



# HPS

Professional Archaeological Services



7-9 George Street West, Luton, LU1 2BJ

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**Client:** Sheriff Construction Ltd

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**Project:** Heritage Impact Assessment

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Applicant Name / Agent: Sheriff Construction Ltd  
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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1. HPS has been commissioned by Sheriff Construction Ltd, on behalf of the developer to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment in favour of the Grade II listed 7-9 George Street West, Luton, LU1 2BJ (hereafter referred to as the Project Site).
- 1.2. The report has been requested in order to establish the significance of the Project Site and to assess the potential impact that the proposed development may have on the significance, setting and fabric of the designated heritage asset and neighbouring heritage assets.
- 1.3. A radius of 200m from the Project Site has been established as the Study Area.

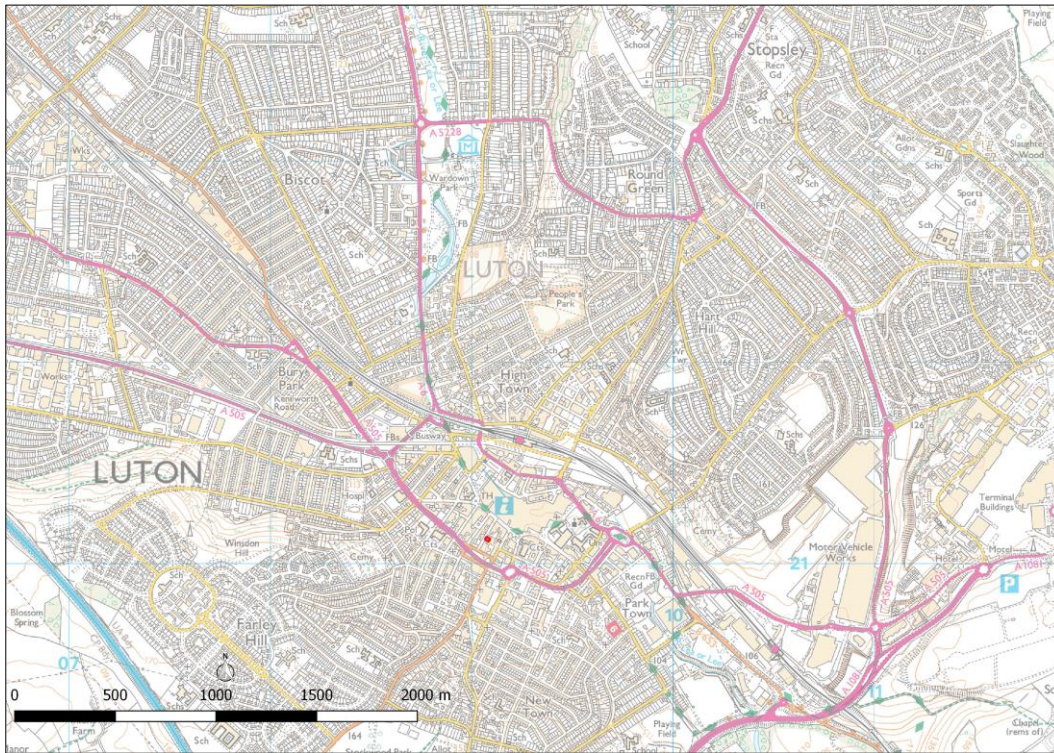


Figure 1 General Project Site location, outlined in red.

