundary wall and landscaped setting.



Photo 6. The front elevation which has a shallow lightwell and access into the lower ground floor accommodation.





Photos 7-9. Views of the extended and altered rear elevation.



Photo 10. The southwest side elevation which exhibits several modern interventions.



Photos 11-16. Views of the modern conservatory attached to the southwest side elevation.



### 2.3 Historic Development

The property was developed in the late 1860s as the city expanded and Clifton as a neighbourhood was extended towards The Downs. Map extracts in figures 5-7 record the development of the property from the 1870s through to the 1930s.

Permission for the new house was given in 1868 (figure 3) and it was built by the 1874 edition of Ashmead's Plan of Bristol (figure 4). It is illustrated on the plan and is named 'Glanmorfa'.

Over time it was extended and adapted with a porch added c. 1902 (Bristol Archive, Building Plans Index, Volume 41/57a) to the design of Curnock & Son. Conservatories were then added to the southwest and northeast elevations (figure 6).

In 1936 the garage was approved (Bristol Archive, Building Plans Index, Volume 152/31m) and in 1947 planning approval was given to convert the property into two flats (Bristol Archive, Building Plans Index, Volume 199/41i) for the owner M Story and by the architect J R Chaffe.

In 1964 planning permission was granted (ref. 64/02784/U) to convert the building back into a single dwelling. The application was made by the Bristol architectural practice of Stride Treglown Architects.

In 1998 an assortment of external alterations were approved under application ref. 98/01439/H that included the construction of a new single storey lean-to extension, alterations to existing dormer windows, and installation of rooflight and a lantern (clerestory).

The main roof was then altered after permission in 1999 Ref. 99/00273/H to create the clerestory windows at second floor level.

The last application was submitted in 2000 when under application ref. 00/03413/H planning permission was granted for the demolition of an existing garage and conservatory a replacement garage, swimming pool and pool room along with new landscaping.

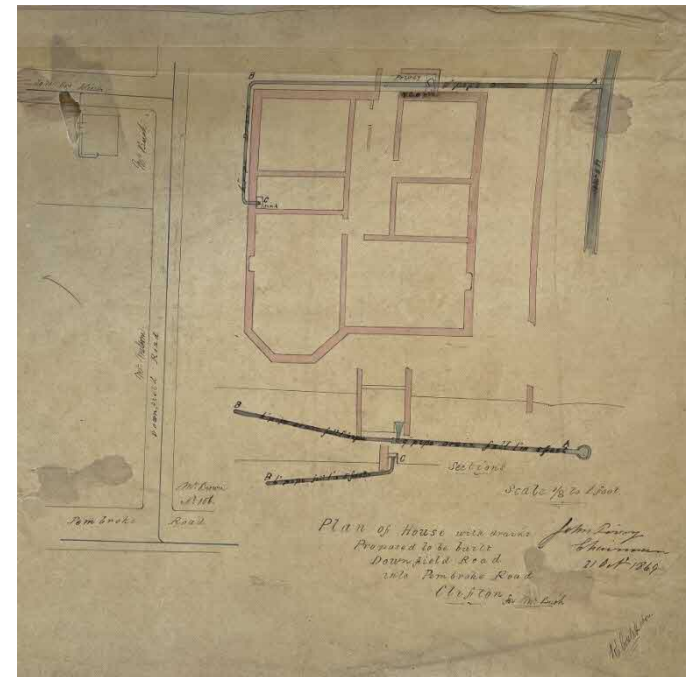


Figure 4. Drawings from the 1868 application for the house. The drawings show the basement plan and details of the drainage connection.

Source: Bristol Archive, Building Plans Index, Volume 8/163a).



Figure 5. Extract from George C. Ashmead's Map of Bristol dated 1874 showing the property as 'Glanmorfa'.

