

**7 Montpelier Row,
Blackheath, London
Heritage Statement**

Client: NINA RAHMANIAN-BEHESHTI

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Date:27/10/2017

GLHER Data Licence Number: 13311

7 Montpelier Row, Blackheath, London Heritage Statement

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 AB Heritage has been commissioned by Nina Rahmanian-Beheshti to produce a Heritage Statement to cover a proposed development at the Grade II Listed 7 Montpelier Row, Blackheath, London SE3 0RL (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) ref: 1079957).

1.1.2 This report will form part of a Listed Building Consent Application.

1.2 Statutory Designations

1.2.1 The site is part of a Grade II Listed terrace including Nos. 5 - 7 and 8 - 11 Montpelier Row (The Regency Hotel), (NHLE 1079957), which was statutorily listed on 12th March 1973. The listing description for the Montpelier Row terrace is as follows:

'Late C18 terrace, each 3 storeys, attic and basement, 3 windows. Multicoloured stock brick with stone-coped parapet. Slated mansard roof with 2 square dormers, except No 6, one long dormer. Some rebuilding to upper floors. Gauged flat brick arches to recessed replaced sash windows with glazing bars (except No 7, lost bars) in stucco lined reveals, 1st floor windows of No 5 long casements to wrought iron balcony. No 5: Ground floor door and windows round headed in round arched recesses. 6-Panel door with radial fanlight. No 6. Later rounded low window with reeded pilasters on ground floor. Door has 4 fielded upper panels. Cornice head continuous with impost block of round architrave with keystone. Panelled reveal, patterned fanlight. Doric doorcase has open pediment with cyma brackets and dentils. Nos 7-11: Moulded stucco architraves to ground floor windows. No 7 has round arched doorway with plain fanlight in later stucco surround. No 8 has round gauged brick door arch plain fanlight. Nos 9 and 10 have doors replaced by windows, No 11 has modern double door and plain fanlight in round moulded architrave with keystone and impost blocks. Modified entablature surround with rusticated pilasters. Wrought iron area railings to No 7.' (National Heritage List for England, 2017).

1.2.2 The site is located within Blackheath Conservation Area, designated jointly by Lewisham and Greenwich Councils in 1968 as an area possessing 'outstanding qualities of townscape and special historical architecture which is enhanced by the wide-open spaces of the heath' (Lewisham Council 2017a). It formed London's first conservation area, and remains Lewisham's largest and most diverse in character. The boundaries were extended into the Borough of Lewisham in 2001. The Conservation Area is typified by:

- Diversity of character and retention of the spatial qualities;
- Extensive survival of high quality historic architecture;
- Survival of important townscape defining groups which have retained their architectural integrity and settings and
- Early suburbs and individual houses of the 18th and 19th century interspersed with later development (Lewisham Council, 2007).

1.3 Site Location & Description

- 1.3.1 The site is in the London Borough of Lewisham, centred on National Grid Reference: (NGR) TQ 3972 7635. The site covers a rectangular plot with an area of c. 580 sqm and forms part of a Grade II Listed 18th century terrace (NHLE 1079957), which incorporates the adjacent properties on both sides.
- 1.3.2 The building is three-storey with an attic and basement. The construction is mixed stock bricks with gault brick and stucco detailing. The mansard roof is slate and has two front dormers. A replacement red brick wall fronts the property on Montpelier Row, with a modern paved garden in front of the building. A modern paved patio is present at the rear of the building, with a lawn to the rear. A multi-phased brick wall forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the rear of the property. The southern boundary is a modern concrete block wall.
- 1.3.3 The ground floor and basement are currently occupied by a dental surgery and a single residential unit covers the upper three floors.
- 1.3.4 The site is situated on the eastern side of Montpelier Row, which forms the western site boundary and overlooks the Blackheath to the north-west.
- 1.3.5 The heath forms part of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Buffer Zone [DLO33117], the boundary of which is located c. 15m to the north-west of the site. However, the boundary of the designated World Heritage Site itself is located c. 570m to the north-west of the site.
- 1.3.6 The site is bounded to the north by No.6 Montpelier Row, to the south by The Clarendon Hotel and to the east by a garage block off Paragon Place to the rear of the site.

1.4 Proposed Development

- 1.4.1 External changes proposed to front elevation and street frontage:
- Refurbishment of all existing windows (in poor condition) including basement level with like for like double glazed units;
 - Refurbishment of front garden wall at north-western boundary with reclaimed bricks to match existing brickwork;
 - Change layout of front garden paving / bushes etc and
 - Changing the dental practice sign in the front garden.
- 1.4.2 External changes proposed to rear elevation:
- New French doors to replace existing window (in poor condition) at basement level to allow for more natural light.
 - Changes to WC extension, including raising the height by 400mm and addition of roof light and larger window.
- 1.4.3 The proposal includes reducing the level of the basement across the footprint of the building. Current drawing (*SECTION 004 – PROPOSED: 17007-7MR-DRW-3004*) indicates that foundations will be dug 450mm and a 200mm slab added. This is to undertaken to comply

with the minimum standard head height room of 2.1m (N. Rahmanian-Beheshti, 2017, *pers comm.* 28th June). The spine wall will also be reinforced following a structural engineer's specifications. Damp proofing will be applied to the external walls at basement level.

1.4.4 Internal remodelling is proposed in the basement including:

- Division of the larger storage room at the front of the building into one larger surgery room (accessed by a new doorway in an existing partition wall) and a smaller decontamination room;
- Conversion of smaller front storage room into kitchenette;
- Conversion of second storage room into a waiting room, with access to front surgery room via new doorway;
- Reconditioning of front vault into utility room for boiler water system;
- Existing decontamination room at the rear of the building converted into a surgery room, including the replacement of the existing door with a sliding door;
- Rear vault refurbished to be used for storage;
- Re-wiring and re-plumbing
- Change of both basement doors for fire doors and
- Installing central heating where no heating system currently exists.

1.4.5 At ground floor level, proposed internal changes include:

- The addition of an X-ray room or disabled toilet in the southern corner of the front room (currently the reception area), through the construction of new lead-lined walls.
- The 'room within room' system, including suspended floor and walls, will be applied to the reception and entrance lobby at the front of the building and the surgery room at the rear. This will be fitted over the existing architectural features such as cornice, skirting board etc. The X-ray room or disabled toilet will be installed after this system has been put in place and
- Re-wiring, re-plumbing and installation of central heating, all of which will be located behind the 'room within room' system.

1.4.6 The upper floors will be retained as existing.

2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 128 requires local planning authorities to request descriptions on the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, 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.'

