

Heritage Statement



Proposed Development

Development comprising change of use and alterations to former Prescott Police Station to create 8 no. apartments, together demolition of outbuildings and erection of 6 no. town houses and associated external works

Applicant:

Prima Group

Application Site:

Former Prescott Police Station
12, Derby Street, Prescott, L34 3LG



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1.0 Introduction and Background Information

- 1.1 This report provides the Heritage Statement, including Statement of Significance in relation to an application for planning permission submitted on behalf of the applicant, *Prima Group*.
- 1.2 Prima Group works across a number of initiatives delivering affordable housing and housing of choice, and this has resulted in recent developments delivered by the applicant within Knowsley. The Group has delivered 11 new build houses at Roughwood Drive in Kirkby (completed 2021) and recently started on site delivering a new development of 21 apartments in two blocks in Dinas Lane, Huyton.
- 1.3 Prima Group acquired the application site last year from the Merseyside Police Estates Service. The former Prescot Police Station building has been vacant for 4 years following the relocation of Prescot Police Station to a new site, shared with the Fire Service on a site in Cables Way within Prescot.
- 1.4 The current planning application relates to the conversion of the former Prescot Police Station building, together with alterations, and demolition of outbuildings to create 8 no. apartments.
- 1.5 Additionally, the proposals seek to make effective use of the land to the rear of the Police Station building with the erection of 6 no. townhouses, with associated gardens and external works.
- 1.6 The proposals are designed and delivered through the Prima Group as a mix of houses for sale and/or rent and apartments for rent.
- 1.7 The site has a rich history with the erection of the former Police Station building (circa 1870).
- 1.8 The building continues to form an impressive street frontage to the north side of Derby Street, alongside the adjacent building at no. 10 Derby Street, which together they form a small group of unlisted historic buildings that make an imposing statement within the streetscene and contributes positively to the character of the Derby Street section of the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area.

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- 1.9 The site's history is part of an established character that is associated with the former Police Station building within the site, which is of relevance when considering the impact of the proposed development.
- 1.10 The planning application seeks full planning permission and provides the appropriate suite of detailed plans, sections, and further information in respect of the proposals is set out in the applicant's Design & Access Statement.
- 1.11 The application is brought forward following careful consideration of pre-application discussions with the local authority Knowsley Borough Council (KBC) and taking on board planning advice in relation to development within the context of the key planning issues and the requirement to be sensitive to the site's historic relevance.
- 1.12 The application will be considered having regard to the statutory development plan, which comprises the adopted Knowsley Core Strategy and saved policies from the Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, and in relation to policy advice relating to heritage assets set down in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.13 The proposals will be assessed against the impact of the development in relation to the heritage assets, which in this case comprise the designated Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area, in which the application site forms an important unlisted building.
- 1.14 Knowsley Council has confirmed that they consider the Police Station building to be a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.15 In accordance with statutory legislation set under S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and S.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this Heritage Statement considers the proposal having regard to the impact of the development on both designated and non-designated heritage assets and considers to what extent any harm caused by the proposals (if any) may be outweighed by public benefits.

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2.0 **Site Context**

Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The site comprises the principle building of the former Prescott Police Station, built in the 1870's. The Police Station building is a two storey brick building with decorative use of light coloured brick in window heads, stone detail and a slate roof.
- 2.2 The Police Station building had previously contained a court house within the first floor and judge's changing chambers.
- 2.3 A court yard/car park is located to the rear of the site; in this area there are a group of outbuildings that remain. Some are part of the original construction (two-storey dual pitched roof outbuilding to the rear of the Police Station building), whilst others appear to have been added as the Police Station evolved over the years.
- 2.4 Outbuildings appear to have been used for stables, storage and staff quarters.
- 2.5 The main Police Station building has a main entrance from Derby Street with concrete ramp and separate side entrance for public access to the former court rooms.
- 2.6 The site is currently vacant since 2018, when the Prescott police Station moved to new building shared with the Fire Service.
- 2.7 The site is located on the north side of Derby Street close to the main shops and services within Prescott town centre. Public transport is available along Derby Street connecting the site to beyond Prescott to Liverpool and St Helens.
- 2.3 The site is identified as being within the boundary of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.4 94/00627/APP – Construction of access ramp to front of building. Application granted 8th December 1994.

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Development Proposal

- 2.5 The proposal comprises the conversion and alterations of the former Police Station building to create 8 no. apartments, split between 1-bed and 2-bed units. The details of the layout of the proposed conversion scheme show 4 apartments on each of the ground and first floors.
- 2.6 The conversion of the Police Station building will be undertaken with due care and sensitivity to the historic value of the building, with the external elevations of the building retained, repaired (where necessary) and cleaned.
- 2.7 The windows in the building will be replaced with double-glazed conservation type timber sliding sash to meet the energy efficiency and acoustic standards for residential use.
- 2.8 The new timber replacement windows will match existing windows in profile/glazing bar details, all to be approved by the council's conservation officers.
- 2.9 The proposal includes demolition of the majority of the outbuildings to the rear of the main building, save for the retention of the two-storey, dual-pitched roof outbuilding attached to the rear of the Police Station building.
- 2.10 The clearance of the outbuildings and facilitates the opening up of the former courtyard to support the erection of 6 no townhouses, set out in 3 pairs of semi-detached houses. The townhouses will be 3-bed units, each having private amenity space and space for off-street car parking.
- 2.11 The townhouses will be two and half storeys, built of brick with tile roof, with the materials being selected to complement the brick and detailing of the main police building.
- 2.12 Car parking will be provided within the site, 8 spaces dedicated for use by the apartments in the converted Police Station building and each of the townhouses will have 1 car parking space to the side of the house, with room to support 2 cars depending on the size of the vehicles.