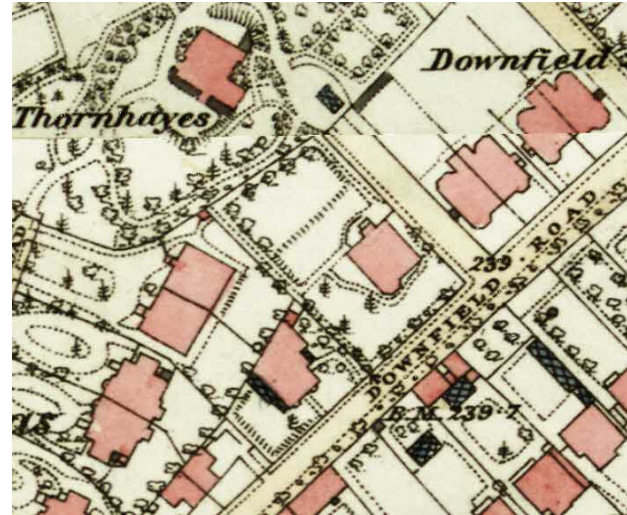


Figure 6. First Edition Ordnance Survey map showing the setting of the house, c. 1885.

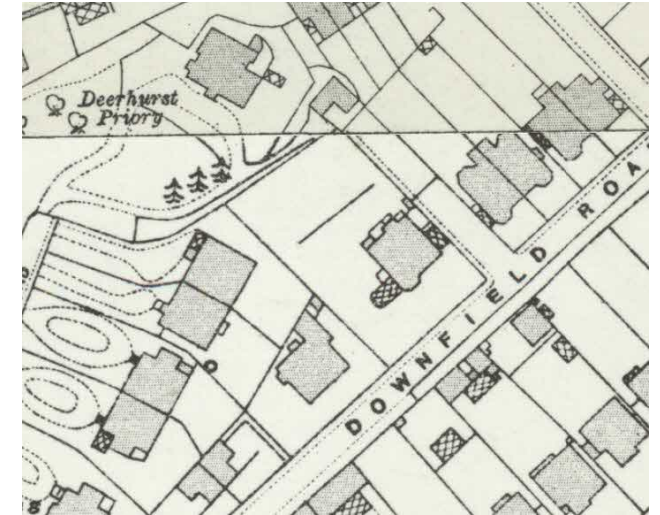


Figure 7. Third Edition Ordnance Survey map extract showing the house with conservatories added to the southwest and northeast side elevations c. 1932. The latter was subsequently adapted to become a garage.

Figures 4-6. Mapping that records the development of the property from the 1870s through to the 1930s.



### 2.3 Planning Policy

According to Bristol City Council's policy mapping, there are no land use designations for the site, but it is located within the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area (adopted in 1976). Other than the statutorily and locally listed buildings shown in Figure 2, there are no other heritage assets close to the site.

There is no up-to-date management plan for the conservation area but instead, the Council relies on an 'interim' document - PAN 2 Conservation Area Enhancement Statements, 1993. The Statements were not put forward as formal Enhancement Plans but as a stage in producing such a plan. Whilst the Council has been producing detailed Conservation Area Management Plans since 2007, Whiteladies Road remains to be reviewed. Nevertheless, the 1993 Statement provides a narrative on the general character of the area, it describing the area around the application site as:

'... its character relies on the subtle combination of mainly domestic qualities: solidly built, substantial villas and terraces in local Brandon Hill, and Bathstone with interesting and varied elevational use of classical architectural motifs; well-constructed boundary walls in local stone'

It also explains the importance of the landscape along with the many rubblestone walls that enclose the period properties. The Statement finishes with a section headed General Enhancement Objectives although there are none directly relevant to the extension or alterations of domestic dwellings.

### 2.4 Appraisal / Historic Significance

The purpose of this section is to describe the significance of the building and its context. This is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, where paragraph 200 requires applicants to provide a description of the significance of heritage assets and/or its setting that may be affected by development proposals. Within the Glossary of the NPPF 'significance' is described as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance."

The Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019) sets out the approach to an assessment of significance. It guides on how to describe heritage significance to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for changes to heritage assets.

The property sits adjacent to the western boundary of the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area where it adjoins the Clifton & Hotwells Conservation Area. Within the street, the building is relatively prominent due to the spaciousness of the plot and the distance to neighbouring properties. However, as seen from the public realm, it appears as a background building and one of several on the northern side of the road which evidently make a positive contribution to the townscape and general street scene.

The building's design attributes have enduring qualities, and although it has been extended and altered with modern interventions, it retains its essential character and traditional appearance. However, the building's architecture, pleasant though it is, lacks qualities to justify it being locally or statutory listed.