2.1.2 The aim of this report is to facilitate such a process by understanding the historical development of the application site and the likely impact upon any surviving heritage assets resulting from the proposed development, devising appropriate mitigation responses where necessary.

2.2 Consultation

2.2.1 A meeting was held in June 2016 between Ms Jo Townshend and Karl Fetterplace and Natasha Peach, the latter being Officers at Lewisham Council. During the meeting, Lewisham Council provided the following advice:

- The building is listed, within the Blackheath Conservation Area & an area of archaeological priority;
- The proposal would need to demonstrate that there is no harm caused to the subject listed building or the Conservation Area;
- Any changes to the front boundary wall should be carefully considered and the railings should not be altered;
- Reversible internal works may be acceptable;
- The fenestration pattern of the building should not be altered;
- The floor levels should not be raised or lowered from their original state;
- Amendments to the layout, features and staircases of the basement may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances and
- A scheme could be supported by the Council subject to the requirement that there is no adverse impact upon the listed building or the Conservation Area.

2.3 Data Collation

2.3.1 The assessment has been carried out, in regard to the collation of baseline information, in line with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (December 2014) and the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures (December 2014).

2.3.2 This assessment includes relevant information contained in various statutory requirements, national, regional and local planning policies and professional good practice guidance, including:

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990
- The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012

2.3.3 The Greater London Historic Environment Record is the primary source of information concerning the current state of archaeological and architectural knowledge in this area. The HER Commercial dataset search reference number for this project is 13311. The HER information can be viewed in Appendix 1.

2.3.4 This information was supported by examination of data from a wide range of other sources, principally:

- Heritage Gateway for information from the Historic England National Monuments Record;
- Pastscape and other research resources, including the Access to Archives (A2A);
- The Historic England website professional pages, particularly the National Heritage List for England;
- A site visit was undertaken on 6th June 2017. During the site visit, an inspection of the building was made and principal areas of the building, significant architectural details, fixtures and fittings were noted and digitally photographed using a DSLR Nikon D3300 24.2 Megapixel, 18-55mm lens camera, with tripod where necessary. A selective capture method with single shot image capture using a 23.5 x 15.6mm CMOS sensor was used. The images included a photographic scale where appropriate.
- Additional relevant documentary resources at the local archives were accessed on the 7th June 2017, and online historic sources;

2.3.5 Information from these sources was used to understand:

- Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites
- Readily accessible information on the proposed development site's history from readily available historic maps and photographs
- Any information on the proposed development site contained in published and unpublished archaeological and historical sources, including any previous archaeological investigations undertaken within the study area
- A greater understanding of key cultural heritage issues of the proposed development site and surrounding area, developed through the onsite walkover, including information on areas of past impact within the proposed development site boundary
- The impact of the proposed development on the known and potential cultural heritage resource, resulting in the formulation of a mitigation strategy, where required, which appropriately targets any future works to those required to gain planning consent.

2.4 Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Resource

2.4.1 The importance of identified cultural heritage resources is determined by reference to existing designations (Table 1, below).

Table 1: Assessing the Importance of a Cultural Heritage Site

SCALE OF SITE IMPORTANCE	
NATIONAL	The highest status of site, e.g. Scheduled Monuments (or undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance). Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings. Other listed buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance. Extremely well preserved historic landscape, whether inscribed or not, with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factor(s).
REGIONAL	Grade II Listed Buildings or other designated or undesignated archaeological sites (in addition to those listed above), or assets of a reasonably defined extent and significance, or reasonable evidence of occupation / settlement, ritual, industrial activity etc. Examples may include areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character, burial sites, deserted medieval villages, Roman roads and dense scatter of finds.
LOCAL	Evidence of human activity more limited in historic value than the examples above, or compromised by poor preservation and/or survival of context associations, though which still have the potential to contribute to local research objectives. Examples include sites such as 'locally designated' buildings or undesignated structures / buildings of limited historic merit, out-of-situ archaeological findspots / ephemeral archaeological evidence and historic field systems and boundaries etc.
NEGLIGIBLE	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest. Examples include destroyed antiquities, structures of almost no architectural / historic merit, buildings of an intrusive character or relatively modern / common landscape features such as quarries, drains and ponds etc.
UNKNOWN	Insufficient information exists to assess the importance of a feature (e.g. unidentified features on aerial photographs).

- 2.4.2 For some types of finds or remains there is no consistent value and the importance may vary, for example Grade II Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. For this reason, adjustments are occasionally made, where appropriate, based on professional judgement.

2.5 Impact Assessment Criteria

- 2.5.1 The magnitude of impact upon the archaeological and heritage resource, which can be considered in terms of direct and indirect impacts, is determined by identifying the level of effect from the proposed development upon the baseline conditions of the site and the cultural heritage resource identified. The criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact are set out in Table 2 (below).
- 2.5.2 In certain cases, it is not possible to confirm the magnitude of impact upon a cultural heritage resource, especially where anticipated buried deposits exist. Where possible a professional judgement as to the scale of such impacts is applied to enable the likely 'Significance of Effects' to be established; however, a magnitude level of 'uncertain' is included for situations where it is simply not appropriate to make such a judgement at this stage of works.

Table 2: Criteria for Determining Magnitude of Impact

IMPACT LEVEL	DEFINITION
HIGH	Changes to most or all of the key archaeological or key heritage baseline elements, or comprehensive changes to the setting of such key features that lead to total or almost complete alteration of a features physical structure, dramatic visual alteration to the setting of a heritage asset, or almost comprehensive variation to aspects such as noise, access, or visual amenity of the historic landscape.
MEDIUM	Changes to many key archaeological materials/historic elements, or their setting, such that the baseline resource is clearly modified. This includes considerable visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape, noticeable differences in noise or sound quality, and considerable changes to use or access changes to key historic landscape elements
LOW	Detectable impacts which alter the baseline condition of an archaeological or heritage receptor to a slight degree – e.g. a small proportion of the surviving heritage resource is altered; slight alterations to the setting or structure, or limited changes to aspects such as noise levels, use or access that results in limited changes to historic landscape character.
NEGLIGIBLE	Barely distinguishable change from baseline conditions, where there would be very little appreciable effect on a known site, possibly because of distance from the development, method of construction or landscape or ecological planting, that are thought to have no long term effect on the historic value of a resource.
UNCERTAIN	Extent / nature of the resource is unknown and the magnitude of change cannot be ascertained.

2.5.3 The overall Significance of Effects from the proposed development upon the Cultural Heritage Resource is determined by correlating the magnitude of Impact against value of the Cultural Heritage resource. Table 3 highlights the criteria for assessing the overall Significance of Effects. Where effects are moderate or above these are classified as significant.