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3.0 Relevant Planning Policy

3.1 The development plan for the area consists of the Knowsley Core Strategy (adopted 2016) and saved policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted 2006.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021) is also relevant to the heritage impact assessment.

National Planning Policy Framework – Revised July 2021

3.3 The NPPF provides the key objectives of the planning system to achieve sustainable development – these being the three dimensions of economic, social and environmental roles (*paragraph 8*).

3.4 The NPPF sets down a presumption in favour of sustainable development at *paragraph 11*. This states that development proposals should be granted where they accord with the policies of an up to date local plan.

3.5 Where policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless “*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework.*”

3.6 Paragraph 189 – Heritage 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.

3.7 *Paragraph 194* – states that 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.

3.8 *Paragraph 195* - 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).

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- 3.9 *Paragraph 197* – sets out three tests for determining applications affecting heritage assets, these deal with
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 3.10 *Paragraph 199* - 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.
- 3.11 *Paragraph 202* – provides guidance on developments that cause less than substantial harm affecting the significance of heritage assets. 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.
- 3.12 *Paragraph 203* – the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 3.13 *Paragraph 205* – local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.
- 3.14 *Paragraph 206* – local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

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- 3.15 *Paragraph 207* – not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 3.16 *Paragraph 208* – local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy

- 3.17 The Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (KLPCS), adopted 2016, deals with strategic issues and policies and sets down the housing land requirement and supply considerations, as well as identifying the spatial strategy for the borough.
- 3.18 The KLPCS is part of the statutory development plan in force and accordingly its policies are of significant weight in the planning decision.
- 3.19 Policies of the KLPCS that are relevant to the heritage impact assessment of the proposals are listed below and will be referred to in the assessment set out within Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this Statement.
- CS2 Development Principles
 - CS19 Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
 - CS20 Managing the Boroughs Historic Environment

Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan

- 3.20 The Knowsley UDP is somewhat vintage being adopted in 2006 and prior to the first publication of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, saved policies of the UDP can carry weight in planning decisions depending on their consistency with the Framework.
- 3.21 The key policies of the UDP relevant to the heritage impact assessment of the proposals are as follows:
- DQ5 – Development in Conservation Areas

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Historic Research & Resources

- 3.22 Merseyside Historic Environment Record - Archive: *Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record. 1977-2011. SMR F sheet. 4692-047*
- 3.23 Knowsley Council '*Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area – Character Area Appraisal, 2012*'
- 3.24 Monograph: Davey, P.J.. 1978. *Prescot Action Area: an Archaeological Overview.*

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4.0 Heritage Assessment

- 4.1 In order to assess the heritage significance of the proposed development area, an appropriate desk-based assessment of readily available sources was undertaken, including the Merseyside Historic Environment Record, in order to provide the historical context of the site.
- 4.2 A site visit was also undertaken in order to assess the character, form and setting of the Prescott Police Station building and consider how the proposed development may affect the building, the neighbouring historic building, the setting of the historic buildings and the surrounding area.
- 4.3 The results of the desk-based assessment, historical research and the findings from the site visit have been combined to provide a brief overview of the historical development of the site and a description of the heritage assets which may be impacted by the proposals.
- 4.4 In order to assess the heritage *significance* of the site, guidance provided by Historic England has been followed. Under the values presented within the NPPF this significance can be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. These values are broadly similar to the four principle values described in Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008).
- 4.5 The four principle values which contribute to overall significance are:
- *Evidential Value*: Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
 - *Historical Value*: Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present;
 - *Aesthetic Value*: Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
 - *Communal Value*: Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or from whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects.

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- 4.6 The heritage *significance* of the site is discussed detail in Section 5, with an assessment of the possible impacts on heritage significance by the proposed development provided in Section 6 of this Statement.

Identifying the Heritage Assets

- 4.7 The former Prescott Police Station building is an historic building (built 1870's) and lies within the designated Knowsley Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 4.8 The former polices station building is recorded in the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) ref: MME6356. It was described in 1978 as: "*Police Station. Brick, two storeys. Decorative use of light coloured brick in_window heads. Stone detail, slate roof. Inscription "Police Station" in sandstone*".
- 4.9 The Police Station building is identified as a "*positive unlisted building*" in the designated Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area Map (ref: PTCCA Character Appraisal, dated 2012)
- 4.10 It is agreed with Knowsley's Conservation Officer that the former Prescott Police Station is a '*non-designated heritage asset*.' As such, proposals that affect the building as a non-designated heritage asset shall be considered in line with NPPF policy advice set down in paragraph 203 and relevant polices of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (KLPCS) and saved policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (KRUDP).
- 4.11 The neighbouring office building (no. 8 – 10, Derby Street, HER ref: MME6355) is not part of the development proposals. It appears to have been built at the same time as the former Prescott Police Station building (see regression mapping exercise below and noted as having same references cited in the HER). It is also evidenced that these buildings were the homes of the Prescott Police Station's Sergeant and Deputy Sergeant, and in 1966 became the court house.
- 4.12 The office building at no. 8 – 10 Derby Street is also accepted to be a non-designated heritage asset. However, as this building is adjacent to the proposed development, it is the *setting* of this historic office building that will be considered, in the same way that the proposals will be considered in regard to the impact on the *setting* of the former Prescott Police Station building.

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- 4.13 Knowsley Town Centre Conservation Area (KTCCA) is a *designated heritage asset*. Proposals that affect the character or appearance of the KTCCA shall be considered in line with policy advice set down in paragraphs 199 and 202 of the NPPF.