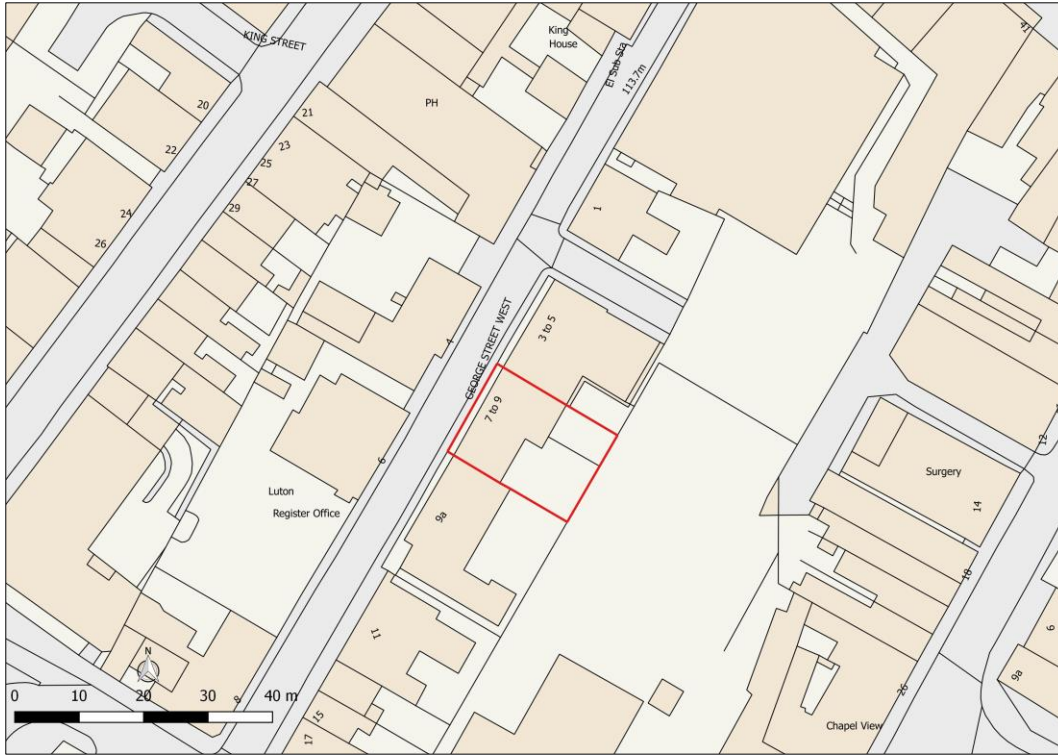


Figure 2 Detailed Project Site location, outlined in red.

- 1.4. The Project Site is a Grade II listed building located within Luton Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 1.4.1. *Historic England Listing-"Late C19 town house. Two storeys and basement. Stucco facade. Slate roof. Heavy bracketed and moulded eaves cornice. Four bay facade divided by plain pilasters with fleur-de-lys motif on the capital. Rounded architrave surrounds to sash windows. Doorway in second bay from left has double 3-panelled doors under semi-circular fanlight, reveals, plain pilasters and cornice. Door is up 4 steps. Basement wall."* (Historic England List Entry Number: 1114622).
- 1.5. The Project Site is situated southwest of George Street, in the Luton's commercial Town Centre. George Street West comprises a mix of modern office buildings and 19th century residential development, now mostly converted for use as flats and commercial premises.
- 1.6. George Street West preserves nine listed buildings, which make a significant contribution to the Conservation Area. Number 3-5 George Street West is attached to the north of the Project Site. The property is a Grade II listed town house, thought to have been constructed in the 1860's. To the south is the Grade II listed 11 George Street West, dated to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Directly opposite the Project Site is 6 George Street West. A Grade II listed house dated to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 3 Listed buildings within a 200m radius of the Project Site.