Table 3: Significance of Effects

IMPORTANCE	MAGNITUDE			
	HIGH	MED	LOW	NEG
NATIONAL	Severe	Major	Mod	Minor
REGIONAL	Major	Mod	Minor	Not Sig.
LOCAL	Mod	Minor	Minor	Not Sig.
NEGLIGIBLE	Minor	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Nt.

Not Sig. = Not Significant; Nt. = Neutral; Mod = Moderate; Ext. = Extensive

2.6 Limitations

2.6.1 It should be noted that the report has been prepared under the express instruction and solely for the use of Nina Rahmanian-Beheshti, and any associated parties they elect to share this

information with. Measurements and distances referred to in the report should be taken as approximations only and should not be used for detailed design purposes.

- 2.6.2 All the work carried out in this report is based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (June 2017) and relevant United Kingdom standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in these areas may occur in the future and cause changes to the conclusions, advice, recommendations or design given. AB Heritage does not accept responsibility for advising the client's or associated parties of the facts or implications of any such changes in the future.
- 2.6.3 This report has been prepared utilising factual information obtained from third party sources. AB Heritage takes no responsibility for the accuracy of such information. It should also be noted that this report represents an early stage of a phased approach to assessing the archaeological and cultural heritage resource of the application site to allow the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy, should this be required. It does not comprise mitigation of impacts in itself.
- 2.6.4 No intrusive investigation of the historic fabric of the building was undertaken by AB Heritage during the site visit.

3. HERITAGE REVIEW OF THE SITE

3.1 Historic Development of Blackheath & No. 7 Montpelier Row

- 3.1.1 The ancient common land of Blackheath [MLO107887], c. 15m to the north-west of the site, has been subject to human activity from the prehistoric period onwards. Evidence recorded within the heath includes the discovery of a cavern under the Point (Blackheath Hill), on the opposite side of the heath c. 1.4km to the north-west of the site, which comprised a series of chambers and a well that had been carved using antler tools (Lewisham Council 2017b; Walford 1878).
- 3.1.2 The main road from London to Dover, now the A2, located c. 425m to the north of the site, runs along the course of the main Roman road of Watling Street and evidence of Roman occupation, including Roman pottery, has been identified in the region of Blackheath Hill, c. 1.4km to the north-west of the site.
- 3.1.3 The area of the heath was used by the Vikings in 1011 prior to their invasion of London. The name 'Blackheath' was first mentioned around this period, during the 11th century and likely refers to the dark colour of the soil. The heath played host to several rebellions during the Medieval period including the Peasant Revolt in 1381. Inhabitants of Kent and Sussex revolted at the heath against tax rises in 1450 and discontented Cornishmen were defeated in the Battle of Blackheath Field in 1497. The heath also became a significant meeting point, during the Medieval period, for escorting foreign dignitaries and Royalty into London.
- 3.1.4 The important function of Blackheath continued into the Post-Medieval period when the heath was used as a military marshalling site prior to the embarkation of troops for the Napoleonic Wars.
- 3.1.5 The main focus of historic settlement is the village of Blackheath. Most of the buildings date from around 1790 to 1880 and the village contains many well-preserved shops in buildings of Georgian and Victorian styles (Lewisham Council 2017a). Within the 250m study area there are 13 Listed Buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, including the building within the site.
- 3.1.6 Much of the area of Blackheath was predominantly rural in nature prior to the 18th century, except for the manor house of the Wricklemarsh Estate, built in the late 15th century. The estate was purchased by John Morden. Almshouses, built by John Morden in 1695, now form the Grade I Listed Morden College (NHLE 1289879), located c. 660m to the east of the site [MLO 210 & 107964]. An area of 113 hectares of the estate was sold to a wealthy timber merchant by the name of John Cator in 1783. He leased parts of the estate for development, including the site of Montpelier Row, to Michael Searle and William Dyer in 1793 and this formed part of the earliest development of the Cator estate (Rhind, 1983).
- 3.1.7 The builder of No. 7 Montpelier Row is uncertain but it is thought likely to be Michael Searle, based on comparisons with other properties known to have been built by him. The property was in existence by 1789 – 1800. When first constructed, the Row was comprised partly of a terrace and partly of distinctive but separate houses. The earliest recorded occupier of the property was Mr Wignell in 1798.

- 3.1.8 During the early 19th century, the property was tenanted by Colonel James Christie in 1804. The Grade II listed Versailles Hotel [MLO90129] is a later addition to Montpelier Row, having been constructed c. 1820. During the 1840s, Miss Caroline Waterhouse used the property at 7 Montpelier Row as a seminary.
- 3.1.9 An engraving of Montpelier Row from Blackheath (in Rhine, 1983) dated c. 1850 shows that around this time the form of the terrace was much as it is at present, comprising three storeys with mansards roofs but the front elevation was stuccoed.
- 3.1.10 The construction of the North Kent Railway through the region in 1849 sparked rapid growth in the area, leading to the development of 'high quality Victorian houses, some of them designed as architectural set pieces, grouped in pairs or in formal uniform terraces, often on a grand scale' (Lewisham Council 2017a). During this period, between 1849 and 1869, the property at 7 Montpelier Row was the residence of a solicitor by the name of Henry Bradley.
- 3.1.11 The 1st edition of the 25" OS map (available online), dated c. 1870, shows the building at 7 Montpelier Row with the lightwell at the front of the property and a linear garden extending from the front of the building towards the street. Paths are depicted on the north side of the front garden. At the rear, an extension is located on the south side of the building and another structure, of uncertain function, is situated adjacent to the north—west corner of the building. Paths lead down the sub L-shaped garden to another building that fronts onto Paragon Mews. This is likely to be a stable with coach house, with servant's accommodation. At this time, most of the surrounding area has been given over to streets of residential development, apart from the remaining part of Blackheath opposite the site.
- 3.1.12 The property was leased in 1879 by Frank Robinson for use a dental practice and has been used as such ever since. Between 1892 and 1894, under Carl Schelling who was at one time the President of the Orthodontic Society, the practice became part of a group whose patients included Queen Victoria and King George V (Rhind, 1983).
- 3.1.13 The 2nd edition of the 25" OS map (Plate 1), dated 1897 shows the building much as it is on the 1st edition of the map, except for the position of a feature that is located immediately to the rear of the property. The nature and function of this features is uncertain, it may be an enclosed yard or possibly an enlarged light well at the rear of the property. The garden has been separated from the building at the end. The surrounding area remains largely unchanged from the previous map.