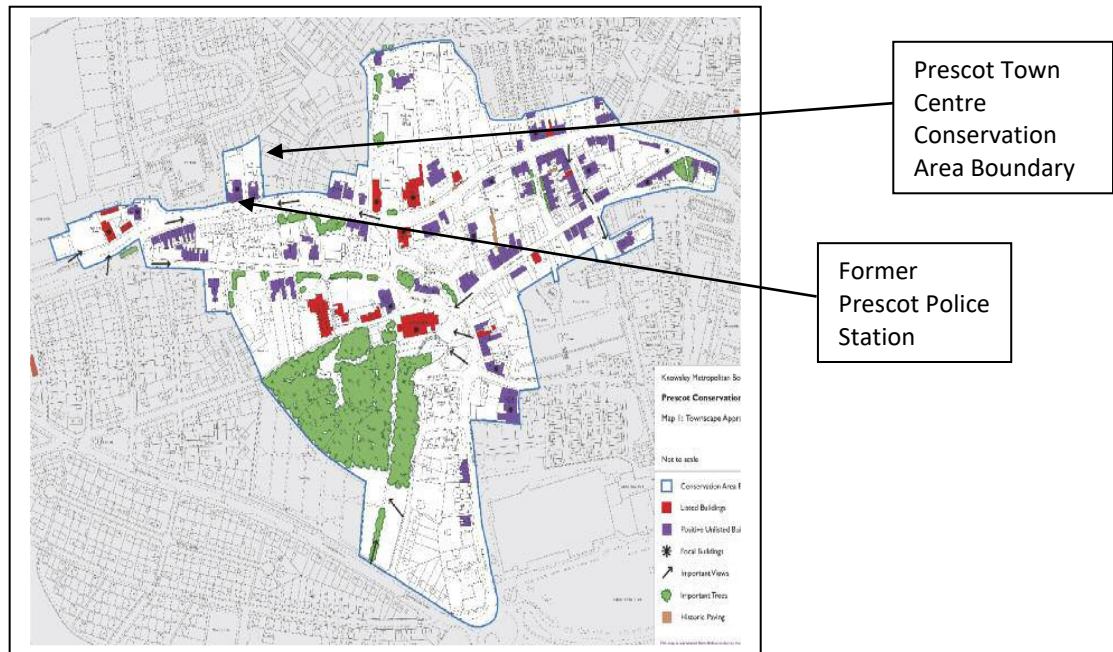


Image 1: Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary
Extract from Knowsley Council, Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, 2012

Understanding the Character of Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area

(Reference: Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

- 4.14 Prescot sits on a south-facing hill overlooking two streams and is dominated by St Mary's Church, listed grade I and the most important historic building in the Conservation Area.
- 4.15 In the eastern half of the Conservation Area, the remains of the medieval street layout, as defined by Eccleston Street and High Street and the narrow alleyways which run between them, are noted to be of special interest (reference: Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal).
- 4.16 To the west, a broad swath of woodland forms the backdrop to the church, with a group of mainly listed Victorian and Georgian buildings close by.

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- 4.17 Derby Street, which leads out from the west of the town centre, contains further important 19th Century buildings including a complex of listed buildings close to the junction with Knowsley Park Lane.
- 4.18 The CAA records that apart from two churches, and one purpose-built 19th Century commercial office, most of the other listed buildings (of which there are 21) are either late 18th or early 19th Century cottages or higher status town houses.
- 4.19 There are also a high number of historic buildings which are considered to make a 'positive' contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area, which include the grouping of the Prescott Police Station building and the adjacent office buildings at no's 8 to 10 Derby Street.
- 4.20 Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area date to the late 18th or the 19th Century and are built from brick or stone which has been rendered and painted. They were largely built as houses although many are now in commercial use, with a variety of shopfronts, most of little merit.
- 4.21 The CAA identifies sub character areas within the PTCCA, of which the 'Derby Street & West Street' area is one of such. It has several *key positive features*:
- Attractive location on west-facing slope, with long views along Derby Street over the roofs of a collection of mainly listed buildings at the junction with Knowsley Park Lane.
 - Derby Street's principal buildings are No. 2 (Tickle Hall Cross Solicitors) at one end of the street and West End House and the adjoining house and stables at the other end - both are listed grade II.
 - The unlisted but 'positive' Police Station and adjoining building (No. 10 Derby Street) are also of note.
 - Long terraces of well detailed mid to late 19th Century houses in both West Street (Nos. 2-12 even) and Derby Street (Nos. 79-97 odd).
- 4.22 The CAA reveals a number of *Key Negative* features, namely:
- Busy traffic along Derby Street, a principal route into Prescott town centre.
 - A large group of terraced houses facing both Derby Street and West Street, probably dating to the early 1970s.

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- A certain amount of 'left-over' space with some tree planting and car parking areas.
- The unlisted but positive buildings need to be protected from unsympathetic alterations, such as the uPVC windows on many of the unlisted but positive houses in Derby Street.

