

Design & Access statement and Heritage Impact statement

Site addresses:

69a Church Street
Littleborough
OL15 8AE



69a Church Street

Proposal

69a Church Street: Change of use from offices to 7 Person - 7 bedroom HMO.

Description of works

The proposal includes the internal refurbishment of the existing building to provide residential spaces. Associated parking is provided outside.

Proposed internal works on both floors to include bedrooms, communal lounge and kitchen spaces and bathroom facilities. Internal works will include the addition of some walls, additional of extra bathroom and kitchen facilities, and hand basins to all rooms. Externally, minimal work is proposed, mainly the remove the metal shutter and the grills on lower ground window, ensuring any holes in the mortar is filled to match the colour of existing mortar.

Use

69a Church Street: Currently vacant but previously used as offices.

Amount of development

The proposed development looks at retaining most of the internal layout. On the ground floor, additional WC facilities, and kitchen space is provided by removing and rebuilding some internal walls. Hand basins to be provided to the 3 ground floor bedrooms. Externally the shutter will be removed, as well as grills from the windows, ensuring that mortar is filled in to match existing. There is no further external works proposed.

On the first floor, the layout is mostly retained, with some internal walls removed to provide additional WC/shower rooms, as well as lounge facilities. Bedrooms will be plumbed in for hand basins. Property will be decorated in neutral paint, and suitable floor coverings provided. No other work is proposed.

Layout

Entrance is from the ground floor which will lead to a communal entrance hall. Within this space, a bathroom (existing) and a new separate WC facility will be provided. Leading off from the entrance hall, on the left hand side a sizeable kitchen diner is provided. To the right, 3 bedrooms are provided.

Opposite the entrance hall is the stairs leading to first floor. To the left of the corridor, a living room is provided, and additional shower rooms/wc, a total of 3. To the right of this, 4 further bedrooms are provided.

Scale

The overall scale of the proposal will be staying the same as no extensions are included within the proposed application.

All bedrooms will have a minimum floor space of 6.5sqm as per current HMO guidelines. The kitchen diner will have a floor space of 19.8sqm and the lounge will have a floor space 16.7sqm. These meet the criteria as defined in the HMO guidelines provided by Rochdale Council.

Landscaping

The external parking spaces will be retained. No external works are proposed.

Appearance

The appearance of the proposals have been carefully considered to ensure the proposals fit in with the existing structure as well as the surrounding buildings. Proposed works do not include any modifications or alterations to the fabric of the buildings.

This building is constructed using traditional red bricks and grey slate roof. The main external work includes for removal of the metal shutters, and the metal grills around the ground floor windows. Any damage is expected to be minimal, mainly consisting of holes in the mortar which will be replaced with a matching colour mortar. No other work is proposed to the brickwork. Existing windows will be retained.

