

PROPOSED WORKS AT PARTNERSHIP HOUSE

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
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SEPTEMBER 2022

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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as 'scholarship as its best' by *Country Life* (June 2003), and 'well analysed and presented' in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 Buildings of England volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

Date of issue: September 2022

Status: final version for planning submission

Text: Garry Miller

Photographic survey: Peter Miller

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at Partnership House, Sparrow Hill, Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property was built in the 1720s as the vicarage to the adjacent St Chad's Church, becoming Rochdale Museum in the late 20th century and latterly offices. It is now vacant. Partnership House is listed at Grade II and stands within Rochdale Conservation Area, while St Chad's is also listed at Grade II*. Broadfield Park, a Grade II registered park and garden, lies opposite the listed building.

An application has been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for internal and external works associated with the conversion of the building to seven self-contained offices. Owing to the nature of the proposal, the principal heritage issue arising is its impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed building. Proposed minor works in the grounds also raise the secondary matter of impact upon its setting. The scope and purpose of this assessment is to identify this significance and to evaluate how it will be affected by the proposal.

The listed building has developed in several phases:

- The main house of circa 1724
- A single-bay, two-storey addition on its west side, probably early 19th century
- A single-storey late 19th century wing to the east
- A two-storey probably 1950s wing on the west side

The Grade II designation of the application building denotes it is of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. Its significance essentially derives from this intrinsic special interest, and can be summarised as follows:

- Its architectural and historic interest as a fine early 18th century vicarage in Classical style, with 19th century additions and alterations
- Its advanced design, with symmetrical facade, classical detailing and centralised plan, all supposedly modelled on the London house of Samuel Dunster, vicar from 1722 and for whom it was built
- The role it played in the spread of this innovative style of architecture in Lancashire at the time
- Its group value and setting in relation to the Grade II* church of St Chad

This significance resides principally in the main 18th and early 19th century elements of the building, as they contain its principal interest and the features from which this is derived. The late 19th century east wing and the 1950s west wing are of later date and are therefore secondary. Their significance derives primarily from their external envelope as the interiors are of little interest.

The scheme as proposed will put the listed building to sustainable use and secure its future. The works are intended to undertake a general refurbishment of the exterior, involving repair/replacement of windows and the roof along with cleaning of the brickwork, while internally they primarily affect low-significance, modern elements and not those of historic importance. The original room layout of the building will remain intact and legible.

