



Heritage Impact Assessment

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Project: Two new dormers to the front elevation, new entrance porch with internal alterations to the first floor to create two additional bedrooms at 65 Commercial Road, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, HD8 9DX

1. Introduction and Context

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared to support a planning application for first-floor alterations to an existing dwelling located within Skelmanthorpe's Conservation Area. The proposed works comprise the introduction of two new front-facing dormers and a new entrance porch. The objective of the development is to provide sufficient headroom within the reduced roof space, accommodating two additional bedrooms to make the building more viable and appropriate as a family home. This project will facilitate the long-term restoration and conservation of the building.

2. Site Context and Heritage Setting

The host dwelling sits within a Conservation Area but possesses a distinct, somewhat isolated relationship with the immediate street scene.

- **Street Scene Alterations:** The historic setting of this specific part of the Conservation Area has been diluted by commercial interventions. The dwelling stands adjacent to a convenience store featuring illuminated signage. Other nearby commercial properties have introduced modern signage and, in some instances, postal drop boxes, altering the traditional character of the immediate surroundings.
- **Recent Precedents:** On the opposite side of the road, planning permission was recently granted for the demolition of The Chartist public house to make way for new residential dwellings. The Chartist was considered a non-designated heritage asset and a key building within the Conservation Area. The local authority concluded that its demolition would result in less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset, and that the public benefit of providing residential development outweighed this harm.

- Green Buffer: The property is set back considerably from the main road and benefits from a green buffer to the front, which effectively screens and hides the dwelling from public vantage points.

3. Impact Assessment

The proposed scheme has been thoughtfully designed to ensure the alterations remain subservient and sympathetic to the host dwelling and the wider Conservation Area. The works include:

- Front-Facing Dormers: Two new dormers will be introduced to the front elevation.
- Proportional Sizing: The dormers are scaled to be proportionate to the host dwelling, avoiding an overbearing roofscape.
- Architectural Alignment: The dormers will be set out to perfectly match the geometry and vertical alignment of the existing ground-floor windows.
- Traditional Materials: The additions will feature pitched roofs to match the existing dwelling and will utilise traditional lead flashing to the cheeks, ensuring material continuity.
- Entrance Porch: A new entrance porch will be constructed on the ground floor, architecturally detailed to complement the aesthetic of the new dormers.

4. Assessment of Heritage Impact

The primary objective of the proposal is the restoration and conservation of the building by converting it into a viable family home, which aligns directly with the aims of NPPF Paragraph 210 regarding putting heritage assets to viable uses.

Visual Impact and Design The introduction of the dormers and porch complies with Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP24. By utilising pitched roofs and traditional lead flashing, the materials are in keeping with the existing building. Furthermore, aligning the dormers with the ground-floor window geometry ensures the extensions remain visually harmonious and subservient to the original building. The green buffer to the front of the site effectively conceals the dwelling, meaning the visual impact on the wider Conservation Area is negligible.

Contextual Harm Policy LP35 requires developments to preserve or enhance the significance of designated heritage assets. In assessing the potential harm, the immediate context must be considered. The historic setting is already heavily compromised by modern commercial signage, illuminated displays, and postal boxes.

When compared to the recent approval for the total demolition of The Chartist public house opposite the site an intervention that resulted in the complete loss of a non-designated heritage asset the proposed works to this dwelling are exceptionally minor. If the total demolition of a prominent historic building was deemed to cause "less than substantial harm" that was outweighed by the public benefit of residential use, the sympathetic, proportionate addition of traditional dormers and a porch to a hidden dwelling must be considered to preserve the character of the Conservation Area.

5. Conclusion

The proposed alterations represent a high-quality, sustainable design approach that secures a viable long-term use for the building as a family home. The use of traditional materials, proportional scaling, and geometric alignment ensures compliance with Kirklees Local Plan Policies LP24 and LP35. Given the existing green buffer and the heavily altered commercial context of the immediate street scene, the proposal will not result in harm to the Conservation Area and should be supported.