Historical Development of Prescott Police Station Site

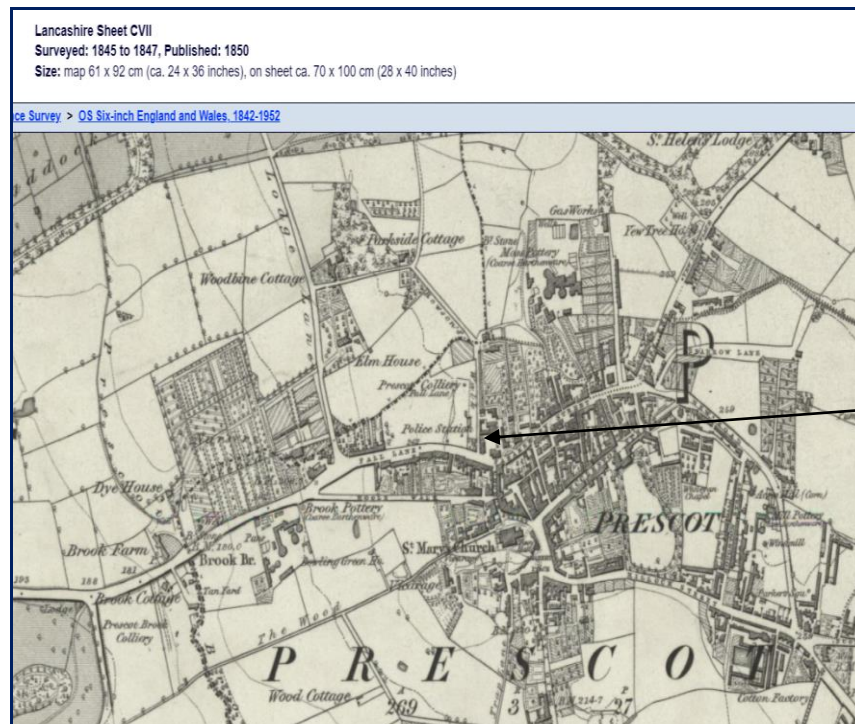


Image 2: Lancashire Sheet CVII, 1845-47 – source: OS six inch 1842-852 (www.maps.nsl.uk)

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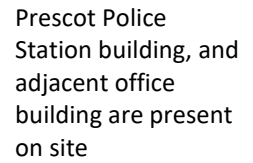


Image 3: source: OS Map six Inch 1890-91- www.maps.nsl.uk

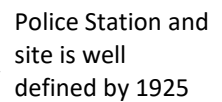


Image 4: source: OS Map six Inch - 1925 souce www.maps.nls.uk

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Historic Images & Archive Material



Image 5 & 6: Knowsley Archive Resource (Arc) – Image 5 shows the original Prescott Police Station by the offices of Cross & Son. The building was later demolished (date unknown). Archive Ref: GB1076.IMPT/1/8/2. Image 6 (to the right) shows Prescott Police Station, date unknown (considered to be pre 1910).

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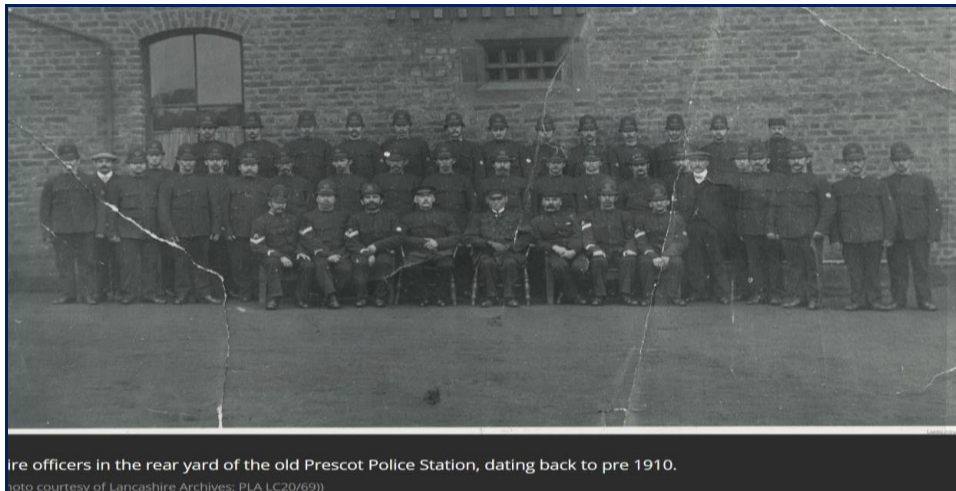
Image 7: Census Record of Prescott (1911) – records Police Sergeant, wife, children and 4 police constables (source: Knowsley Archive Resource)

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Images 8: - Plan of Prescott Police Station, 1869 (source. Courtesy of Lancashire Archives)



ire officers in the rear yard of the old Prescott Police Station, dating back to pre 1910.
(photo courtesy of Lancashire Archives: PLA LC20/69))

Image 9: Lancashire Police Officers in the rear yard of Prescott Police Station, circa 1910
(Source:Courtesy of Lancashire Archives via Liverpool Echo)



ancashire Officers in the rear yard of the old Prescott Police Station, said to be some of the first Lancashire motorcycles and riders. Image
(photo courtesy of Lancashire Archives: PLA LC28/195)

Image 10: Police Officers on motor cycles in the Prescott Police Yard, 1919L source: Photo
courtesy of Lancashire Archives: PLA LC28/195:

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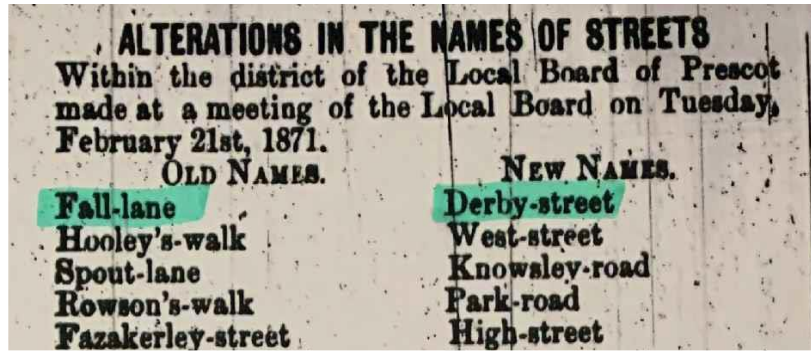
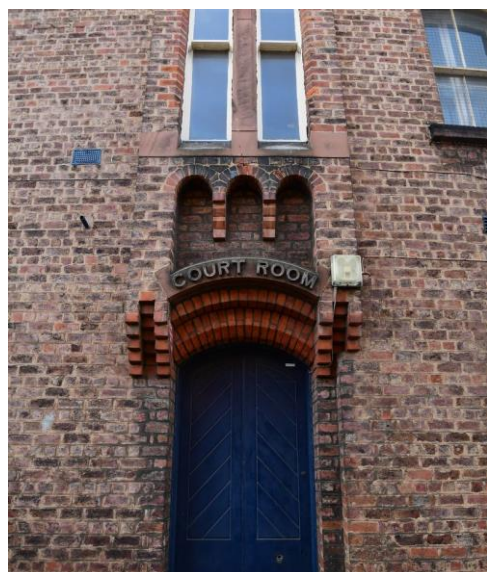