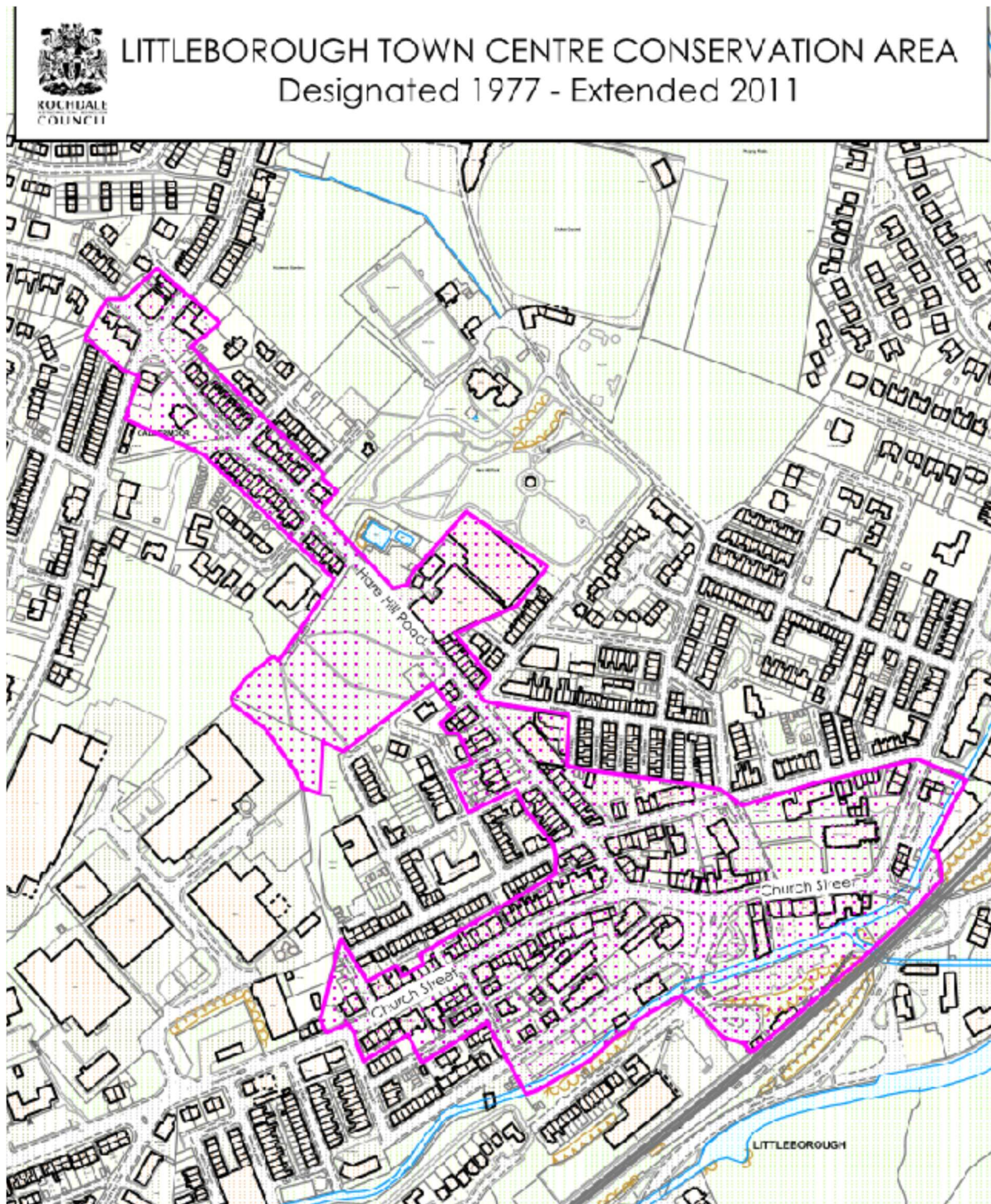
Access

Existing access into the site is turning off from Church Street (a major road into Littleborough) into Morgan Street, before turning left into Queen's Road. This road is mostly unadopted, which leads onto the site of all three properties. Vehicle parking is provided on the site which is privately owned. In addition to this, there are extremely close amenities and public transport options, with a local Co-Op approx. 5minute walk away, along with a bus stop a 2 minute walk along Halifax Road/Church Street and Littleborough train station approx. 5 minute walk away which provide direct links into Rochdale town centre as well as Manchester city centre at a travel time of 26 minutes. See below for Google Earth screenshot showing location of site:



Heritage Impact

65 Church Street is not a listed property but does fall within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area.



5. Statement of Significance

5.1 Introduction - Understanding Heritage Significance

5.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) requires that:

200. 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.

201. 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 assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

5.1.2 The Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) defines "Significance" (for heritage policy):

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

5.1.3 In assessing the heritage significance of 69a Church Street, and their setting, regard has been had to the special heritage interest of the building, as required by the NPPF, and the heritage values, as defined in Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008), which asserts that a tangible heritage asset can have the following four values:

Evidential value - the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value - the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Aesthetic value - the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value - the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

5.1.4 Conservation Principles also clarifies that:

The significance of a place embraces all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve.

In order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time; and then to consider:

- who values the place, and why they do so
- how those values relate to its fabric
- their relative importance
- whether associated objects contribute to them
- the contribution made by the setting and context of the place
- how the place compares with others sharing similar values

Understanding and articulating the values and significance of a place is necessary to inform decisions about its future. The degree of significance determines what, if any, protection, including statutory designation, is appropriate under law and policy.

5.1.5 Conservation Principles goes on to state that:

4.1 Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change.

4.2 Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

4.3 Conservation is achieved by all concerned with a significant place sharing an understanding of its significance, and using that understanding to:

judge how its heritage values are vulnerable to change take the actions and impose the constraints necessary to sustain, reveal and reinforce those values
mediate between conservation options, if action to sustain one heritage value could conflict with action to sustain another ensure that the place retains its authenticity – those attributes and elements which most truthfully reflect and embody the heritage values attached to it.

4.4 Action taken to counter harmful effects of natural change, or to minimise the risk of disaster, should be timely, proportionate to the severity and likelihood of identified consequences, and sustainable.

4.5 Intervention may be justified if it increases understanding of the past, reveals or reinforces particular heritage values of a place, or is necessary to sustain those values for present and future generations, so long as any resulting harm is decisively outweighed by the benefits.

4.6 New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued both now and in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but should respect the significance of a place in its setting.

5.1.6 In Historic England's Informed Conservation, Kate Clark advises that:

Significance lies at the heart of every conservation action, which for the historic environment means the recognition of a public value in what may well be private property. Historic buildings and their landscapes are significant for many different cultural reasons: for their architecture, for their archaeological significance, for their aesthetic qualities, for their association with people and memories, beliefs and events or simply because they are old. They can tell us about technology, innovation, conflicts and triumphs. Their interest may lie in the materials used or in the decorative finishes, in the grouping of landscape, building and place. That significance may be personal, local, regional, national or international; it may be academic, economic or social.

5.1.7 Important considerations in assessing significance are authenticity and integrity. These are defined as:

Authenticity is a measure of truthfulness. Understanding of the concept of authenticity is guided by ICOMOS's Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) . Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of cultural heritage and its attributes.