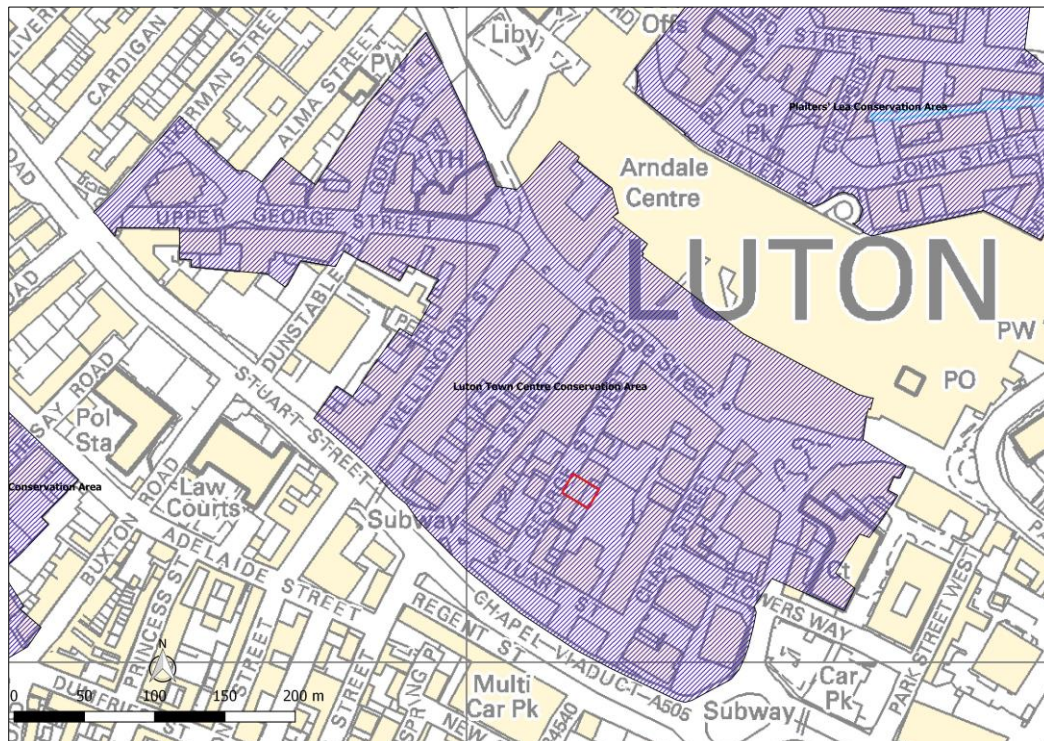


Figure 4 Luton Town Centre Conservation Area shaded in purple. Project Site location outlined in red.

1.7. The report has been prepared by Sam Driscoll MCIFA, Director, Heritage Planning Services Ltd and completed under HPS project reference HPS-320/20.

## 2. Planning Policy & Development Framework

2.1. With regards to the relevant policy and development framework, the following are considered appropriate to the current proposal:

2.1.1. *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019;*

2.1.2. *Luton Local Plan 2011 – 2031, 2017.*

2.2. Relevant planning policy transcribed from the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019.

2.2.1. *Paragraph 189: "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 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."*

2.2.2. *Paragraph 190: "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

2.3. Relevant planning policy transcribed from Luton Local Plan 2011 – 2031, 2017.

2.3.1. Policy LLP1- Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.

*"The Council will require all new development in the borough to contribute to enhancing a sense of place, preserve or improve the character of the area. Development proposals should respond to and enhance local character, the natural environment, heritage assets, and the identity of the Borough."*

2.4. Policy LLP30 - Historic Environment.

*A. To protect, conserve and enhance Luton's unique and rich heritage, identity, and sense of place, development proposals must take account of the character, setting, and*

*local distinctiveness (including materials and detailing) of local affected heritage assets, and features of particular importance including:*

*i. the manufacturing industry and the hat industry;*

*ii. registered parks and gardens including Luton Hoo and Wardown Park;*

*iii. historic landscape features such as the Chilterns and River Lea; and*

*iv. prominent listed buildings including within the town centre, the medieval street patterns, the Town Hall, and the Parish Church of St. Mary.*

*Any degree of harm and benefit arising from development proposals will be assessed against the significance of any affected heritage assets including:*

***Designated heritage assets:***

*listed buildings*

*conservation areas*

*scheduled monuments*

*registered parks and gardens.*

***Non-designated heritage assets:***

*locally listed buildings*

*archaeology*

*B. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of heritage assets. Development proposals will be supported where they conserve heritage assets, bringing them back into appropriate use for the benefit of future generations.*

- 2.5. C. Any harm or loss to a heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. substantial harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset should be exceptional or wholly exceptional depending on the significance of the affected heritage assets. It will only be permitted where there are substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or the nature of the heritage asset is such that no reasonable alternative use including conversion can be found, and that appropriate marketing or options for grant-funding or charitable/public ownership have been exhausted. Less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The loss of a building or other element that makes a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area should be avoided and treated as substantial harm or less than substantial harm depending on the circumstances.*



*D. Proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets require a Heritage Statement for validation (which may be included within a Design and Access Statement), setting out the significance of the asset, the resulting impact, and mitigation, addressing the setting of the asset.*

*E. Where a site includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, developers should submit an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a strategy for field evaluation using non-invasive and invasive techniques prior to the determination of the planning application. On the basis of this assessment, an appropriate conservation strategy will be developed, which may include preservation in situ where appropriate and/or full or partial recording, with the record of evidence being made publically accessible. If non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest are of equivalent value to a designated asset, they would need to be subject to the same policies for designated heritage assets.*