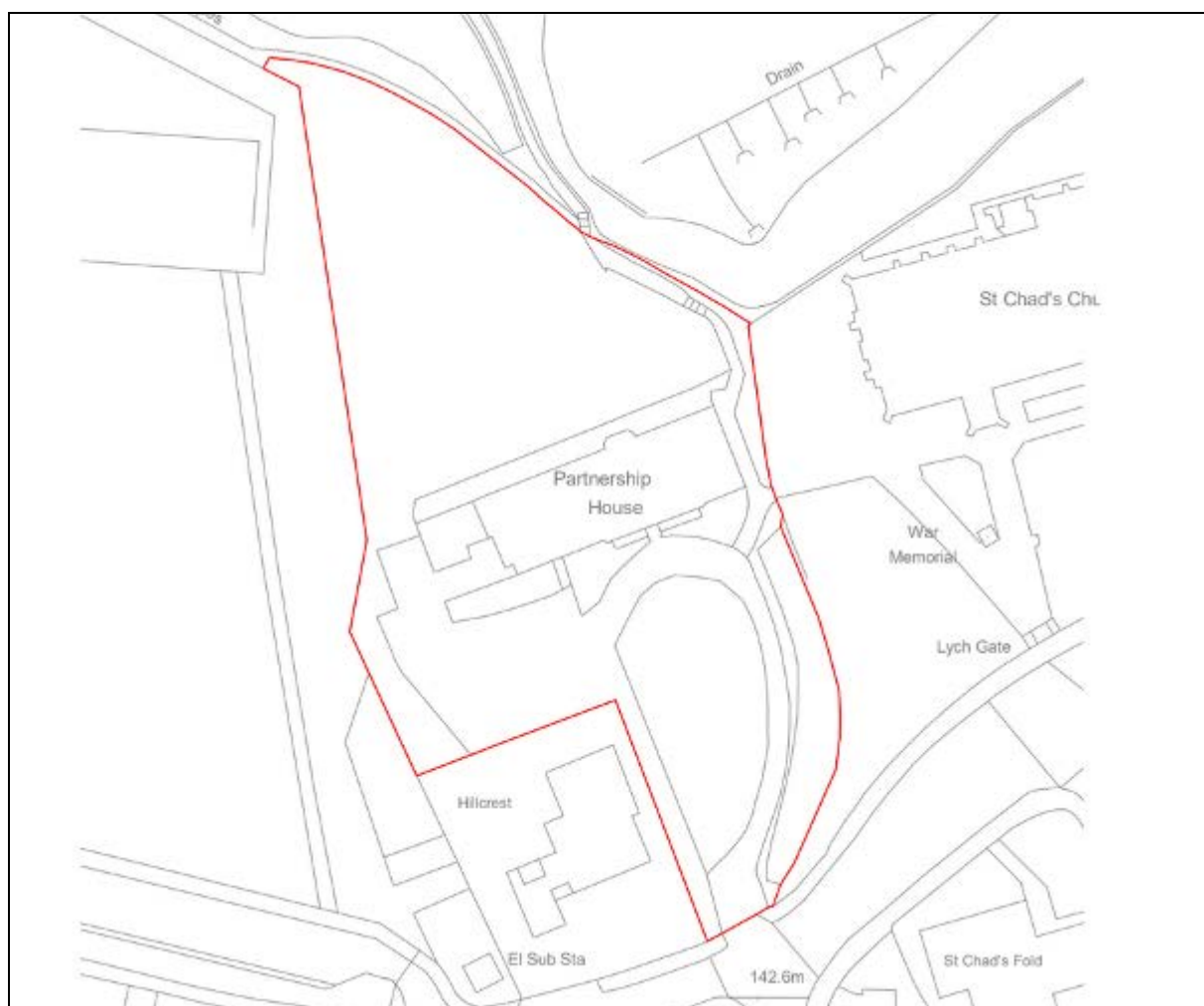
In the grounds, two limited areas of tarmac hard standing are proposed for car parking. The effect is not considered adverse as large car tarmac parking areas, along with an access drive, already form part of its setting and hence there will be no material change to these surroundings. At the rear, steel security railings of 600mm height are proposed upon an existing boundary wall. These are not considered detrimental to either the wall or the setting of the listed building.

In conclusion, the external works will enhance the appearance and significance of the listed building, while the internal works, and those in the grounds, will have no adverse effect. The proposal is thus entirely in accordance with national guidance and local development plan policy, and therefore merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

2.1 Location

The application building is Partnership House, Sparrow Hill, in the town centre of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is a dignified early Classical house built in the 1720s as the vicarage of the adjacent St Chad's Church and later extended. It became Rochdale Museum in the late 20th century and was latterly used as offices. It is now vacant. Partnership House stands immediately west of St Chad's where it is set back from Sparrow Hill (originally Vicarage Road) behind a long lawned garden with driveway and parking area. The rear overlooks the steep descent of the valley of the River Roch, with the town hall and town centre below.



Map 1. Location of the application property



1. The fine early Classical front elevation of the listed building



2. View from the rear



3. The property was built as the vicarage of St Chad's



4. Public view of the vicarage and St Chad's from Sparrow Hill

2.2 Elements of the building

The listed building has developed in several phases:

- The main house of circa 1724
- A single-bay, two-storey addition of its west side, early 19th century
- A single-storey late 19th century wing on the east side
- A two-storey probably 1950s wing on the west side

The various elements are shown below.