Image 11: Local Board List of Alterations to Streets, 1871 – source: Lancashire Archives

Photographs of Prescott Police Station



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Historical Development of Prescott Police Station

- 4.23 The Lancashire Constabulary was created in 1839. Following in the lines of the London metropolitan police. The new chief constable appointed to assistant Chief Constables of whom was based on Prescott.
- 4.24 Prescott effectively became the headquarters for the Southwest Lancashire Police Force.
- 4.25 Prior to the existing Prescott Police Station building opening in the early 1870's, the original Prescott Police Station was located behind the offices of Tickle Cross, slightly further east of the present site (referred to in the identification of "Police Station" in the historic map of 1845-47: *see Image 2*).
- 4.26 Until the current Prescott Police Station was built in 1870, the application site was undeveloped. Whereas opposite the application site, to the south of Fall Lane (the then name for Derby Street), terraced buildings had sprung up, extending in a linear pattern west from the town centre (*see Image 2*).
- 4.27 The earliest records for the current Police Station building seem to indicate that the Police Station was built between 1869 -1870, with the maps and census records from Knowsley Archives providing the evidence through maps and census records.
- 4.28 An Article in the Liverpool Courier and Commercial Advertiser 6th July 1870 records to opening of the new Police Court Building in 1870. It reports that the building was designed by highly regarded Liverpool based architects (and civil engineers) Messers Reade and Goodison, and built by Messers Jones & Son, of Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.
- 4.29 The news article described the new Prescott Police Station as being in the original name for Derby Street (then known as Fall Lane), and stated:

"The new buildings, which present a substantial frontage to Fall Lane, comprise on the ground floor besides spacious offices for the superintendent of police, a large general office, workroom for adjusting weights and measures, hot water apparatus for heating the building, four cells for prisoners, large day room for police-officers on attendance for inspection or pay, and other apartments. Accommodation is also afforded for one married and four single constables on one side of the building. and on the others

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apartments are provided for the resident sergeant. The court for transacting the business of the petty sessions is on the first floor and is of dimensions we should hope amply sufficient for the criminal business of the division. Adjoining it are an anteroom and a retiring-room for the magistrates, and the appointments of the place are well adapted to the purposes of a police-station.” (quotation provided courtesy of Knowsley Conservation Officer)

- 4.30 As part of the original Police Station plot there was a sergeant dwelling and a deputy sergeant’s dwellings. Both dwellings are no longer part the former Police Stations site as these later became offices on the adjacent plot at no.’s 8 & 10 Derby Street). These are seen in the 1890-91 OS map, *Image 3*.
- 4.31 The original Police Station had its own court house located on the first floor with Judge changing quarters to the rear. The court room was accessed by the public from a separate side entrance accessed from rear courtyard/ former car park.
- 4.32 The prisoners would access the court via the smaller stone staircase located adjacent cells on the ground floor .
- 4.33 It appears from the HER records that no. 10 Derby Street become the court house in 1966.

Setting

- 4.34 Setting of a designated or non-designated heritage asset is important in contributing to the significance of the asset. It is important to note that setting itself is not a heritage asset.
- 4.35 The setting of the former Prescott Police Station building is one of essentially a residential character, with residential properties located immediately to the north, south and west.
- 4.36 The immediate setting of the Police Station building is protected from areas beyond due to the presence of the original brick walls that contain the west and east boundaries to the site (refer to *Image 01, Appendix TPS01*).
- 4.37 Established housing in Stanley Crescent to the east of the site, and 1970’s dormer bungalows in Egerton Road to the north of the site form a barrier to views into the site from vistas from these surrounding areas. There are no

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significant views to the site beyond these housing areas which form boundaries to the site

- 4.38 Views along Elm House Service Road to the north west of the site are restricted to sight of the retained building and the retained boundary wall. The views into the site are screened from boundary planting (*see Image 02, Appendix TPS01*).
- 4.39 The Police Station building (and the adjacent office building) are seen in long views along Derby Street, as is the case with most of the other properties, due to the buildings being within a strong building line, the Police Station nestles into the general residential context.
- 4.40 The building is noticeable by reference to the large square bay window to the front, similar to the bay window on the adjacent office building (*see Image 03, Appendix TPS01*).
- 4.41 To the south of the Police Station and office buildings the 1970's housing estate creates a detracting presence within the immediate setting of the heritage assets, affecting the significance of this part of the Conservation Area (the housing estate is not within the Conservation Area).

Change within the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area

- 4.42 Since the designation of the Conservation Area over 45 years ago, the Conservation Area has undergone changes including new development and changes to existing buildings, which include modern alterations, extensions, and changes to original windows, materials (slate roofs changed to modern tile roofs), and changes to boundary walls and fences.
- 4.43 As the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset, and therefore is considered to be of high significance, it is important to highlight that it is an area based heritage asset.
- 4.44 Being part of an area where changes have taken place since the designation of the Conservation Area in the early 1970's, it is considered that changes to the conservation area over time, including road widening, new buildings and unsympathetic alterations will reduce the significance of the Conservation Area, certainly in Derby Street where modern developments are noticeable.

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- 4.45 The changes to the Conservation Area from organic growth, unsympathetic alterations to dwellings and new build can all have consequential impacts, that may affect the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.46 There are examples of the mix of modern development in the vicinity of the Prescott Police Station site shown in Images in *Appendix TPS1*.