*F. Applicants will be required to record and advance an understanding of heritage assets that are to be lost (wholly or in part). The recording will be in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact. This evidence (and any archive generated) should be made accessible to the public. Recording and advancing the understanding of heritage assets will be regulated by legal agreements on the phasing of demolition and development.*

*The Council will seek to:*

- maintain a regularly updated schedule of Luton's Designated Heritage Assets and locally listed heritage;*
- ensure that heritage assets considered to be at risk of neglect or decay, included on the Historic England's at-Risk Register, are effectively managed and protected;*
- and work with stakeholders and the community to establish Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for its Conservation Areas.*

### 3. Historic Development

- 3.1. In 1842 the Project Site was located on land belonging to Thomas and Edmund Waller (Plots 1670 / 1671 as shown on the Revised Tithe Map<sup>1</sup>). Land to the south was recorded as pasture, whilst land to the north, bordering George Street, was recorded as warehousing and gardens.
- 3.2. George Street West was established between 1853 – 1862. The piecemeal development is illustrated on the Map of Luton, surveyed by The Great Straw Hat Bonnet Emporium. The map includes elevations of principle buildings. The Project Site appears to have been developed at this time, and its inclusion on the map suggests that the buildings were considered significant. The image below shows the approximate location of the 7-9 George Street West.



*Figure 5 Map of Luton surveyed by The Great Straw Hat Bonnet Emporium 1853-1862.*

*Approximate location of Project Site circled in red.*

<sup>1</sup> Source [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk) Map of Luton Parish in the County of Bedford Revised 1842

3.3. Published 1880 (surveyed 1879), the Ordnance Survey map of Luton shows the Project Site in detail as two separate houses, with basements and landscaped gardens. Access to the properties is clearly illustrated, with paired doors located centrally, reached via steps leading up from the street to Ground Floor level. The gardens backed onto grounds belonging to Adelaide Steam Saw Mill, with boilers houses c. 30m to the southeast. The town houses were an example of the intermixing of piecemeal residential and industrial development that defined the 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape. Adelaide Terrace to the rear of the Project Site was a known slum, described in 1850 as a place where the stench was intolerable (Bunker et al, 1993).



*Figure 6 Ordnance Survey Map Surveyed 1879, Published 1880. Project Site outlined in red.*

3.4. In 1922 the Project Site was depicted as two separate properties, with the dwelling to the northeast having been extended to the rear.