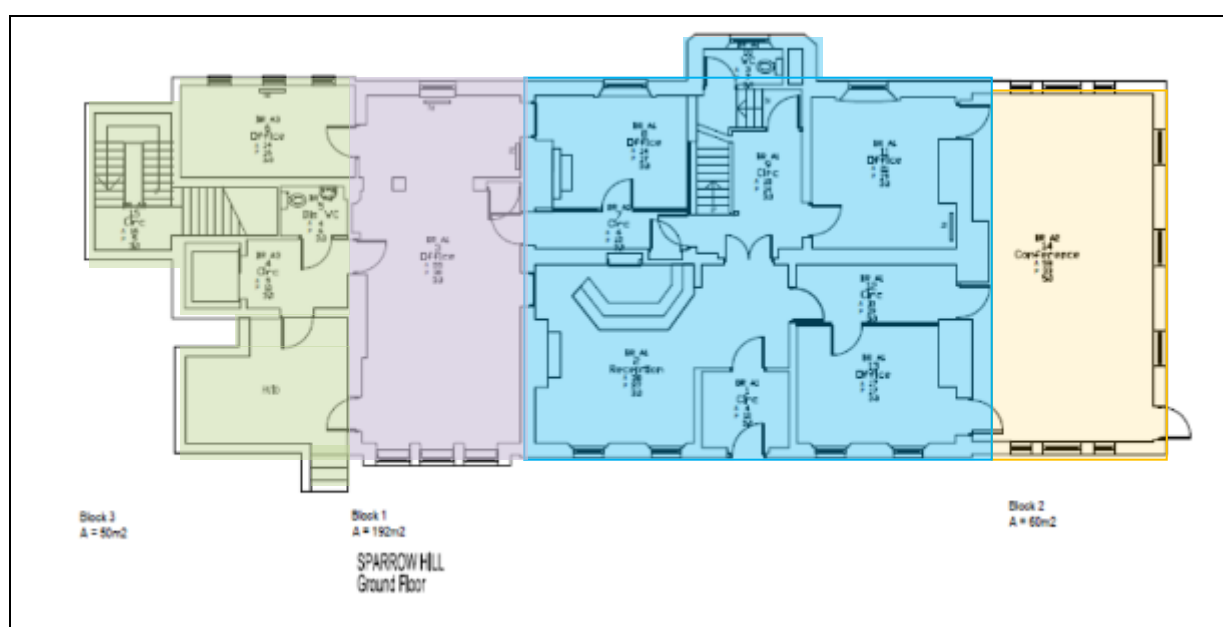
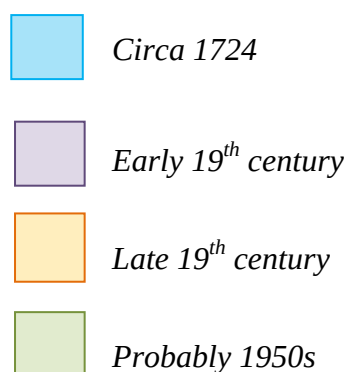


Figure 1. Elements of the building



3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Designations

The application property is listed at Grade II, having been first designated in 1951. It is identified in the list description, compiled in 1984, as *Rochdale Museum, The Old Vicarage, Sparrow Hill*. Partnership House also stands within Rochdale Conservation Area, while St Chad's is also listed at Grade II*. Broadfield Park, a Grade II registered park and garden, lies opposite the listed building.

3.2 The proposal

An application has been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for internal and external works associated with the conversion of the listed building to seven self-contained offices.

3.3 Heritage impact

Owing to the nature of the proposal, the principal heritage issue arising is its impact upon the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed building. Proposed minor works in the grounds also raise the secondary matter of impact upon its setting.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, July 2021) states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the listed building and to evaluate how this will be affected by the proposal. It is considered its level of detail is proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal, in accordance with paragraph 194. This report should be read in conjunction with other documents submitted in support of the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A description of the historical background relating to the listed building (Section 4) and of the property itself (Section 5)
2. A summary of its heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A summary of the relevant heritage planning policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 7)
4. Analysis within this context of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the listed building (Section 8).

4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

St Chad's was historically a large and important parish: the site has Saxon origins and the present building dates in its oldest parts from the 13th century. The vicarage dates from around 1724, and was commissioned by Samuel Dunster (1675–1754), a classical scholar and author who was vicar of St Chad's from 1722 until his death. It is said to have been modelled upon Dunster's house in Marlborough Street in London, hence its advanced appearance at a time when centralised plans and symmetrical facades were still a relative novelty in Lancashire. The house appears to have been extended westwards at an early date, as staggered projections are shown upon the OS map of the mid-1840s (Map 2, below). At that time the building stood at the centre of extensive gardens with a wide carriage drive to the front and a long outbuilding (possibly stables and a coach house) to the west. The westwards extensions had gone, along with the outbuilding, by the 1890s (Map 3), but by 1908 (Map 4) further piecemeal extensions had been built. These were replaced by the present west wing in the 1950s.