The changes made to the building reflect the differing aspirations of successive owners, but who appreciated its qualities and sought to preserve them. The extensions and roof alterations have contributed to the character of the building in a small way but have less interest than the host building. The development undertaken in 1998 is of quality but reflects the tastes of the owners at that time.

## The Proposals

### 3.1 Land Use and Amount

The applicants wish to upgrade the property to significantly improve its liveability and environmental performance. The proposals are described in detail within the Design & Access Statement but the following is a summary of the key changes:

#### Front elevation

- Lowering the front elevation basement windows and lower the lower ground floor level by 400mm
- Remove the front dormer and make good the roof

#### West and Rear Elevations

- Demolish the poorly insulated late 20<sup>th</sup> century side extension/conservatory and construct a high-quality contemporary addition
- New windows/sliding to improve day and sunlight into the Kitchen/Dining Room. The alterations will also create direct access to the patio and garden.
- Improve access to the lower ground floor
- Re-face the rear elevation extension

#### Roof

- Replace the clerestory
- Remove the front elevation dormer window
- Replace the concrete tiles with natural slate.



## Planning Assessment

### 4.1 Planning Overview

The period property has undergone a series of alterations and additions throughout its 160-year life. The owners of the property recognise they are custodians and their intention is to preserve the key characteristics of the building, and as we previous owner, update and improve the building's functionality and performance to reflect modern standards.

In bringing forward the proposals, the key conservation legislation, local and national planning policy have been considered. The design guidance within SPD2 – A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions (2005) has been followed with the design of the replacement extension which amongst other things states:

'For detached dwellings there is greater flexibility to extend the property and in many cases, it is less important for an extension to be subservient to the main house. However, this is dependent on the particular property and the character of the area.'

### 4.2 Design and Heritage Impact

In designing the proposals, a key consideration has been to retain the distinctive character and features of the period house. To this end, the extension will be subservient and the use of the copper sheeting, whilst having a contemporary appearance, will complement the host building, it be a particularly high-quality appearance.

The design changes to the other elevations and roof will have a nominal visual impact and importantly will not harm the character of the wider conservation area.

As such, the duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area is met.

At the local level, Bristol Core Strategy Policy BCS22: Conservation and the Historic Environment states that development proposals should safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance including, inter alia, conservation areas. Sites and Development Management Policy DM31: Heritage Assets sets out that development will be expected to conserve and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and/or its setting. In this case and in terms of heritage impact, the proposed development has met with the aspirations of these policies.

From a pure design perspective, Core Strategy BCS21: Quality Urban Design sets out generic design criteria which new development is expected to meet. Buildings are required to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, and to reinforce its local distinctiveness.

In the supporting explanation of the policy, at para 4.21. the following is stated: "A high quality built environment should consider the amenity of both existing and future development. Consideration should be given to matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space. Development should also take account of local climatic conditions". The wording promotes good practice and the protection of general amenity interests.

Sites & Development Management Document Policy DM26: Local Character and Distinctiveness refers back to Core Strategy Policy BCS21 and provides a list of design criteria relating to local character and distinctiveness which development proposals are expected to address.

Again, the proposals are well thought out and will make a positive contribution.

### 4.3 Sustainable Design & Construction

The replacement extension will significantly improve the thermal performance of the building by adding insulation and increasing its air tightness. This will help reduce ongoing heating requirements and assist with making the building more sustainable.

#### 4.4 Planning Balance

The information submitted with the application has provided a detailed explanation of the scheme and given clear justification for why planning permission should be granted consent.

The proposals to extend and alter the house are part of its ongoing evolution, balancing the needs of conservation and the expectations of 21<sup>st</sup> century living.

Importantly, the development will comply with the aims and objectives of the legislation, the Local Development Plan and material considerations such as the NPPF. In assessing the scheme, paragraph 11 of the NPPF is particularly relevant as it asserts there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, such as the application proposals. Furthermore, the duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 has been met in that the character or appearance of the conservation area will be preserved or enhanced.

We trust that with the above explanation and the drawn information the Council will look positively on the proposals and support the application. Should following an initial assessment the planning officer has any questions then in the spirit of co-operation and professional working they should contact the agent at the earliest opportunity.