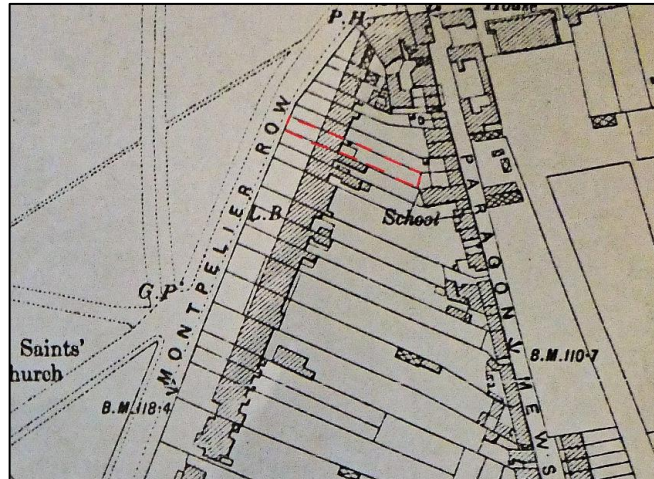


Plate 1: 2nd edition 25" OS map, 1897 (Approx. location of site outlined in red)

3.1.14 The 1916 edition of the 25" OS Map (Plate 2), shows the site and the surrounding area to have changed little, if at all since the previous map of 1897 (Plate 1).



Plate 2: 25" OS map, 1916

3.1.15 During World War Two, numerous high explosive bombs landed near the site, the closest of which hit the heath directly opposite the site on the east side of Montpelier Row (Bombsight, 2017). The London Bomb Map of the area (Plate 3) identifies that the site suffered general blast damage but no structural damage. Most of the buildings fronting onto Paragon Mews to the east were damaged beyond repair, as were many on Montpelier Vale to the south and Blackheath Vale to the west.

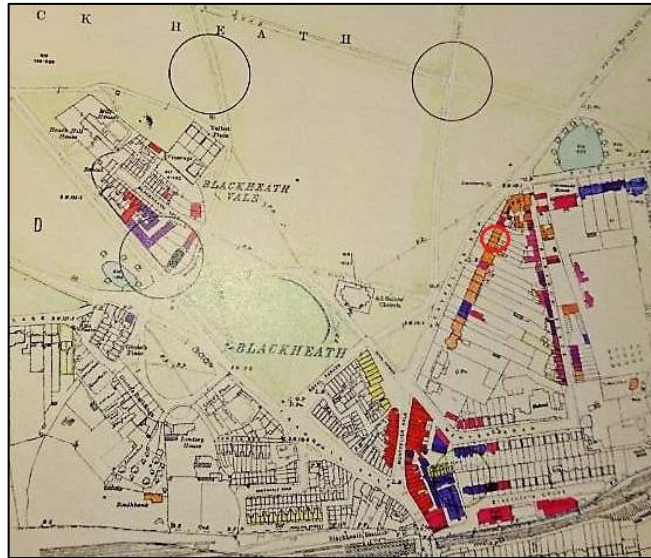


Plate 3: London Bomb Map. Site circled in red

- 3.1.16 The 1949 edition of the 1:1,250 OS map (available online) shows the site at 7 Montpelier Row much the same as on the 1916 edition of the map, except that the structure at the rear of the building has been removed. The extent of the damage from the bombing during World War Two is evident from the areas of clearance and redevelopment that are present in the areas most highly affected, as outlined above.
- 3.1.17 The later editions of the 25" OS map (available online) indicate that the overall footprint of the building has changed little, if at all, since the 1949 edition of the map. A 1965 photograph of the terrace taken from the west (Plate 4), shows that the front wall of the property appears to post-date this photograph, where a large hedge occupied the street frontage.



Plate 4: The terrace from the west (No. 7 is third from left), 1965 (Historic England)

3.2 Current Condition of 7 Montpelier Row

- 3.2.1 The symmetrical front (north-west facing) elevation is set back from the road. The windows mostly have cambered brick arches, except for the ground floor which has moulded stucco surrounds. A stucco arched surround has been added to the front door which has a rounded replaced fanlight. All the windows and the door on the front elevation are replacements (Photo 1). The basement level has a rendered exterior.



Photo 1: Front (north-west facing) elevation from Montpelier Row

- 3.2.2 The rear elevation is rendered at basement level. A small casement window has been inserted between the first and second floor levels. Most of the windows appear to be of late 19th century date, apart from the basement which is a modern replacement, as is the door. A flat roofed dormer is set back into the roof at attic level (Photo 2).



Photo 2: The rear (south-east facing) elevation from the rear garden

- 3.2.3 Entered at ground floor level, the entrance hall has been partitioned to create a vestibule, an entrance into the dental surgery reception and a doorway has been inserted to create an access to the residential accommodation on the upper floors. A moulded cornice is present within the entrance hallway. The hallway skirting is likely a replacement (Photo 3).



Photo 3: The entrance hallway from the vestibule

- 3.2.4 The ground floor front room, which was probably originally the dining room or parlour, retains most of its original form, although the original doorway has been altered and a doorway has been inserted into the rear wall. The room retains a blocked chimney breast, complete moulded cornice, high skirting board and picture rail (Photo 4).



Photo 4: The front ground floor room, looking towards the front of the building

- 3.2.5 The rear ground floor room, which may have been the original dining room or study / library, retains its original layout, including the doorway with surviving architrave and six-panel door. This room also retains moulded cornice although most other features have been removed. Some skirting board survives behind the cabinetry.

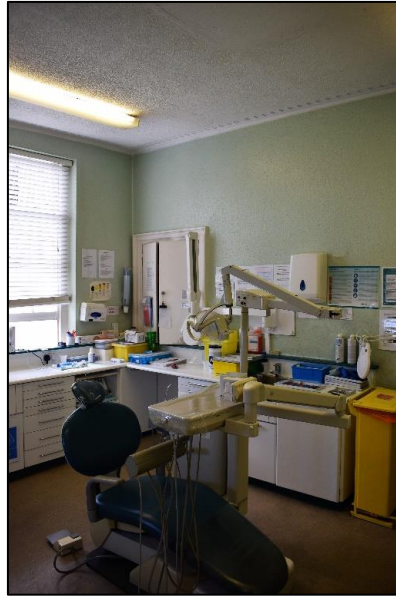


Photo 5: Rear ground floor room, looking towards the rear of the building

3.2.6 Within the residential accommodation, the original main stairs survive, which is open string on the upper floors. This has a plain balustrade and hardwood hand rail, with a spiral end at ground floor level (Photo 6). The attic level stairs have a plain newel and balustrade suggesting that this area of the house was used for service accommodation.