Map 2. The 1844-1848 six-inch OS map depicts the buildings within extensive gardens



Map 3. The 1890-1891 25-inch edition shows the buildings on the west side had now gone



Map 4. Piecemeal additions to the west are recorded by the edition of 1908

5: THE LISTED BUILDING

5.1 Overview

Large early Classical vicarage of circa 1724, with extensions and alterations of the early and late 19th century and the mid and later 20th century.

5.2 Description

The National Heritage List for England description, compiled in 1984 during the resurvey of that decade, does not fully identify the various elements of the building:

Vicarage, now museum. c.1724 and c.1820. Brick with stone basement, stone features, C20 tile and stone slate roofs. Double depth with central staircase plan with later additions to left and right. Two storeys with attic and two basement storeys. Five bays with two bay addition to left and gabled single storey addition to right. Windows are eight-pane sashes with flat gauged brick arches, stone sills and keystones. Square bay window to left addition. Six-panel fielded door, overlight and segmental hood with carved shell and cherub, on enriched console brackets. Wood modillion eaves cornice continues round left addition and over central gable. Stone quoins.

Rear facade c.1820, re-used stone mullioned windows and door surround. Projecting stair bay. Good panelling to most rooms. Entrance hall connects with stair by segmental arch with panelled pilasters, keystone and soffit. Original staircase with open string, column-on-vase balusters and deep handrail.

Said to be built for Samuel Dunster D.D. (Faculty applied for 1724) who "adopted the plan of his house in Marlborough Street, London," William Robertson 1889 The social and political history of Rochdale, being a companion volume to 'Old and new Rochdale and its people' and 'Rochdale past and present' Rochdale: the author

5.3 Further analysis: main building

- a. **Exterior.** With its symmetrical façade and centralised plan, the house would have been, when first built, among the most advanced of its type in Lancashire, where Classical principles were slow to replace the medieval building tradition. The

appearance of its front has been subject to 20th century intervention however. The door canopy is probably early 20th century, and partly obscures a cartouche over the original lintel. The framing of the windows, which are all narrow-proportioned, near-flush sashes with the exception of a small squat sash in the attic gable, may be mid-20th century as they are of a type found also on the east wing and the 1950s west wing. Their appearance on the latter suggests all the façade windows were renewed at this date, although they may have copied the framing pattern that previously existed. The rear has a quite different appearance. The basement is in stone and has Tudor Gothic mullioned windows (probably mid-19th century) either side of the stair tower. The latter appears to have been rebuilt (probably mid-later 19th century) and has a tall stairlight, with some of its panes boarded. The ground and first floor meanwhile have 12-pane sash windows of likely early 19th century date, suggesting they were renewed when the extension of this date was added (see 5.4 below).

b. Interior. The property has undergone a notable degree of alteration in connection with its use as offices. The original centralised double-depth room plan however remains legible, with central entrance hall and stair lobby beyond, principal rooms to the front and smaller former service rooms behind. The principal surviving features include:

- The staircase, with moulded handrail and turned balusters, which is typical of the early 18th century. The stairwell dado panelling however does not appear original
- Boxed beams in the front left principal room and some other rooms
- An Adam-style fireplace, probably early 19th century, in the latter room
- Panelling in the same room, now painted; probably early 20th century
- Panelling and a fireplace, probably also early 20th century, in the rear room behind the latter. (This room has been subdivided by a modern glass partition to create a corridor; a corridor has also been created in the rear right front room)
- Paired early 19th century doors with blocked fanlights on the first floor, linked by a plaster frieze, now leading to toilets. These have clearly been repositioned and were probably bedroom doors on the stair landing prior to 20th century internal alteration
- Late 18th/early 19th century hob grate in front right-side bedroom
- Early 19th century hob grate in same room
- Panelled window surround and boxed beams in bedroom to rear of latter
- Some exposed purlins on the second (attic) floor

The principal internal interest is on the ground and first floors. The attic floors and basement are of notably less interest, the latter much subdivided in the 20th century and devoid of any features of note.



