

HERITAGE STATEMENT **A**

28 RUSHBY MEAD, LETCHWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE.



Picture 1 - Row of terraces representing the application, number 28 is the second gable roofed building to the left of the picture.

My name is Jon Tankard and I am an Architect with RLP Surveyors based in Hitchin, I carry full ARB and RIBA qualifications, I am an experienced Principal Designer under the Building Safety Act and I hold qualifications as a Retrofit Assessor under PAS 2035 with the added qualification of Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings.

The reasoning behind the Heritage Statement for the retrofitting of the properties is that the building falls within the Restrictions of North Herts Council that the building is within the Conservation Area, is Grade 2 Listed, and is overviewed by the Letchworth Garden Heritage Foundation.

The Conservation Area and Heritage Foundation restrictions generally deal with the aesthetic conclusions of the works that we are proposing and have directed the solutions so as to avoid conflict with these restrictions, therefore for the main part of this application, the afore mentioned restrictive requirements are not affected as the works have been arranged internally.

Therefore, Listed Building Consent is sought within this application this application regarding the Grade 2 listed heritage status and demonstration that the improvements made within the retrofit works, will not unduly damage the historic structure of the building.

Historic England Listing.

The building is contained within a group listing as follows.

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1102007

Date first listed: 07-Sept-1979

List Entry Name: 2-42, RUSHBY MEAD

Statutory Address 1: 2-42, RUSHBY MEAD

RUSHBY MEAD 1. 5255 Nos 2 to 42 (even) TL 2232 9/118-121 II GV 2. 1911 by Bennett and Bidwell. Grouped workmen's cottages in 4 terraces built for the Letchworth Cottages and Buildings Limited, taken over by the Howard Cottage Society Limited. Typical of the best of Garden City housing and a model for all subsequent work. One and a half storeys, one and two windows each. Each terrace symmetrical but of varying design depending on the arrangement of the dormer gables. Tiled roofs with brick ridge stacks. Roughcast walls. Gabled and flat-topped casement dormers. Nos 34-42 with projecting gabled end bays to terrace; bay at north end is tile-hung. Two light casement windows with glazing bars and tile labels. End bays of Nos 34-42 with splayed bay windows to ground floor. Recessed doorways with segmental arched lintels and labels; No 42 entrance with hood carried over bay window. The original paintwork specification of cream walls and windows, and green doors has been maintained throughout.

The submission and accompanying text would suggest that the character, layout and setting are the driving factors of the listing, the works as proposed would be non-invasive and will not have detrimental effect on the external appearance of the building or affect the internal layout.

The Requirement Of the Works.

First Garden Cities Homes are a social housing provider who identify that warm, dry secure housing is a basic human right and as time progresses, recognises that in order to maintain those goals, that retrofitting the existing housing stock is a necessity.

Britain has some of the oldest housing stock in Europe, with roughly 38% built before 1946 and 20% built before 1919. These homes are inefficient primarily due to solid walls lacking cavities, a general lack of modern insulation. The buildings are built of a 'leaky' structure with in built open fires and uninsulated suspended floors, this leads to cold draughty buildings with high energy costs. 18 – 21 degrees Celsius is identified as a healthy internal temperature for most adults, however with the application of part and piecemeal retrofit interventions on a number of social housing providers, this has led to

unbalanced properties with the often resulting factor being mould and damp coming from within the building structure and revealing itself onto the building surfaces leading to respiratory illnesses which led to the instigation of Awaab's law in October 2025. A recent report by Health Equals determined that 23% of people living in social housing, were living with mould.

Furthermore, the cost of heating a poorly insulated house is more than double that of a correctly insulated property, so therefore within the social housing situation a reduction on household bills, reduces household stress and allows improvements in other aspects such as education.

Therefore, the retrofit requirements of the property are needed, and we would look to retrofit in a standard that is sympathetic to the buildings aesthetics and one that compliments the structural requirements of the in excess of 100 year old structure.

Assessment of significance.

The assessment of significance follows the requirements of PAS 2035 and BS 7913, and is a formal evaluation required for traditional, protected, or historic buildings before any energy retrofit work begins. It identifies architectural, cultural, and historic value to ensure improvement measures do no harm.

The Existing Structure

Walls

Solid brick with external cement pebbled render and non-porous painted finish (may be a retro painted addition). Internal lime plaster applied directly to the internal brick face.



Picture 2 – Wall thickness demonstrated.

Ground floor

Suspended timber ground floor with ventilated void, sw timer joists supporting timber floorboards, metal air vent set between joists, sub ground appears dry.

Solid Ground Floor – set within entrance and kitchen area, unknown substrate with quarry tiled finish.



Picture 3 and 4 – Ventilation and clearly ventilated void.



Picture 5 – Juxtaposition of differing floor finishes and construction.

First Floor

Most first floors are internal, some areas such as entrance porch and storage have exposed underside of non-vented floors. All SW joists, all boarded with lime plaster soffit.

Roof.

Areas of open void and enclosed areas of low eaves. Roof currently unvented with 100mm of insulation between ceiling joists.



Picture 5 – Juxtapose of differing floor finishes and construction.

Ventilation

Currently all fireplaces are blocked, there are no trickle vents to the windows as dictated by the Letchworth Garden Heritage Foundation. Extract ventilation is provided to all wet rooms as required by building control, the house was previously supplied air by a 'positive' air pressure system, which has ceased to be used, has not negatively affected the building and the building is currently ventilated by the use of opening windows and windows set on 'locked open' settings. Noted that window heights and ceiling heights result in 700mm of unvented volume to first floor ceiling areas.