Photo 6: Spiral end of the main staircase handrail

3.2.7 Architrave is present throughout most of the upper floors, including skirting board and door architrave. Several early six-panel doors are present and moulded cornice is located on the first-floor landing. However, the architectural details have been removed from the principal first-floor front room, which was likely the drawing room. Most of the floors and stairs on the upper floors are sloping in towards the centre of the building. The upper floors appear to largely retain their original planform.

- 3.2.8 At the rear of the ground floor is a rear entrance that leads out into the backyard. A small extension, a probable 19th century addition, houses a WC. This extension is devoid of architectural details and fixtures and is considered to be of limited heritage value.
- 3.2.9 The basement is accessed from a staircase beneath the main stairs. The basement comprises two main rooms on the south side which have false ceilings. The front room has a front access via steps and a lightwell at the front of the property. A large fireplace and alcoves suggest this was the original kitchen. The front window and door in this room are both modern replacements (Photo 7). A brick vault is present adjacent to the lightwell, containing a blocked doorway is present that would have led into the adjacent vault.



Photo 7: Front basement room, looking towards the front of the building

- 3.2.10 The rear room in the basement also has a fireplace and may have been a back-kitchen area or scullery. A modern replacement window in the lightwell is present on the rear elevation. The doorway between the main basement rooms has been altered and replaced with a narrower doorway. A timber post has been erected in the centre of the rear basement room, which also has a false ceiling.



Photo 8: The rear basement room, looking towards the rear of the building

- 3.2.11 It seems possible that the layout of the main part of the basement has been altered by the probable removal of several walls that would have formed a passage along the centre of the building, from the door on the front of the building. This could account for the sloping of the floors towards the centre of the building, from the ground floor level up, although this would need to be confirmed by a suitably qualified structural engineer.

- 3.2.12 On the north side of the basement are several storage rooms with a vault at the north-west end which would have been linked to the vault adjacent to the front lightwell. False ceilings have been installed in these rooms but the floor joists, with evidence for former lathe and plaster ceilings and the ground floor floorboards are visible above the ceiling. It is possible that these rooms may originally have been accessed from the missing passage and that the door at the base of the basement stairs and those between the rooms have been inserted. A further vault is present at the south-west end of the basement.



Photo 9: One of the basement vaults

- 3.2.13 The vaults have rounded ceilings, earthen floors and some have been plastered on the interior (Photo 9). Both these and the main basement room appear to be particularly damp, which is evident in the ground floor also, although this would need to be confirmed by a suitably qualified damp specialist. The architrave and doors throughout basement are modern additions.

3.3 Current Setting of 7 Montpelier Row

- 3.3.1 The immediate setting of 7 Montpelier Row comprises the linear rear garden on the south-west side of the property which has a large tree at the south-east end. This is formed from a modern patio immediately behind the building with a lawn beyond. The rear of the garden is accessed directly from Paragon Place to the south-east. This is surrounded to the north and east by additional gardens which gives the setting here a leafy character (Photo 11).
- 3.3.2 The adjacent streetscape to the north-west comprises terraces, pairs and individual houses, although the fine-grained nature of these gives the impression of a single terrace from a distance. The group, which originated in the late 18th & early 19th century, have an attractive symmetrical frontages and an overall harmonious multi-coloured stock brick construction (Photo 10).



Photo 10: Montpelier Row from the south-west

- 3.3.3 The area to the south-east of the property suffered heavy damage during World War Two and as a result was largely redeveloped in the late 20th century. The newer development comprises large blocks of flats which have used the surrounding historic buildings to formulate a good modern design that complements the Conservation Area (Photo 11) (Lewisham Council, 2007).



Photo 11: View from the rear of 7 Montpelier Row

- 3.3.4 Montpelier Row forms an important element of the views out of the heath to the east. The scale and the built form of the street frontage provides a role as a robust architectural statement which encloses the heath (Photo 12). Montpelier Row also plays an important role in forming a main thoroughfare and view towards the centre of the village from the north.



Photo 12: View of Montpelier Row from the heath

- 3.3.5 All Saints Church (NHLE 1080025), located c. 170m to the south-west of the site, forms a prominent element of the views from Montpelier Row out towards the wide, open expanse of the heath, with its amorphous collection of encroaching buildings, comprising a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraces of 18th or 19th century date (Photo 13).



Photo 13: View from Montpelier Row, south toward the centre of the village

- 3.3.6 The setting of 7 Montpelier Row has undergone a low level of change overtime. This is primarily related to the damage caused to the south-east of the site during World War Two and the subsequent rebuilding, as well as the increase in traffic using the B212 which passes directly by the front of the building.
- 3.3.7 The setting is considered to make a positive contribution towards the significance of 7 Montpelier Row to a High degree. This is because the vistas from the building across the heath have remained largely unchanged since it's construction in the late 18th century. The building, as part of the group of buildings that form Montpelier Row is an important element of the visual enclosure of the heath to the south-east.

3.4 Significance of 7 Montpelier Row

- 3.4.1 As a Grade II Listed building (NHLE 1079957), 7 Montpelier Row is thought to be a heritage asset of Local Importance. The Blackheath Conservation Area is a heritage asset of National Importance (in line with Table 1 & Section 2.4).

- 3.4.2 The exterior elevations of the building appear to have undergone a degree of change over time. This is focused mostly on the replacement of the original windows, probably during the late 19th century. The interior has also experienced some changes throughout its history, chiefly in the form of the alterations to elements of the planform, mostly apparent in the basement but also on the ground floor. A relatively high level of architectural details survives, such as moulded cornice, although some significant elements have been lost in the first-floor principal room. These features are considered to contribute positively towards the evidential and illustrative historic values of the building to a Medium degree.
- 3.4.3 The replacement features such as the windows and some of the architrave, are thought to have a limited heritage value and contribute to the overall significance of the building to a Low degree.
- 3.4.4 The front wall of the property is post 1965 and detracts from the significance of the building to a degree due to the poor choice of the construction materials. The paving within the front garden is modern and detracts from the overall aesthetics of the building and the surrounding Conservation Area.
- 3.4.5 The WC extension on the rear of the property is likely to be a 19th century addition. The historic value of this element of the building is limited and its thought to contribute little, if anything to the significance of the listed building or the Conservation Area.
- 3.4.6 The building is thought to have some level of associative historical value, as it was once part of a group of practices that were the dentists for Queen Victoria and King George V. The building also has some level of aesthetic value, as an attractive symmetrical example of a late 18th century house. However, these values are thought contribute to a lesser degree.
- 3.4.7 The significance of the building is thought to relate chiefly to the group value of the building as a part of Montpelier Row. This relates to the part that the building plays in the important vistas and enclosure of the heath, making a positive contribution to the Blackheath Conservation Area. These elements form part of the building's setting, which makes a High positive contribution towards the significance of the building and the Conservation Area.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Predicted Impact of Proposed Development

4.1.1 External changes proposed to the elevations and street frontage:

- Refurbishment of all existing windows including basement level with like for like double glazed units:

4.1.2 The windows have been replaced, probably during the late 19th century and are in a poor state of repair. The basement windows are modern replacements. The replacement of the windows for more efficient units, on a like-for-like basis would improve the appearance of the elevations of the building, which would have a Beneficial impact by enhancing the surrounding Blackheath Conservation Area. The upgraded units could assist with the maintenance of the building for the future.