5. The fine Classical front of the main building



6. The door canopy is however early 20th century



7. Window framing is probably mid-20th century



8. Rear has stone basement with 19th century Tudor Gothic windows



9. Stair tower appears rebuilt probably in the mid-later 19th century



10. Adam-style fireplace in left front room, early 19th century



11. Panelling and fireplace in rear right room, early 20th century



12. Staircase and arched door from entrance hall



13. Relocated panelled doors and frieze on first floor



14. Late 18th/early 19th century hob grate in first floor right front room

5.4 Early 19th century extension

- a. **Exterior.** The front elevation matches the appearance of the main building, with its cornice, quoins and narrow sash windows with keystone lintels. However the rear elevation is more typical of its date, with 12-pane sashes on the first and second floor and casement windows to the basement (which is in brick, not stone). The appearance of the front elevation therefore may date from a later remodelling.
- b. **Interior.** Each floor (except for the basement and attic) has a single-opened up space; the original plan would have been a larger room to the front and smaller room to the rear. Features are few: panelling and shutters to the front bay window and some eight-panel doors of the early 20th century.



15. The matching appearance of the addition may be the result of later remodelling



16. The rear is more typically early 19th century, with 12-pane sashes



17. Panelled surrounds to the windows in the front bay



18. Looking to rear of ground floor, showing where the room has been opened up

5.5 The late 19th century east wing

A low single-storey gabled wing in Flemish bond brickwork, the front elevation with narrow sash windows with keystone lintels matching the rest of the building along with a circular gable window. The rear has a stone basement and brick above, with a trio of small-pane sash windows on the ground floor, circular gable window and three low sash windows to the basement. Internally, it contains a single room on each floor with no features of interest.



19. Front elevation of the late 19th century wing



20. Ground floor, looking to rear

5.6 1950s west wing

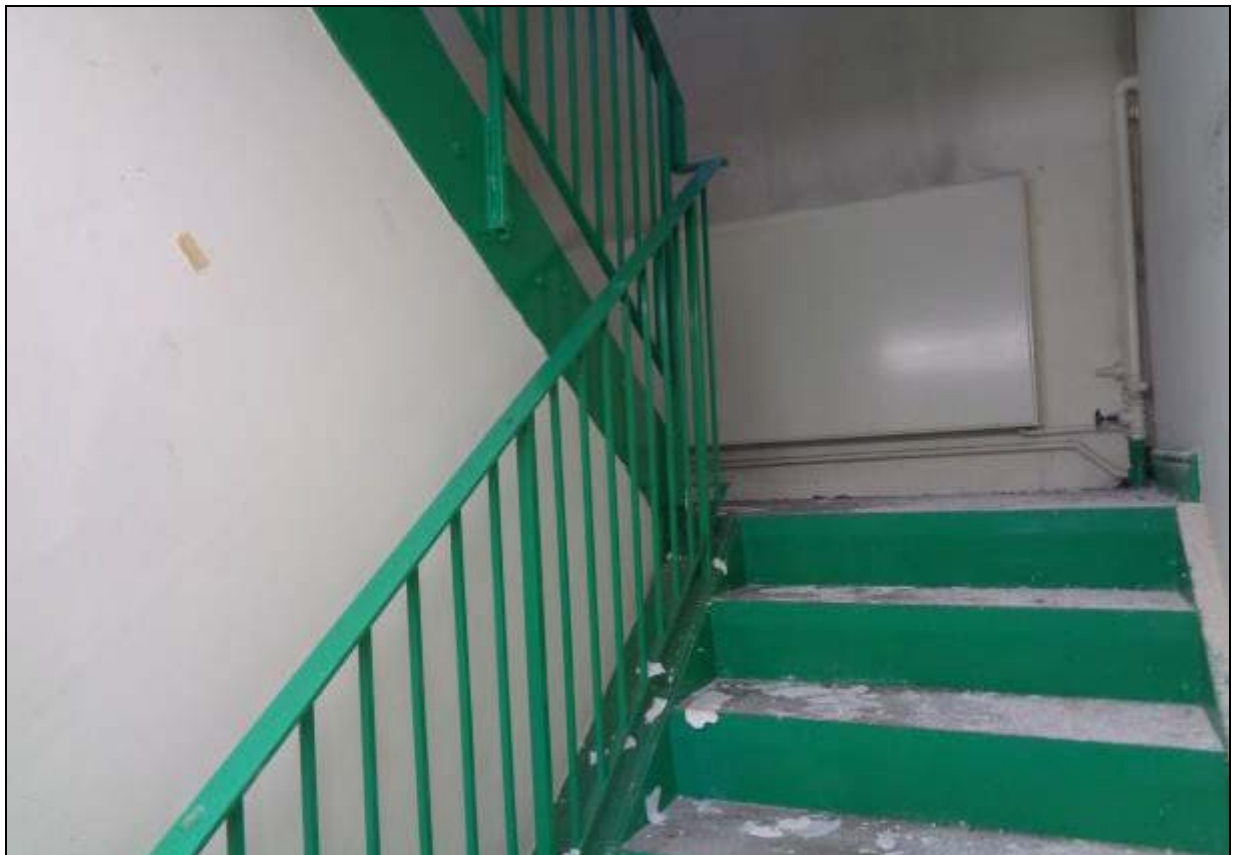
A narrow two-storey gabled wing and attached lower block containing stair and lift, designed in a similar manner to the main building but of more spartan appearance. Its front elevation has narrow sashes and keystone lintels of similar pattern to the main building and a circular window in the gable. The brickwork is all stretcher bond. Internally, there are no features of note: the staircase is metal, functional and typical of its date.