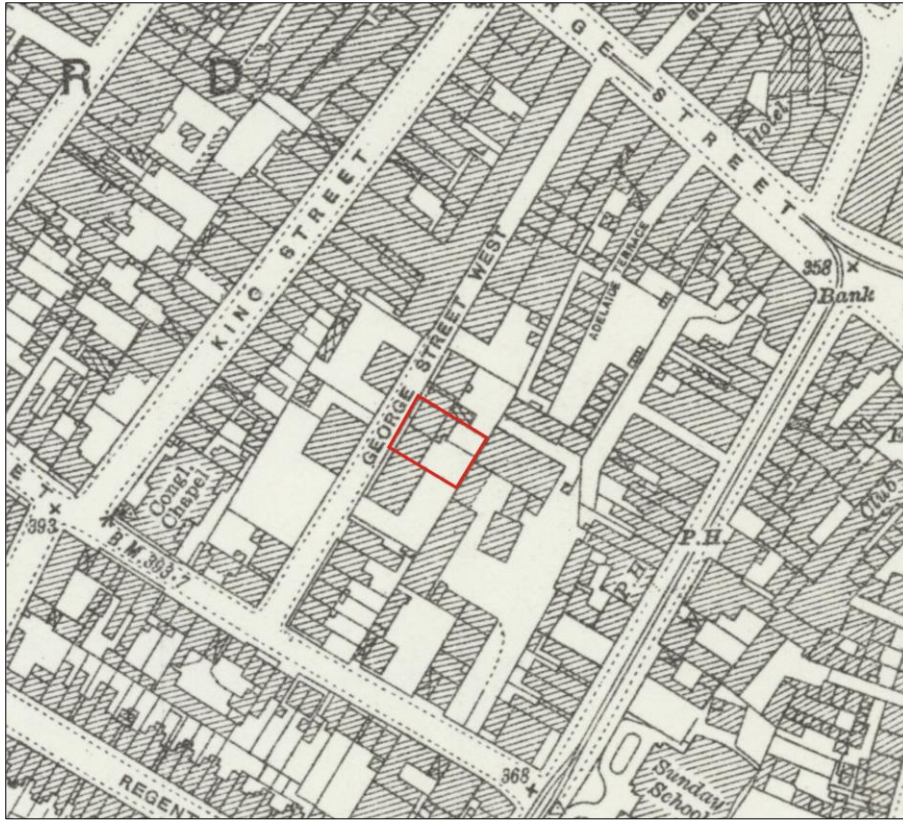
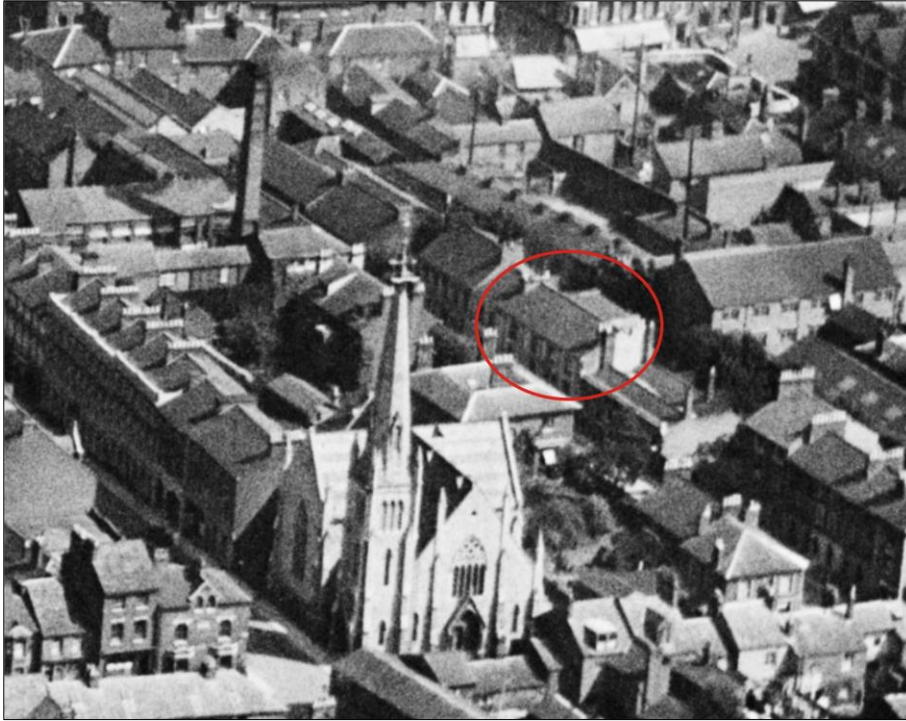


Figure 7 Ordnance Survey 1922, Published 1924. Project Site outlined in red.

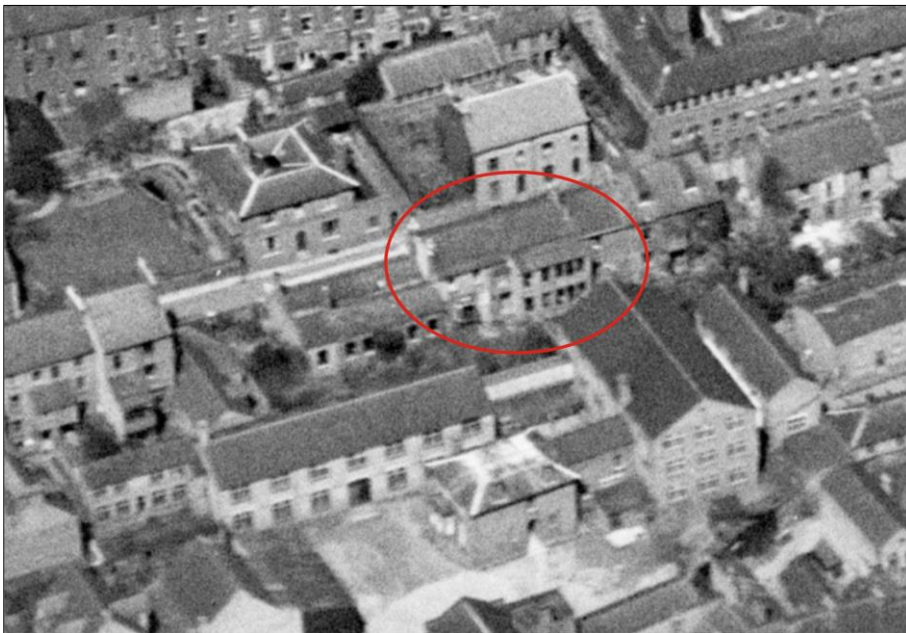
- 3.5. An aerial photograph dated 1927 shows the Project Site with a large extension to the rear.<sup>2</sup> The building shown on previous maps attached to the north does not appear to be visible. Perhaps the building was a single storey or in the process of redevelopment.