- Refurbishment of front garden wall at north-western boundary with reclaimed bricks to match existing brickwork:

4.1.3 The replacement of the modern red brick wall with reclaimed bricks to match the main building, is thought to be a Beneficial impact, as it would enhance the visual aspects of the listed building and the surrounding Conservation Area.

- Change layout of front garden paving / bushes etc:

4.1.4 Removal of the modern, unsightly paving would be a Beneficial impact, as it would enhance the aesthetics of the listed building and the surrounding Conservation Area by contributing to the existing leafy character of the adjacent gardens.

- Changing the dental practice sign in the front garden:

4.1.5 The signage is currently set back from the road and as such is inconspicuous in nature. To move the sign to the front of the garden may have an adverse impact upon the surrounding Conservation Area by increasing the dominance of the signage. However, much intrusive street furniture is already present in the vicinity. The predicted magnitude of impact of the movement of the signage upon the Conservation Area is thought to be Low adverse (in line with Table 2; Section 2.4), with a Moderate significance of effect (in line with Table 3). There is thought to be a Negligible adverse impact upon the listed building with a Not Significant effect.

4.1.6 External changes proposed to rear elevation:

- New French doors to replace existing window at basement level:

4.1.7 The replacement of the window with a door has the potential to alter a small element of the circulation of people and goods through the building. However, the scale of the alteration would be small. The magnitude of impact of this alteration upon the listed building is thought to be Negligible, with a Not Significant effect. There is thought to be a Neutral impact upon the Conservation Area.

- Changes to WC extension, including raising the height by 400mm to allow for minimum standard head height and addition of roof light and larger window:

- 4.1.8 The scale of the alterations to the WC are small and are not thought likely to impact upon any significant architectural details. Overall this is considered to be unlikely to impact upon the significance of the listed building or the Conservation Area. There is thought to be a Negligible magnitude of impact upon the listed building and Conservation Area, with a Not Significant effect for both.
- 4.1.9 Internal remodelling is proposed in the basement including:
- Division of the front basement room into one larger surgery room (accessed by a new doorway in an existing partition wall) and a smaller decontamination room:
- 4.1.10 The planform of the basement appears to have been altered, as discussed above in Section 3.2.11. However, the remaining space is identifiable as the former kitchen. The position of the intended partition has the potential to impact upon the remaining planform the room. The predicted magnitude of impact is Low, with a Minor significance of effect.
- Conversion of smaller front storage room into kitchenette:
- 4.1.11 This room is devoid of significant architectural details or fixtures. The conversion to a kitchenette is predicted to have a Neutral impact.
- Conversion of second storage room into a waiting room, with access to front surgery room via new doorway:
- 4.1.12 As discussed above in Section 3.2.12, it is possible that these rooms may have originally been accessed via a missing passage, through a doorway in a similar location to that proposed. Therefore, the reinstatement of a doorway here would be a Beneficial impact by reversing an unsympathetic alteration.
- Reconditioning of front & rear vault into utility room for boiler water system & storage:
- 4.1.13 The vaults are currently in a poor condition due to damp. The treatment of the damp to enable to utilisation of this room is considered a Beneficial impact. This is because the treatment of the damp would help to ensure the survival of the building and therefore enhance the building and the surrounding Conservation Area.
- 200mm slab added to basement floor to allow for minimum standard head room height;
- 4.1.14 To enable to treatment of the damp in the basement, the floor is to be lowered by 450mm and reinstated with a 200mm slab. This is a minimal addition to the floor level. As discussed elsewhere, the treatment of the damp will ensure the survival of the building which will preserve the building and ensure the preservation of the Conservation Area. The predicted magnitude of impact is thought to be Low, with a Minor significance of effect.
- Existing decontamination room at the rear of the building converted into a surgery room, including the replacement of the existing door with a sliding door:
- 4.1.15 This room is also in a poor condition due to damp. As mentioned above, treatment of the damp is considered a Beneficial impact for the same reasons as stated above. The door and associated architrave are replacement with little, if any historical value. Therefore, the replacement is thought to be Neutral.
- Change of both basement doors for fire doors:

4.1.16 The basement doors are modern replacements and are thought to be of no historic value. Nor do they make a contribution to the significance of the building and if anything, they detract from it. Their replacement may enhance the significance of the building and surrounding Conservation Area.

- Re-wiring, re-plumbing & installation of central heating:

4.1.17 The upgrading of these systems would likely be a safer alternative to the existing outdated services. The upgrade is likely to cause minimal disturbance to the historic fabric of the building. This is predicted to have a Negligible impact and Not Significant effect.

4.1.18 At ground floor level, proposed internal changes include:

- The addition of an X-ray room or disabled toilet in the southern corner of the front room through the construction on new lead-lined walls:

4.1.19 This area of the ground floor contains some of the complete original moulded cornice, which contribute to the significance of the building, as outlined in Section 3.4.2. The insertion of partitions in the area would be undertaken following the completion of the room within a room system, preserving the architectural details in this area. This is predicted to have a Negligible impact upon this area of the building.

- The 'room within room' system, including suspended floor and walls, will be applied to the reception and entrance lobby at the front of the building and the surgery room at the rear. This will be fitted over the existing architectural features such as cornice, skirting board etc:

4.1.20 The system is designed to level the sloping floors of the building without directly altering the historic fabric. The system will be installed over the existing architectural details which will remain unaltered beneath the new wall and floor surfaces. The use of this system is predicted to have a Negligible impact upon these areas of the building. Re-wiring, re-plumbing and installation of central heating will all be undertaken within the cavity of the new walls so no historic fabric will be effected by the updating of the services.

4.1.21 Overall, the proposal includes for several elements that are thought to be beneficial for both the listed building and the Conservation Area. When these are taken into account in line with those low level adverse impacts, the overall predicted magnitude of impact is thought to be Negligible with a Not Significant effect for both the listed building and Minor significance of effect for the Conservation Area.