21. Front elevation of the 1950s wing



22. Side elevation of the wing



23. The staircase

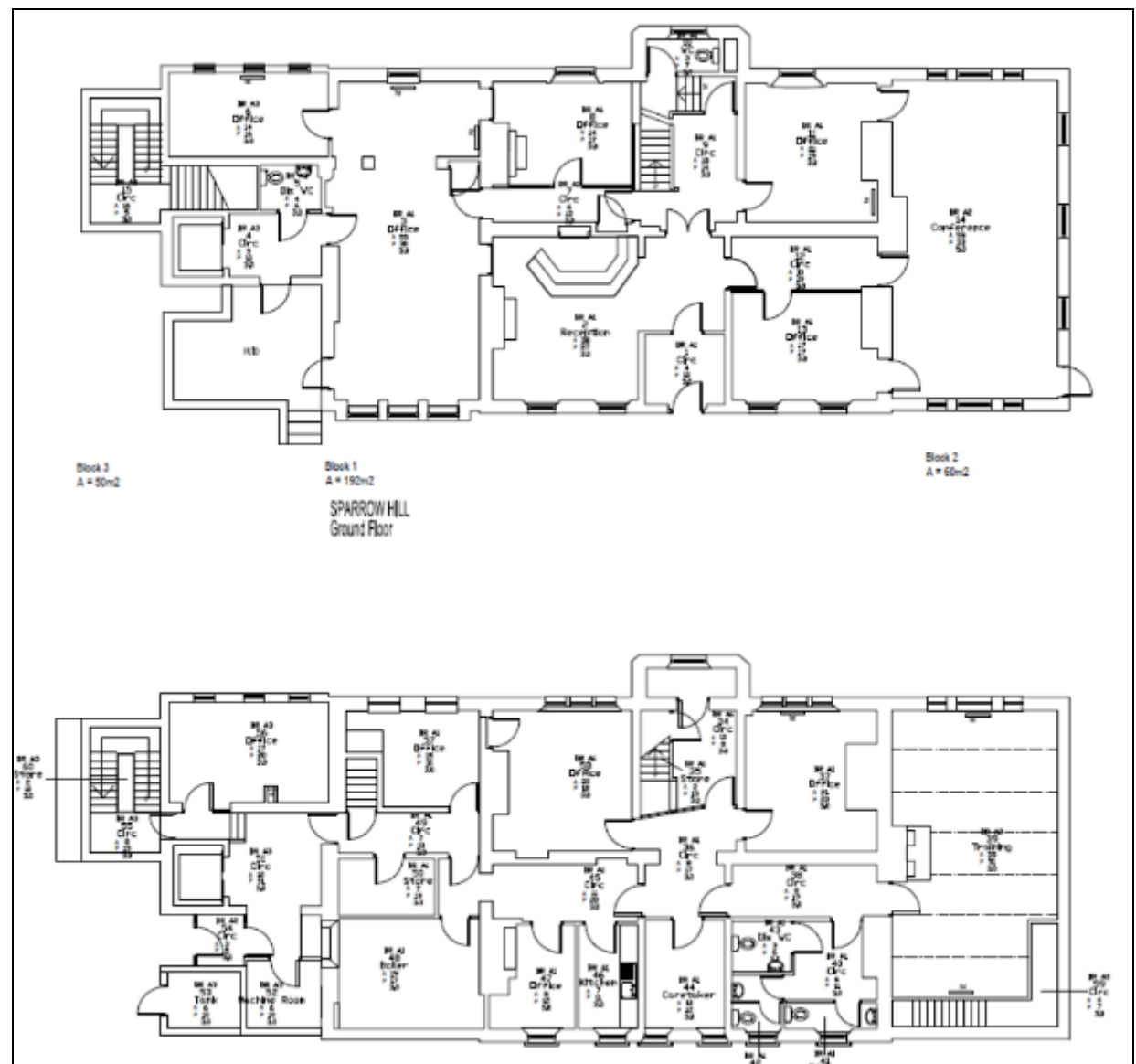


Figure 2. Ground floor (top) and basement layouts

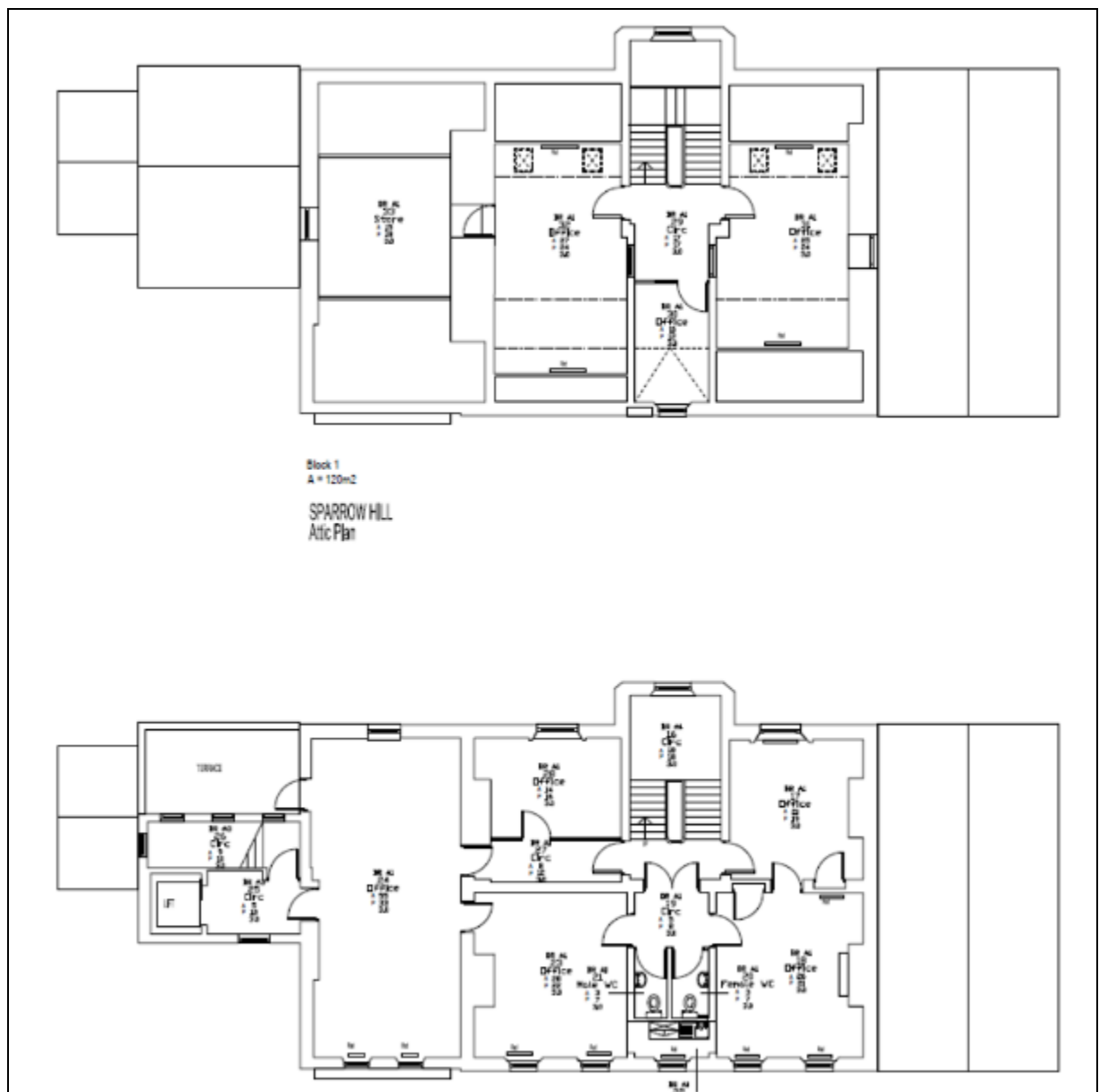


Figure 3. First floor (below) and attic layouts

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDING

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

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.