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5.0 Statement of Significance

Significance of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area

- 5.1 The Derby Street area of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area is predominantly concentrated on the south side Derby Street with the application site, along with the adjacent offices of the same age, being brought into the Conservation Area as an adjunct component part.
- 5.2 There are no surrounding parts of the area around the application site, save for the offices at no's 8 to 10 Derby Street that are within the Conservation Area. This is not surprising as all surrounding parts to the east, north and west are forms of housing development, majority of which is post second world war or later, including 1970's housing in Egerton Road and apartment blocks in Elm House Service Road.
- 5.3 The 1970's housing estate situated directly opposite to the south of the application site replaced terraced buildings that existed in earlier times, these can be seen in the OS maps of 1845-47 and 1890-91 (Images 3 & 4).
- 5.4 The 1970's housing estate is within the Conservation Area. However, as can be seen in Images in *Appendix TPS1 (Images 01 to 03)*, the housing estate opposite the site is not historical and it has no architectural or aesthetic merit. In fact, it wouldn't be unkind to suggest that this development harms the setting of the 'positive buildings' in the Conservation Area that comprise the Police Station building and adjacent office buildings.
- 5.5 The significance of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area is derived from several different elements, as set out in the distinct character areas identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- 5.6 Whilst in Derby Street there are buildings that self-evidently do contribute positively to the Conservation Area, conversely there are significant elements that unfortunately detract from the character. These elements (including the 1970's housing estate) are in direct view of the Police Station building and the adjacent office building.
- 5.7 Being close to the main elevation of the positive buildings in Derby Street, it is fair to comment that in this area of the Conservation Area, the significance is harmed by the 1970's development.

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- 5.8 The historical buildings that include listed buildings at no 2 Derby Street and West End House and stables to the western end of Derby Street, along with the positive buildings that comprise the former Police Station building and adjacent office building, stand out as focal points in the streetscene. These important historic buildings define specific locations that waymark separate areas along Derby Street.
- 5.9 The Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area as a whole, has significant evidential and historical value, and there are parts of special interest, such as the medieval street patterns of Eccleston Street and High Street and associated narrow alleyways. St Mary's Church, Grade 1 listed, is the jewel in the crown of the Conservation Area.
- 5.10 Whilst it is fair to record that the Conservation Area as a whole, should be ascribed a high level of significance, and it is agreed that the former Police Station site contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, within the vicinity of the site there is no other sensitive elements.
- 5.11 The level of significance of the Conservation Area in the Derby Street area near to the site is considered to be of a lesser historical value than other parts of the Conservation Area.
- 5.12 The area around the site has been affected by modern house building, some of which create significant detracting elements situated opposite the site on its southern and westerly boundaries (1970's housing and flat blocks).
- 5.13 One could argue the immediate setting (the surroundings of the application site) is of low value and of limited significance to the character of the Conservation Area. It is only the application site and the adjacent office building site that provide positive features to this part of Derby Street.

Significance of the former Police Station Building

- 5.14 The former Police Station building is considered to be *high significance*, with specific importance to the evidential, and historical value of the area.
- 5.15 There has been a police station established in the vicinity of the site some time before the construction of the existing Police Station building in 1870-71.

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- 5.16 The earlier version of the Prescott Police Station was part of buildings to the east of the current site (see reference in *Image 2, 1845-47*).
- 5.17 The Police Station building has communal value, being associated with the development of local policing by Lancashire Police Officers under the guidance and control of a resident sergeant and deputy sergeant.
- 5.18 The Police Station building is solid and in generally good condition. It has attractive decorative detailing with gothic elements weaved into the Victorian design of the building (see images included in the separate heritage sections of the architect's Design & Access Statement).
- 5.19 Internally, there has been numerous alterations in the past that have changed the original layout and removed or damaged original features.
- 5.20 The jail cells, with thick brick walls, heavy doors and small paned windows and typical of the bridewell police cells.
- 5.21 The former court room on the first floor is a double-height space that is significantly altered presently through subdivision partitions and suspended ceiling.
- 5.22 Original fireplaces remain intact in some rooms, although none have worked for many years.
- 5.23 Windows throughout the Police Station building are affected by age, lack of maintenance and lack of being operated for many years. The original timber Victorian 2-sliding sash windows have multiple defects including work ropes, cracking in the frames, wet rot and defective putty.
- 5.24 The plot/rear courtyard that comprises the former Police Station site will remain, mostly as originally set out, with the brick wall to west and the truncated section of brick wall to the east acting as a continuation of the historical development of the site.
- 5.25 To the east, in the area of the former garden to the Sergeants House there is a substantial sandstone wall built in local stone. The wall which historically ran along the diagonal is absent and has been replaced with a series of poor ad hoc fences which, presumably erected by adjacent residents.

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Outbuildings

- 5.26 The is a collection of outbuildings within the rear yard, with the principal outbuilding being a two-storey brick building to the west of the site which stands to directly to the rear of the main Police Station building and is connected to the complex by a linked brick wall.
- 5.27 The two-storey outbuilding is particularly characterful with a dual pitch roof under slates and gable ends capped with a coping boards. This outbuilding would seem to have particular value, being of similar design features to the rear of the Police Station building.
- 5.28 It is also revealed in the early historic maps (1891-92) and it is acknowledged to have likely to have been constructed as an original element of the Police Station complex, possibly as coach house.



- 5.29 The other main outbuildings (shown in the right-hand photograph above) are mono-pitched, brick and from evidence of the historic mapping, these are shown in the same curtilage as the offices building (no. 10 Derby Street), as seen in the maps at *Images 3, 4 & 5* – see above).
- 5.30 The mono-pitched outbuildings are of age and consistent in terms of brick materials and design elements (including chimneys) to the office building. They are of historical value as part of the complex of the office building.
- 5.31 The mono-pitched outbuildings have been extensively altered in the past with major areas of replacement brickwork, concrete lintels, and non-original

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materials in part of one of the gable end. These are considered to be of less significance than the two-storey outbuilding, and through many changes over time, the mono-pitched buildings have been extensively altered.