4.2 Outline Recommendations

4.2.1 An alternative solution to the new location of the front signage should be considered. It is recommended that the signage is kept back from the street frontage to avoid being made more conspicuous within the surrounding Blackheath Conservation Area. Should this be followed, the magnitude of impact would likely reduce to Negligible with a Not Significant effect for both heritage assets.

4.2.2 Any window or door replacements should be timber and likewise for the new French door, as UPVC is considered unacceptable within a Conservation Area.

4.2.3 A level of Historic Building Recording may be required by the local planning authority prior to any alteration works.

4.2.4 All recommendations will need to be approved by the local planning authority.

4.3 Conclusion

4.3.1 7 Montpelier Row is a heritage asset of Local Importance. The Blackheath Conservation Area is a heritage asset of National importance.

4.3.2 The significance of the building is thought to relate chiefly to the group value of the building as a part of Montpelier Row and therefore the setting makes a High contribution towards its significance.

4.3.3 The overall predicted magnitude of impact is thought to be Negligible with a Not Significant effect for the listed building and Minor significance of effect for the Conservation Area. Should the recommendations be taken into account, the significance of effect upon the Conservation Area would be Negligible.

4.3.4 It is recommended that an alternative solution to the new location of the front signage should be considered and any replacement windows and new exterior doors should be of timber and sympathetic to the character of the building.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Planning Policy

Introduction

The following section highlights the key planning and legislative framework relevant to this project, including legislative framework, national planning policy and relevant sector guidance.

Statutory Protection for Heritage Assets

Current legislation, in the form of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, provides for the legal protection of important and well-preserved archaeological sites and monuments through their addition to a list, or 'schedule' of archaeological monuments by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This necessitates the granting of formal Scheduled Monument Consent for any work undertaken within the designated area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Likewise, structures are afforded legal protection in the form of their addition to 'lists' of buildings of special architectural or historical interest. The listing of buildings is carried out by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The main purpose of the legislation is to protect buildings and their surroundings from changes that would materially alter the special historic or architectural value of the building or its setting. This necessitates the granting of formal Listed Building Consent for all works undertaken to or within the designated curtilage of a Listed Building. This legislation also allows for the creation and protection of Conservation Areas by local planning authorities to protect areas and groupings of historical significance.

The categories of assets with some form of legal protection have been extended in recent years, and now include Registered Parks and Gardens, and Historic Battlefields. While designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is not a statutory designation under English planning law, such a designation is regarded as a material consideration in planning decisions, and World Heritage Sites are in practice protected from development that could affect any aspect of their significance including settings within the Site and a buffer zone around it.

National Planning Policy

The NPPF sets out government policy on the historic environment, which covers all elements, whether designated or not, that are identified as 'having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'.

One of the over-arching aims is to 'Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'. To achieve this, local planning authorities can request that the applicant describe "the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". The level of detail required in the assessment should be "proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance". It goes on to say that "where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest,

local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

A key policy within the NPPF is that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

With regard to non-designated heritage assets specific policy is provided in that a balanced judgement will be required having due regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset affected.

Paragraph 132 states that ‘Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of a heritage asset or development within its setting. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional, while substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, should be wholly exceptional’.

Paragraphs 133 & 134 explain that ‘where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

It also advises that where a proposal involve less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The London Plan 2011 with 2016 alterations

Policy 7.8: Heritage Assets and Archaeology

This policy states that development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect, and where possible, present the site’s heritage assets, whether designated or non-designated.

Based on this policy, planning decisions involving heritage assets will be assessed on the level of identification, value, conservation, restoration, re-use and incorporation of the asset in the proposed plans. The significance of heritage assets and their settings should be conserved by proposals which are sympathetic to the form, scale, materials and architectural detail of the asset.

Any development which will cause substantial harm or loss of a designated heritage asset will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. The importance of the development will be assessed proportionately in terms of public benefit against the impact on, and the importance of the asset.

Proposals showing potential modifications to heritage assets which will reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development are favourable where it is on balance with potential harm to the heritage asset or its setting.

London Borough of Lewisham: Local Development Framework, adopted 29th June 2011

Core Strategy

The core strategy is the key Local Development Framework document. The core strategy forms part of the development plan for the borough, together with the Site allocations local plan, the Lewisham town centre local plan, the Development management local plan, and the London plan.

Core Strategy Objective 10: Protect and enhance Lewisham's character

Lewisham's distinctive local character will be protected through sensitive and appropriate design, in particular those areas requiring managed change and protection such as the borough's heritage assets and their settings, local rivers and landscape, and yet at the same time creating and improving the environment within the key regeneration and growth areas of Lewisham, Catford, Deptford and New Cross. This will mean:

- a. ensuring that new development achieves high standards of urban design and residential quality, and contributes to a sense of place and local distinctiveness informed by an understanding of the historic context
- b. ensuring that new development and alterations to existing buildings are sensitive, appropriate to their context, and make a positive contribution to the urban environment
- c. preserving or enhancing the condition and historic significance of the borough's heritage assets and their settings and the other identified elements of the historic environment.

Spatial Policy 1: Lewisham Spatial Strategy (extract)

The following paragraph from Spatial Policy 1 is relevant to this assessment:

5. All new development will need to ensure the principles of good design are addressed, heritage assets protected, and high standards of sustainable design and construction, including maximising energy efficiency and the provision of on-site renewables and low carbon decentralised energy, are incorporated.

Spatial Policy 3: District Hubs

Blackheath

1. Ensure the preservation or enhancement of the village's historic character and significance, and that of the surrounding residential areas, through conservation area status.

Core Strategy Policy 15: High quality design for Lewisham

The following sections from Policy 15 are relevant to this assessment:

1. For all development, the Council will:
 - a. apply national and regional policy and guidance to ensure highest quality design and the protection or enhancement of the historic and natural environment, which is sustainable, accessible to all, optimises the potential of sites and is sensitive to the local context and responds to local character.

f. ensure any development conserves and enhances the borough's heritage assets, and the significance of their settings, such as conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments and the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site.

District Hubs

4. Development should achieve the following design aims to maximise the unique character and potential of each centre and improve accessibility and the overall environment with the highest quality design to ensure new development at:

a. Sydenham, Forest Hill, Lee Green and Blackheath preserves or enhances the historic character and significance, and that of the surrounding residential areas within a conservation area.

Core Strategy Policy 16: Conservation areas, heritage assets and the historic environment

The Council will ensure that the value and significance of the borough's heritage assets and their settings, which include the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, registered historic parks and gardens and other non designated assets such as locally listed buildings, will continue to be monitored, reviewed, enhanced and conserved according to the requirements of government planning policy guidance, the London Plan policies, local policy and English Heritage best practice.