5.1.8 Historic England has recently issued an advice note Statements of Heritage Significance (October 2019) which explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal. This Heritage Statement incorporates the advice in the advice note.

The advice note recommends:

For each heritage asset, describe the various interests:

Archaeological interest - There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest - These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic Interest - An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Having described the various interests, assess the level of the general significance of the heritage asset and the particular contribution to that significance of any features which would be affected by the proposal, or of its setting if it, too, is affected by the proposal.

Again in the development of proposals and during works, more information may become available which increases the understanding of the heritage asset, and of its significance. The opportunity may usefully be taken to re-appraise significance in such cases.

The applicant can assist the LPA's decision-making by setting out a clear and succinct explanation of the impact of the proposal on significance and how negative impact on significance has been avoided, by continuing to follow the staged approach, as shown below.

5.2 Levels of Significance

5.2.1 There is no definitive grading system or methodology for assessing the levels of significance or values of heritage assets but the most reliable methodologies have clearly defined criteria for grading, based upon the designations and other values of the heritage assets.

5.2.2 This report uses the levels of significance and their criteria which are recommended in Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2 (Cultural Heritage) of Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges 22016 (DMRB). Although the DMRB has been withdrawn by the government, the levels of significance and their criteria remain valid. The DMRB recommends that heritage assets should be assessed into one of five categories, based upon specified criteria. The categories are:

- Very High;
- High;
- Medium;
- Low;
- Negligible.

Using the criteria in the DMRB, 69a Church Street has negligible Heritage Significance.

5.3 Statement of Significance of 69a Church Street

69a Church Street is not listed but does fall within the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area.

69a Church Street is constructed of local stone which can still be seen in outcrops around the site, and so it appears rooted in its locality. It thus has some local distinctiveness within the Littleborough area.

The building is not being altered, and there are no notable heritage features internally. The property has a mid /late 20th century look and feel. Internally they are of a modern feel with modern construction details.

Neighbouring dwellings have been modernised over the years with changes to roof coverings, windows, doors and rainwater goods.

The site has no known archaeological interest. 65 Church Street has a negligible Level of Heritage Significance

6. Relevant Heritage Policies and Guidance

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

6.1.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

6.1.2 Three over-arching objectives of the planning system for achieving sustainable development set out at Para 8, are:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.1.3 In Section 1. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places it states:

131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

6.1.4 In Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment it states:

195. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of

Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

205. 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

206. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional.

208. Where a development proposal will lead to 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

6.1.5 The NPPF defines "Designated Heritage Assets":

A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

It defines "Setting of a heritage asset":

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

It defines "Significance (for heritage policy)":

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 Historic England Advice

6.3.1 Historic England is the national advisory body for issues affecting the historic environment. It issues much guidance to assist local planning authorities in making decisions at a local level. The most relevant are:

6.3.2 Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment The generic over-arching guidance document is its Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (2008). It states:

4.1 Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change.

4.2 Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

138. New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;
- d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

143. There are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in new work, although a clear and coherent relationship of all the parts to the whole, as well as to the setting into which the new work is introduced, is essential. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values established through an assessment of the significance of the place.

144. Quality is enduring, even though taste and fashion may change. The eye appreciates the aesthetic qualities of a place such as its scale, composition, silhouette, and proportions, and tells us whether the intervention fits comfortably in its context. Achieving quality always depends on the skill of the designer. The choice of appropriate materials, and the craftsmanship applied to their use, is particularly crucial to both durability and to maintaining the specific character of places.

6.3.4 Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets

Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets recommends a staged approach would usually embrace the following stages, informed by the scope of the proposal:

1. Understand the form, materials and history of the affected heritage asset(s), and/ or the nature and extent of archaeological deposits
2. Understand the significance of the asset(s)
These two stages fulfil the requirement in paragraph 189 of the NPPF and are undertaken by the applicant.
3. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
This stage fulfils the requirement in paragraph 190 of the NPPF and is undertaken by the LPA. However, the applicant needs to be aware of impacts so that the analysis of significance submitted to the LPA, under paragraph 189, is sufficient in its level of detail
4. Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
5. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance

6.3.5 Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning:

Historic England's Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: states:

Development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect. The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest.

6.3.6 Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2

This advice note begins:

1. The purpose of this Historic England Advice note is to provide information on repair, restoration, addition and alteration works to heritage assets to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment legislation, the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In addition to these documents, this advice should be read in conjunction with the relevant Good Practice Advice and Historic England advice notes. Alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation and national policy objectives.

Conclusion

The proposed refurbishment works will bring the building into useful life and give it a new economical input into the local community. It brings in policies of the NPPF of economic value, in that the building would contribute towards the housing supply in the Borough.

The refurbishments are proposed to be in keeping with the area with minimal alterations. With the properties not being listed and the heritage impact being low / negligible significance, we feel the benefits for the Borough in contributing towards the housing supply, the works far out way any impact to the conservation area.