- 5.32 To the rear of the courtyard there is a later period flat roofed concrete garage. This is a poor addition to the complex within the site and has no value in any possible way.
- 5.33 The site yard areas, beyond the building, is of moderate significance having both evidential and historic value that relates to the Police Station.
- 5.34 The Former Police Station building is identified by the Council as being a 'positive building' and a candidate for local listing.
- 5.35 The Council has confirmed that they consider the Police Station building to be a 'non-designated heritage asset'.

Group Value

- 5.36 The Police Station is strongly associated with the adjacent office building at no's 10 Derby Street. The evidence records that this was occupied by former sergeant dwelling, before changing use to offices, in the 20th Century.
- 5.37 The Police Station building has a group value with the adjacent office building at 10 Derby Street. Both of these building have similar characteristic design features (castellated tops to square bays and red brick parapets), and their many decorative, bright red brick chimneys which are a striking feature on the skyline of Prescott in views along Derby Street.
- 5.38 It is inclusive on the available evidence as to whether Police Station building and adjacent office building were built more or less at the same time, or whether no 10 was built later.
- 5.39 That said, given the evidence revealed in the historic mapping and archive records, the use of same materials and similar design features, it would be a reasonable assumption to suggest they were built to complement each other, and possibly built within a short period of time of each other.
- 5.40 As a group, it is considered that the Police Station and offices at no 10 Derby Street, together contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Area and combine as a group to create strong visual markers within the Derby Street streetscene.

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6.0 Assessing the Impact on Heritage Assets

Impact on the Character & Appearance of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area

- 6.1 Proposals that harm a heritage asset should be given great weight, irrespective of the level of harm (NPPF, paragraph 199).
- 6.2 Policy CS20 of the KLPCS requires development proposals to preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance.
- 6.3 Policy CS20 reflects the advice set down in the NPPF in relation to resisting proposals that cause substantial harm to heritage assets, and where less than substantial harm is caused, the harm will be considered against the public benefits of the proposals.
- 6.4 Policy CS20 supports the re-use of vacant and underused historic assets will be encouraged, with favourable consideration given, where appropriate, to proposals which will enable a use for a purpose sympathetic to its conservation.
- 6.5 Policy CS20 deals with "locally important historic assets" which are not subject to statutory designation. These will be identified in a local list and will be afforded consideration in the decision making process.
- 6.6 Policy DQ5 of the KRUDP requires new development within or close to a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Area, having regard to various stated criteria, including: a) The scale, form, massing, height, materials and architectural detail of existing buildings in the Conservation Area; b) Existing plot layouts and the street scene; c) Important views into, within and out of the Conservation Area; d) the need to preserve existing open spaces, structures and landscape features (such as trees and hedges, walls); f) the visual impact of any vehicular access, parking or servicing/delivery areas that are needed to serve the development.

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6.7 The planning application submission is in FULL and detailed plans and a Design & Access are provided to inform the assessment of the proposed house in relation siting, scale and design, which are relevant factors in the consideration of the impact of the development in respect of the setting of the non-designated heritage assets and the character of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.

6.8 It has been established that the former Prescott Police Station complex is of significant value, notably for its historical and evidential value. The building also contributes positively to the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.

Impact of Works for the Conversion of the Police Station Building

6.9 The proposed conversion of the Police Station building will retain the external elevations very much intact with the frontage to Derby Street having very little alterations. There are no changes to the windows or doors in the frontage, and no rooflights or other changes to the roof.

6.10 In relation to the side elevation (facing no. 10 Derby Street) the proposals will result in new timber sliding sash double-glazed windows being inserted into existing openings, and additional opening created to facilitate the internal layout changes. The proposals also provide for a few new window openings in the rear and other side elevation.

6.11 The proposals do seek the replacement of the original timber sliding double sash windows in the front elevation, to match the new windows in all other elevations (see separate Windows Replacement Heritage Statement).

6.12 The replacement windows will be in similar conservation style timber sliding sash, double-glazed within slimline frames. The replacement windows provide significant beneficial thermal and acoustic performance and as set out in the separate windows heritage statement, the visual appearance of the replacement windows would be dissimilar to the existing appearance.

6.13 The main changes to the converted building relate to the internal alterations to accommodate the proposed floor layouts. These show limited changes to the original wall configuration with the applicant having carefully followed the lines of the key structural walls.

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- 6.14 Some of the cell dividing walls will need to be removed to facilitate the creation of apartments in the ground floor. These will alter the original cell layout. However, the changes are modest, and none of the internal layout is protected by way of a statutory designation.
- 6.15 There is a balance required to address the future reuse of the historic building, retain and preserve the asset, or risk its long term void and continued decline and dereliction.
- 6.16 The internal works will address a number of previous unsympathetic alterations and where possible will expose original elements (roof structures, walls, skirtings and fireplaces. Many of the previous features have been removed prior to the client purchasing the building.
- 6.17 Overall, when viewed from the external perspectives, and considering the key heritage value of the building is the historic and evidential value, the changes to the convert the building are modest, appropriate interventions, and on balance are necessary to support the conversion.
- 6.18 There is little discernible changes to the Police Station building when viewed from the Derby Street frontage and it is therefore considered that the conversion of the former Prescott Police Station building would not negatively impact on the significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.19 The conversion works will have an overall beneficial impact on the character of the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area, with the reuse and restoration of the building ensuring the built continues to contribute as a 'positive statement' in the Derby Street part of the Conservation Area.

Changes from Demolitions of Outbuildings

- 6.20 In the rear courtyard, all outbuildings save for the two storey dual-pitched roof outbuilding tied to the Police Station will be demolished to create a more effective developable area.
- 6.21 The mono-pitched outbuildings situated to the rear of no. 10 Derby Street side of the site are considered to be historic in age, showing in the early maps of the time that no 10 was constructed, at about the same time as the Police Station, which is known to have been built in 1870.