The Council will work with its partners, including local communities, to ensure that the borough's heritage assets and those yet to be identified will be valued positively and considered as central to the regeneration of the borough as detailed in the Core Strategy spatial policies. The World Heritage Site buffer zone for the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site is identified on the Proposals Map.

The Council will ensure that its Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity will be protected and enhanced and will ensure the implementation of the World Heritage Site Master Plan.

The Council will continue to review its conservation areas, designating new ones and preparing associated management plans and policies to conserve their character.

Development Management Plan

DM Policy 36 New development, changes of use and alterations affecting designated heritage assets and their setting: conservation areas, listed buildings, schedule of ancient monuments and registered parks and gardens

A. General principles

1. For development proposals affecting heritage assets the Council will require a statement that describes the significance of the asset and its setting, and an assessment of the impact on that significance.

2. Where the significance of an asset may be harmed or lost through physical alteration or destruction, or development within its setting, the Council will require clear and convincing justification. The Council will consider the wider public benefits which may flow from the development where these are fully justified in the impact assessment.

3. The Council encourages the adaptation of historic buildings to improve energy efficiency in line with the detailed guidance provided by English Heritage. Careful consideration should be given to the most appropriate options for insulation, power use and power generation. Intrusive interventions, such as externally mounted micro-generation equipment or external wall insulation, should be avoided where these would unacceptably alter the character and appearance of the heritage asset. The Council encourages the retention and thermal upgrading of historic windows.

B. Conservation areas

4. The Council, having paid special attention to the special interest of its Conservation Areas, and the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance, will not grant planning permission where:

- a. new development or alterations and extensions to existing buildings is incompatible with the special characteristics of the area, its buildings, spaces, settings and plot coverage, scale, form and materials.
- b. development, which in isolation would lead to less than substantial harm to the building or area, but cumulatively would adversely affect the character and appearance of the conservation area
- c. development adjacent to a Conservation Area would have a negative impact on the significance of that area.

5. The Council will encourage the reinstatement or require the retention of architectural and landscaping features, such as front gardens and boundary walls, important to an area's character or appearance, if necessary by the use of Article 4 Directions.

6. The Council will require bin stores and bike sheds to be located at the side or rear of properties where a front access to the side and rear exists

C. Listed buildings

7. In order to ensure the conservation of Listed Buildings the Council will:

- a. only grant consent for alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings which relate sensitively to the building's significance and sustain and enhance its significance and integrity
- b. have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of Listed Buildings in considering any application in their vicinity, and consider opportunities for new development within the setting to enhance or better reveal the significance of the asset
- c. use its powers under Sections 47, 48 and 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to ensure that Listed Buildings are maintained to a reasonable standard.

8. When considering applications for change of use of Listed Buildings, the Council will consider the contribution of the existing use and the impact of any proposed new use to the significance and long-term viability of the historic building. The Council will seek to ensure that the building is put into an optimum viable use i.e. the one that causes least harm to the

significance of the building, not just through initial changes but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear or any likely future changes. The implications of complying with Building Regulations, such as fire escapes, will be taken into account prior to determining applications for change of use.

D. Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens

9. Scheduled Monuments will be protected and preserved in accordance with Government regulation. Where the site or setting is adversely affected planning permission will be refused.

10. When considering the impact of a development proposal on Registered Parks and Gardens, or on their settings, the Council will consider that any loss or substantial harm to these assets will be in wholly exceptional circumstances. The Council will apply the provision in point 2 of the above policy to the assets.

DM Policy 38: Demolition or substantial harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets

The following sections of DM Policy 38 are relevant to this assessment:

1. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and the greater the importance of the heritage asset, the greater the weight will be given to its conservation. Proposals for the demolition of, or substantial harm to a heritage asset will require clear and convincing evidence and will only be considered under exceptional circumstances for Grade II listed buildings, parks or gardens. Substantial harm or loss to designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including scheduled monuments and Grade I and II* listed buildings, will only be considered under wholly exceptional circumstances

4. Development proposals involving substantial structural alterations to a heritage asset need to demonstrate, by way of a structural survey and methodology statement, that the alterations proposed can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the integrity and significance of the asset.

Blackheath supplementary planning document

One of the qualities of Blackheath conservation area is the limited amount of well designed and successfully integrated modern development. Where suitable sites exist, this supplementary planning document provides advice on how good quality small scale new development can continue to enhance the character of the conservation area.

New buildings will only be considered on sites which can be developed without damage to the traditional layout and pattern of development in the area, which is an integral part of the area's character, or to redevelop some of the buildings in the area which currently make a negative contribution to the area's character.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Council's urban design policies, guidance on design and access statements as well as the character appraisal. Preapplication advice can be given by the Conservation and Urban Design Team.

Appraisal of the surrounding built form

The setting of the site is critical to any new development and will vary in virtually every case, but as a guide it should be taken as the area from which the site can be seen and the

surroundings seen from the site. The setting can also be defined as the general pattern of uses in the vicinity. These may vary on each side of the site. The character appraisal should be used for reference. The following elements should all be analysed and their implications understood:

- Surrounding skylines, rooflines and landmarks. Will the development have an impact on cherished views or “signature” skylines?
- What are the typical sizes and shapes of building plots: Are these uniform or varied? If varied, consider largest and smallest types?
- How do buildings relate to the back edge of the footpath or carriageway? This factor alone can help to assimilate new buildings into the streetscene.
- Are the buildings in the street freestanding, or are they in small informal groups or more regular terraces?
- Are buildings linked in a particular way, for example with boundary walls?
- Do the buildings generally have their main ridgeline parallel to the street or at right angles?
- Are the buildings generally “grand” or modestly proportioned and styled?
- Is there a typical or historic boundary treatment? Historic walls and hedging are an integral part of the character of the area.
- What are the predominant materials and colour of material in the area and are any unique?

Appraisal of the site

First consider the features and function of the possible site. Development will only be considered if development would preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Undeveloped sites may still have a function that it is desirable to retain such as a garden or simply a green breathing space in the urban environment.

- What is the current character of the site?
- What trees are present What species are they and what size are they?
- Are there any features or buildings present?
- What is the current use of the site?
- What type of boundary is present?
- Where would the access to the new building be located?

Design solution

The design concept should be developed from the above information. This information should be set out in a design and access statement which will underpin the evolving design process and should be shown to the Council when seeking pre-application advice. It is also a requirement of all planning applications for new development. The design solution should be a building that sits well within its setting as well as preserving and enhancing the character of Blackheath conservation area.