<sup>2</sup> Source <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/EPW019217>



*Figure 8 EPW019217 ENGLAND (1927). The Town Centre, Luton, 1927. Project Site circled in red.*

- 3.6. By 1929 the building to the north had either been replaced or enlarged. The roofline can be seen to continue, and it is clear that the Project Site and the neighbouring building have been infilled with a two-storey dwelling (number 5 George Street West).<sup>3</sup> In the aerial photograph below, the rear extension to the Project Site is clearly visible. The amount and size of the windows suggests an industrial or commercial use at this time.



*Figure 9 EPW026486 ENGLAND (1929). Project Site outlined in red.*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/EPW026486>

3.7. The historic numbering of George Street West is not clear from the records, as such it has not been possible to trace the ownership or use of the Project Site throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century with any certainty. The census records show that the properties along George Street West were predominantly residential from 1871 to the early 1900s, although contemporary newspaper adverts also record business addresses; for example, in 1908 number 9 George Street West was registered to the Bedfordshire Loan Company<sup>4</sup>.

## 4. Site Visit

4.1. A site visit was carried out on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to view the exterior and interior of the Project Site. As the property is still in use as commercial premises, access was limited at the time of the visit.



*Photo 1 SSW facing view of Project Site from George Street West.*

4.2. The Project Site comprises a two storeyed office building with basement. The façade has been significantly altered during works carried out to convert the original two dwellings to a single property. The remaining single entrance may be in the location of the original doorway belonging to the most northerly of the dwellings, whilst the entrance to the southwest has been blocked and

<sup>4</sup> Source Herts & Cambs Reporter & Royston Crow - Friday 18 September 1908

replaced with a replica window / surround. The adjacent (southwest) Ground Floor window surround would also appear to have been altered. Both share the same plain windowsill design. The original basement access is preserved.



*Photo 2 South facing view. Ground floor windowsills share plain design.*

- 4.3. The property has been significantly altered at ground floor level. The party wall has been knocked through. A flight of three stairs leads up to the converted southern property. Modern partitions, doors and glazing have been installed to create offices. A modern dado rail has been incorporated, echoing the detail of the historic interior. A section of historic cornice appears to survive in the Ground Floor southwest offices to the front of the property. The fireplace is concealed, and it is possible that original features may be preserved behind the modern plaster. To the rear of the property (southwest) a 20<sup>th</sup> century brick fire surround has been installed, along with modern wood panelling around the walls.



*Photo 3 Stairs leading up to the level of southern property. The party wall has been knocked through. Modern dado rail has been added.*



*Photo 4 Concealed fireplace with modern dado rail. Cornice above would appear to preserve the 19<sup>th</sup> century detail.*



- 4.4. The main stair is located against the northeast wall and appears to have been relocated from what is presumed to have been a more central location within the northern dwelling. The historic stair belonging to the southern property has been removed.



*Photo 5 Relocated stair to the north of the property.*

- 4.5. At first floor level the rear southwest office would appear to preserve a 19<sup>th</sup> century picture rail, plain skirting and a plain fire surround.



*Photo 6 Period fire surround, first floor level the rear southwest office.*

- 4.6. An example of Crittall style windows was noted. This design became popular following the First World War and continued to be popular throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4.7. The timber window frames appear to be preserved throughout and some evidence of the original skirting was noted, although a plain.



*Photo 7 Period window frames. Example to the left of the photo has been partially concealed behind a modern partition.*

- 4.8. The basement level is currently used as a store and as such much of the space was inaccessible at the time of the site visit. A short corridor leads from the basement to the garden to the rear of the property.
- 4.9. The interior of the property has been substantially altered and very little of the historic décor remains.
- 4.10. The gardens to the rear were not accessed at the time of the site visit, however the area that was visible through the gate confirmed that they are now disused and are in a neglected state.