6.2 Summary

The Grade II designation of the application building denotes it is of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. Its significance essentially derives from this intrinsic special interest, and can be summarised as follows:

- Its architectural and historic interest as a fine vicarage of around 1724 in early Classical style, with subsequent 19th century additions and alterations
- Its advanced design, with symmetrical facade, classical detailing and centralised layout, all supposedly modelled on the London house of Samuel Dunster, vicar from 1722
- The role it played in the spread of this innovative style of architecture in Lancashire at the time
- Its group value and setting in relation to the Grade II* church of St Chad

This significance is contained in the main 18th and early 19th century elements of the building as they embody its principal interest and the features from which this is derived. The late 19th century east wing and the 1950s west wing are of later date and are therefore secondary. Their significance derives primarily from their external envelope as the interiors are of little interest.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

7.2 Relevant policies

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duties are to be put into practice. Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be.

The relevant local planning policy relating to the present application is Policy P2 (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) of the Rochdale Core Strategy, which was formally adopted on October 19, 2016. Part 2a states that key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, will be conserved, enhanced and promoted, including consideration of their wider settings.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The proposal seeks consent for works associated with the conversion of the listed building to seven self-contained offices, and are fully described on the submitted drawings. The proposal will thereby put the listed building to sustainable use. The works are intended to undertake a general refurbishment of the exterior, while internally they primarily affect low-significance, modern elements and not those of historic importance. The original room layout of the building will remain intact and legible.



Figure 4. Proposed floor plans, showing individual office spaces

8.2 External works

- a. **Cleaning of brickwork.** This is to be undertaken using the DOFF system, and will result in an enhancement to the appearance of the listed building.
- b. **Works to windows.** A condition survey is to be carried out and each window repaired/replaced on a like-for-like basis as necessary. These works will again enhance the appearance and significance of the listed building.
- c. **Repairs to roof.** The existing modern tiles will be repaired/replaced as necessary, as will the flashings (in lead or zinc). The eaves cornice will be painted and repaired where needed. These works will also enhance the listed building.

8.3 Internal works

- a. **Ground floor.** The existing modern glazed partitions in the front right and rear left rooms will be removed, thus restoring them to their original extent and thereby enhancing the significance of the listed building. Modern stud partitions on the staircase will also be removed, which also represents an enhancement. The doorway from the entrance hall to the right rear room will be fastened shut but remain intact; no harm will result. The existing lift in the 1950s west wing is to be removed and the space converted to a WC, which will have no adverse effect; this work is to be replicated on the floors above. Kitchen units are to be installed (and also on the other floors) in a manner which will involve negligible effect upon the building's historic fabric.
- b. **First floor.** The existing doorway out of the first floor left front room to the early 19th century extension will be fastened shut but remain intact. The effect will not be adverse.
- c. **Second floor.** A shower room will be created and kitchen units installed, without detriment to the fabric of the listed building.
- d. **Basement.** Modern partitions are to be removed, with no harmful effect. Advice is being taken from a structural engineer on a number of proposed wider openings in the existing walls. Where this occurs, substantial nibs will remain to allow the original layout to remain legible.

8.4 Works in grounds

Two limited areas of tarmac hard standing are proposed to the front of the listed building to accommodate car parking. The effect is not considered adverse as large car tarmac parking areas, along with the access drive, already form part of its setting and hence there will be no material change to these surroundings. At the rear, steel security railings of 600mm height are proposed upon the existing boundary wall. While the wall may be considered to form part of the listed building's curtilage (and therefore become listed itself, by association), the works in themselves are not considered detrimental to either the wall or the setting of the listed building.



24. Boundary wall where security railings are proposed

8.5 Conclusion

The scheme will put the listed building to sustainable use and thereby secure its future. The external works will enhance its appearance and significance, while the internal works, and those to its grounds, will have no adverse effect. The proposal is thus entirely in accordance with national guidance contained in paragraphs 197 and 199 of the NPPF, along with local plan policy P2, and hence merits approval without delay.