

Heritage Statement

THE ATELIER BROWN

Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Atelier Brown architects in support of a Conservation Area Consent application for proposals at 44 High Street, Whitwell, Hitchin, Herts. The scheme has been prepared on behalf of the property's owner, the Applicant, Miss S. Doros.

For further details of proposed scheme, refer to drawings provided by Atelier Brown:

*WHI-03-001-01 Location Plan;
WHI-03-010-01 Existing Plans & Elevations;
WHI-03-110-01 Proposed Plans & Elevations.*

t: 07496 426586
e: tom@theatelierbrown.co.uk
www.theatelierbrown.co.uk

The Site, The Heritage Asset

44 High Street, Whitwell is a modest mid-terraced 3-storey dwelling (including basement), of C19 origin.

- Heritage Category: within Whitwell (St Pauls Walden) Conservation Area
- Grade-listing: None
- Conservation Area Status: 'Non-designated asset' as per North Hertfordshire District Council 'Whitwell (St Pauls Walden) Conservation Area Character Statement', 2019.

Summary of Proposals

The proposals include:

- the removal of the two existing front-facing hardwood, single-glazed white-painted sash windows;
- the replacement of these windows with new hardwood, double-glazed, white-painted sash windows (with fenestration to match the windows to No. 40, 42 & 46 High Street);
- remedial works to existing blown/ frost-damaged facing bricks to front elevation (with brickwork, coursing, pointing and mortar all to match existing).

Appraisal & Design Process

The appraisal of the heritage asset, the analysis of the significance of the existing property within its Conservation Area context and the subsequent design of the proposals have all been overseen by Mr T. Brown (BA Hons PG Dip Arch Dist ARB RIBA), the Lead Architect at Atelier Brown Ltd. Atelier Brown Ltd have an extensive experience of working on buildings of historic importance in the Hertfordshire area and beyond; having successfully designed and delivered multiple schemes for extensions to Grade-II* and II listed buildings, as well as a large-scale masterplan for the re-development of a site within a UNESCO World Heritage Area and recent approvals for development of sites under Scheduled Ancient Monument status.

The process of analysis and design has been carried out in a suitably sensitive and contextually-appropriate manner, ensuring that the implementation of the proposed scheme would be of benefit to this historically sensitive site.

Information Sources

The statement and the design has been prepared with reference to the following sources:

- Historic England 'List of Protected Historic Sites;'
- Historic England 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets;'
- National Planning Policy Framework;
- Planning Practice Guidance: 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;'
- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031: 'Policy D1 Sustainable Design', 'Policy D3 - Protecting living conditions', 'Policy HE3: Non-designated heritage assets', 'Policy SP13: Historic environment',
- North Hertfordshire District Council 'Whitwell (St Pauls Walden) Conservation Area Character Statement', Nov 2019.

The Atelier Brown
10 St George's Road
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 5PN

RIBA 
Chartered Practice

arb  Architects
Registration
Board

Heritage Statement

THE ATELIER BROWN

The Brief

Principally the proposals seek to address issues caused by general wear and tear of the property and a lack of maintenance historically. The Applicant has now lived in the property for more than a year and has a good understanding of the elements of the building that are not functioning properly.

The two front-facing windows are failing - there is a consistent abundance of mould and condensation internally creating a potentially hazardous living environment. The frames are also in poor condition in some areas and require repair to allow for the opening operation to function properly. The glazed panes are fragile and close to breaking.

In addition, because of the position of the dwelling - fronting directly onto the High Street - there are real issues of noise, particularly early in the morning and late at night. The windows are no more than 900mm away from the road edge.

There are also a number of existing bricks and areas of pointing that are heavily frost and weather-damaged. These require replacement and restoration to avoid more significant damage to the property and its historic fabric.

The Applicant is keen to live in the property for the long term and has adopted a conscientious approach to the long-term maintenance of this important historic asset. They do, however, need to ensure their living standards are suitably maintained.

Therefore any and all restorative improvement works have been designed (and will be overseen) by a suitably experienced heritage architect. They also will ensure that the tradespeople used to construct the works are appropriately experienced and skilled for this type of project.

Detailed Description and Appraisal of Heritage Asset

44 High Street is part of a 4-dwelling early-Victorian terrace fronting directly onto the main road. The site falls within Whitwell (St Pauls Walden) Conservation Area.