*Photo 8 Southeast facing view of garden from basement access.*

## **5. Development Proposal**

- 5.1. The proposed development will create seven new flats across the Basement, Ground Floor and First Floor levels. The principle elevation, fronting George Street West, and the rear elevation will be retained.

- 5.2. Internally, the stairwell will be retained, and the floor raised to the north, to bring the level in line with the southern portion of the property. This will result in raising the ceiling height of the basement in order to form a habitable space.
- 5.3. The party wall will be reinstated at Basement and Ground Floor level to allow new entrances to be formed into the flats to the southwest.
- 5.4. Stud walling will be inserted into the south rear rooms at Basement and Ground Floor level in order to install shower rooms. At First Floor level this will be achieved by the relocation of the existing partition.
- 5.5. The dividing wall within the early 20<sup>th</sup> century rear extension will be reconfigured at Ground Floor and First Floor Level to allow for the creation of Lobby areas. At Basement Level a new partition wall will be inserted to create a Lounge and Bedroom.
- 5.6. Gardens to the rear will be landscaped for residential use.

## **6. Setting & Significance**

- 6.1. The Project Site is located within a historically significant area of Luton and is bordered to the north and south by a range of listed properties extending from George Street. These buildings represent the extended development of Luton Town Centre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Principle elevations front George Street West and preserve examples of the piecemeal construction and design of the period, although the Project Site shows signs of alterations carried out most likely in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Significant aesthetic value is attributed to the frontage, which affirms a sense of the historic development of the Town.
- 6.2. The garden area to the rear of the Project Site preserves the early layout of the plots belonging to the 19<sup>th</sup> century town houses. Although the plot to the north has been eroded by the construction of an extension.

## **7. Impact Assessment**

- 7.1. The proposed development will preserve the front and rear elevation detail of 7-9 George Street West. The footprint will remain unaltered, along with the historic garden plot boundaries. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not impact significantly on the setting of the Project Site or on the adjacent heritage assets, numbers 3-5 and 11 George Street West.

- 7.2. Internally the proposed renovation will require a minor amount of stud walling. The knocked through party wall will be infilled and examples of historic cornicing will be preserved in situ.
- 7.3. The landscaping of the garden areas to the rear may have a positive impact on the setting of the heritage asset.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1. The proposed scheme will preserve the historic façade and return the Project Site to its original residential status. The removal of modern partitions, glazing and décor offers the potential to enhance the interior, which has been substantially altered. Furthermore, the reinstatement of garden areas to the rear offers the chance to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 8.2. It is considered that the proposed development will cause less than substantial harm and therefore should be acceptable in heritage terms.
- 8.3. In the event that planning permission is granted, it is recommended that a programme of building recording be secured by way of an appropriately worded condition of planning. All recording should be carried out in line with Historic England guidance.

## 9. Bibliography

Bunker, Stephen; Holgate, Robin; Nichols, Marian. 1993. *The Changing Face of Luton : An Illustrated History*. Dunstable, Bedfordshire, The Book Castle

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<https://www.ancestry.co.uk> accessed 15/01/2020.

<https://historicengland.org.uk> accessed 15/01/2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> accessed 15/01/2020.

## 10. Appendices

### Appendix 1 Listed Buildings within a 200m radius

NHLE Ref	Name	Grade
1146440	19 George Street West	II
1321370	32 George Street	II
1114618	The Heights Public House, 1 George Street	II
1114610	The White Hart, Castle Street	II
1114614	The Bitter End, 9 Chapel Street	II
1114621	3 George Street West	II
1114644	War Memorial Town Hall, George Street.	II
1321369	21 George Street	II
1114619	63 George Street	II
1114622	7-9 George Street West	II
1138335	Red Lion Hotel George Street/Castle Street	II
1146428	9A George Street West	II
1114624	6 George Street West	II
1114613	2 - 8 Castle Street	II
1114641	Ceylon Baptist Church and Hall, Wellington street	II
1114620	1 George Street West	II
1311808	8 & 10 George Street West	II
1114611	5 Castle Street	II
1321376	23-27 King Street	II
1311763	29-37 King Street	II
1114629	39 King Street	II
1321372	11 George Street West	II
1114623	13,15 and 17 George Street West	II





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