Proposed Building Improvements (all works noted on 2537 SK 100).

Walls.

The intension will be to fit 2 layers rockwool insulation totalling 100mm thick, with outer layer plasterboard supported by MF frame. The wall solution is breathable and will allow moisture to move out if required.

Conversations with the conservation officer suggested a reduced depth of the wall from 100mm to 70mm to reduce the overall wall depth, whilst that depth reduction may appear minimal from a thermal performance perspective, we would also raise the issue that it is minimal from a sight perspective and whilst we may have a negligible effect on the overall aesthetics of the building, it can have far reaching effects on the overall living standards of the occupant. The walls as demonstrated have a U value of 0.28 W/m²K, to reduce the insulation depth to 70mm would create a U value of 0.44W/m²K. This is a considerable drop. The drop would create an increased heating requirement of 0.16watts per every m² per every degree of temperature difference. The external walls of this property amount to about 70m² when we include the ceiling area where a reduction is also requested, therefore we are looking at a increased heating requirement of 11.2 Watts for the house for every degree of temperature difference, if we assume an external temperature of 5 degrees and internal of 20 degrees (government recommendations), then the overall requirement is $11.2 \times 15 = 168$ Watts per hour. Once again, numbers appear low but the cost of that increase is 4.37p per hour, allow for a 10 hour heating period and that creates a daily bill of 43.7p per day, average 30 days a month and the figure is £13.11, allow for a 6 month heating window and we get an increase of £78.66, whilst affordable to many working families, we must remember that these are social housing, and we have a high ratio of out of work, retired and disabled occupants, the latter who may in times of cold, require 24 hour heating, which would push the requirements up to £1.04 per day, £31.46 per month, £188.78 per heating window, this is significant and directly effects the most vulnerable. A cold snap of say 0 degrees would increase the daily costs to 58.2p per hour, £1.40 per day, £9.80 a week.

First Garden Cities Homes are a proud social provider and operate on a resident first basis, given the direction that Sir Ebenezer Howard to on social reform and improving the living standards of many, we feel that the improvements in this slight addition to the thermal values are credible and relevant and whilst we can admire the physical form created by that movement in these glorious structures, we must also remember the social direction that created them and keep that attitude alive.

As stated on site, the rockwool batts will be held in place with an aluminium MF system which will be fixed to the floor and ceiling avoiding any direct fixing into the wall medium, thus protecting the structure.

Floor

Suspended Ground Floor, breather membrane laid atop the joists, 100mm rockwool laid between the joists with ventilated void maintained. Air vent will be maintained in its current form.

First floor, where underside of floor is exposed to external air, void between joists to be filled with rockwool insulation.

All voids between walls and joists will be insulated to maintain consistency of wall insulation, and first floor to be insulated min 100mm to match walls at abutment to external walls.

Following the on-site conversation we have modified the detail for the low-level retaining wall to the kitchen area and created a light impervious upstand to allow moisture to raise above the drain, with the Newton wall system laid 800mm up the wall behind the kitchen units, this will then drain to a floor mounted drain which will disperse any collected water externally. Once again, as per the wall, the works are non-invasive and protect the historical structure.

Roof

Roof void to be ventilated, where we have lower eaves, eaves to be insulated as per wall with 100mm rockwool and plasterboard supported on MF system. Ceiling insulation to consist of 100mm rockwool; between ceiling joists with 200mm insulation laid across the joists with breather membrane atop.

Note the issues raised within the wall upgrades, the reduced U value is similar and is calculated within the overall heat loss / costs. We do have further issues within the insulated sloping ceiling in that the requirement for ventilation means that the roof void will remain cold, and given these are in bedroom areas, we can have an issue with mould growth, and given the current legislation under AWAABS law, we have to, under the Building Safety Act, demonstrate all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that mould risk has been taken into account, let alone the comfort nature of the building in avoiding condensation.

Ventilation.

Current extract thru wet areas to be maintained, inclusion of trickle vents to be confirmed.

We note that retro fitted trickle vents to windows is not permitted, we note the existence of vent tiles to the roof and will use these.

**** ALL INSULATION STRATEGIES CONFIRMED ON 2537 SK 100*.**

Internal Alterations.

We discussed the reinstatement of the door to the dining room off the main hallway, this is the original opening and we feel that its reinstatement is within the character of the original house, the reinstatement would involve the removal of plywood and plasterboard stud wall, the original door frame exists and we will refix into the same locations and repair the frame.

Doors will be ledged doors to match the original and doors where historically replaced, will be reinstated as the original timber doors.



Picture 6 – Entrance hall infilled door to dining room.

Conclusion.

All amendments and interventions as confirmed within this document and the above-named drawing are confirmed as 'nonvisible' and therefore do not require Planning Permission. The works as confirmed do interact with the listed structure in a non-invasive way and all original materials are retained in all situations or refixed in the case of floorboards. The application is therefore for listed building consent and the works as noted are in line with the requirements of PAS 2035 Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings and BS 7913, are non-invasive and work in a way that compliments the existing building strategy.

[We note the onsite discussions and hope that the evidence demonstrated here respectfully acknowledges the historic structure and promotes the passionate social value in the creation of this Garden City.](#)

We therefore would look to North Herts District Council to approve this application.

If there are any concerns, we would be pleased if you could contact the undersigned on 07527 620842 to discuss in more detail.

Yours Faithfully

Jon Tankard BA Hons, Dip Arch RIBA