The building is designed symmetrically across its front elevation, finished in tumbled and handmade mixed red clay brickwork (with ashlar stone dressings/ detailing to window surrounds) and a white-painted rendered plinth at the ground floor. The front elevation is punctuated with a series of apertures for hardwood sash windows at both floors and solid hardwood front doors, all under flat arch header details. The fenestration is typical of this age of residential building. The terrace is finished in a natural slate dual-pitched roof, articulated with a number of brickwork chimney stacks.

Although the window fenestration is relatively consistent across the terrace, No. 44 actually differs in that the individual sashes are subdivided into quarters horizontally rather than thirds (which is the case for No. 40, 42 and 46.) The proposals represent an opportunity to make this completely uniform across the building.

There is some damage to the brickwork across the front elevation, likely caused by weathering and, in particular, freezing and thawing blowing the face of the soft bricks. Again, the proposals represent an opportunity to repair and restore this facework.

No. 44 is laid out across 3 floors (including a basement, ground floor and first floor). It comprises a double and single bedroom, a family bathroom, front room, kitchen/ diner and cellar room. Because of the layout of the first floor, the principal bedroom must be located at the front (facing the main road).

The main road in question is a highly trafficked roadway, with little being done locally to prevent the village being used as a cut-through route at peak times. The windows fronting the road are single glazed and in poor condition, meaning that traffic noise is a major problem resulting in the living conditions becoming untenable. This is only likely to become worse over time. The condition of the windows also causes significant issues with condensation and mould, meaning replacement is essential. There is insufficient space internally for a completely mechanically-ventilated system.

The Atelier Brown
10 St George's Road
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 5PN

t: 07496 426586
e: tom@theatelierbrown.co.uk
www.theatelierbrown.co.uk

RIBA 
Chartered Practice

arb  Architects
Registration
Board

Heritage Statement

THE ATELIER BROWN

The Proposals & Impact on Historic Asset

The proposals seek to replace the existing windows at the front of the property to deal with the following constraints and opportunities:

- addressing the significant condensation, damp and mould internally;
- addressing the significant acoustic issues in the main bedroom;
- addressing the significant concerns regarding safety and security with the existing windows;
- improvement of the condition of the windows (which are in a poor state of repair);
- improvement of the appearance of the street-facing elevation of the terrace by virtue of creating a uniform aesthetic of fenestration to all windows;
- improvement of the condition of the street-facing elevation of the terrace by virtue of restoring and repairing the damaged brickwork in a like-for-like manner.

The design process has looked at various options to achieve the above and concluded that a pair of double-glazed hardwood windows to replace the existing windows is most appropriate, not only to achieve the requirements of the brief but to adhere to national and locally-adopted planning policy in relation to non-designated heritage assets and buildings within Conservation Areas.

Whilst the Applicant would naturally consider replacing the windows with a 'like-for-like' single-glazed hardwood painted system to match the existing, it is felt this would not be adequate in terms of dealing with the significant security issues, acoustic issues and heat loss/ ventilation issues presented.

The new windows will be designed to match the proportions, language and fenestration of the neighbouring windows to No. 40, 42 and 46 and will be similarly painted white.

The windows to the two dwellings either side of the proposal site, No. 46 and 42, both have double-glazed windows already.

Because the existing windows at No. 44 are not functioning appropriately, are in poor condition and are at odds visually to the neighbouring windows, a contextually sympathetic replacement as described will not only mitigate against any visual-harm to the heritage asset but will also improve upon the setting of the Conservation Area.

It will also future-proof the dwelling's occupational use, as well as, importantly, improving upon the thermal performance (and sustainability credentials) of the building's fabric.

Conclusion

All of the proposals have been carefully considered against the local context of the site, the historical analysis of the building, the site and the Conservation Area (as well as the local and national planning policies that relate to works to historic buildings and sites).

In all cases, the Applicant has proposed solutions to existing problems in a manner that is not only sensitive to the historic fabric and character of the building, but also protect the long-term viability of the dwelling and its function.

Externally the works should be viewed as essential restorative steps to maintain the principal façade of the building, which is currently suffering from issues of disrepair or damage. The neighbouring properties have already taken the step of replacing the older single-glazed windows with sensitively designed and installed double-glazed replacements.

The works will include consistently high-quality materials implemented by specialist local and experienced tradespeople, overseen by a suitably qualified Architect.

The Atelier Brown
10 St George's Road
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 5PN

t: 07496 426586
e: architecture@theatelierbrown.co.uk
www.theatelierbrown.co.uk

RIBA 
Chartered Practice

 Architects
Registration
Board

Appendix



Existing sash windows, damaged, to be replaced

Appendix



Existing neighbouring double-glazed sash window