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- 6.22 The mono-pitched outbuildings help to inform the significance of the original buildings on the site at the time of their construction. In that sense, they are part of the evidential and historic value of the site, and contribute to the significance of the complex as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.23 However, both mono-pitched outbuildings have had extensive alterations, with changes including replacement bricks in large parts of the buildings, non-original openings (evidence from concrete lintels), and use of non-original timber cladding to repair the gable of one of the outbuildings.
- 6.24 The demolition of the mono-pitched outbuildings is necessary to support the enabling development of the proposed townhouses. The requirement, and the priority, is to safeguard the future of the Police Station building, and retain the two-storey outbuilding attached to the Police Station. This was encouraged by the Council's Conservation Officer.
- 6.25 We agree that the two-storey coach house style outbuilding contributes positively to the setting of the main Police Station building and is physically attached to the Police Station, unlike the two mono-pitched outbuildings, which appear to have been in the separate curtilage of the adjacent offices, when that building was constructed (see early map shown in *Image 5*).
- 6.26 The demolition of the two mono-pitched outbuildings is considered to cause a less than substantial harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. This is balanced against the significant benefits of restoring the Police Station building, removing the downright ugly concrete garages that impact negatively on the setting of the non-designated heritage assets, and by the many public benefits of the proposals, which are addressed in the separate Planning Statement.
- 6.27 The retention of the original brick wall side boundaries of the plot would preserve that element that contributes to its significance.
- 6.28 The wall to the west side of the site contributes significantly to the character of the Conservation Area, and screens views of the townhouses when approached from the Elm House Service Road side of the site.

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Impact of the Proposed Townhouses

- 6.29 Overall, it is acknowledged that the proposed townhouses would increase the amount of built form within the site, changing the character to the rear of the site.
- 6.30 Change is not, however, synonymous with harm. Visible changes within the rear of the application site is limited, and hardly visible at all from Derby Street, which is considered important to protect the character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.31 It is considered that the proposed townhouses would respond to the positively to the character of the Conservation Area, with use of brick as the main construction materials and houses designed to reflect key stylistic elements of the adjacent historic buildings.
- 6.32 The proposed townhouses would not disrupt the special views along Derby Street, or within Egerton Road, not in Stanley Crescent, both of which have borders to the site. The existing housing in these streets screen the site from the road and public vantage points.
- 6.33 It is only in the vicinity of the site from Elm House Service Road to the west of the site, does one see any significant area of the proposed Townhouses. This area is not within the Conservation Area and is bounded by the dominating presence of the 1970's apartment block that fronts onto Elm House Service Road.
- 6.34 Townhouses situated in a set-back position within the site, designed to an appropriate scale and built similar materials, would not harm the rear aspect of the unlisted Police Station building, or the associated unlisted office buildings, both of which are positive buildings in the Conservation Area.
- 6.35 Advice in paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires local authorities to consider development proposals within the Conservation Area having regard to the special qualities that make them worthy of a designation as a Conservation Area.
- 6.36 Indeed, we know by reference to the English Heritage Guidance (*Understanding Place: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation & Management – Update Note June 2012*) – see paragraph 1.14 – that

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conservation areas designated many years ago, the *“original interest may have been so eroded by the cumulative effect of piecemeal change or by single examples of poorly designed development that some parts of the area are no longer special.”*

- 6.37 There have been modern developments within the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area, including new houses and changes to historic buildings and buildings, such that in some examples, the original appearance is changed through unsympathetic alterations (eg., double glazed upvc windows).
- 6.38 The Prescott Town Centre Character Area Appraisal report recognises the impact of unsympathetic changes and urges caution in respect of allowing upvc windows in the non-listed ‘positive buildings’ within Derby Street part of the Conservation Area.
- 6.39 The proposal will retain and refresh the former Prescott Police Station building and will improve its appearance with new replacement conservation style timber sliding sash windows and the building will be checked for repairs and cleaning. These works are considered to have moderate beneficial impacts that will help to secure the future of the non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.40 The proposed townhouses are noted to have limited views from Derby Street, where the character of the Conservation Area is most sensitive. The proposed townhouses are designed to be sympathetic in design, scale, mass and use of materials.
- 6.41 The key boundary treatments, including retention of the original brick walls to the west boundary, and in part to the east boundary will help protect the identity of the site from the rear.
- 6.42 It is considered that the site will not change in terms of overall character and appearance. The Police Station building will be reused and come back into life; it will once again have activity and its use will contribute to the life of the town centre.
- 6.43 The proposals will provide the former Police Station with a viable long term sustainable reuse, and for this reason alone, the proposals should be welcomed.

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- 6.44 It is contended that there whilst the demolition of the various outbuildings does cause a negative impact, this is of a low level of less than substantial harm. These are not visible from Derby Street and in any event are considered to be outweighed by the public benefits and by the improvements to the site through the removal of the concrete garages. This is considered to meet the tests for addressing proposals that cause a less than substantial harm (paragraph 203 of the NPPF and policy CS20 of the KLPCS).
- 6.45 The removal of the outbuildings to the rear has no effect to the contribution the Police Station makes to the local character and identity of the Police Station, in group value with no. 10 Derby Street. It is the views of the frontage of these two buildings that are key priorities, and the proposals will result in improvements to the front of the Police Station, thus ensuring it continues to make a positive statement in the streetscene.
- 6.46 The proposals have been assessed to demonstrate that the impact of the proposed development on character and appearance of the Conservation Area, on its setting and in relation to the significance of the former Prescott Police Station as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.47 The impact is considered to be a beneficial impact in terms of the retention and reuse of the Police Station building, and retaining its external appearance when viewed from Derby Street, where its contribution to the Conservation Area is most sensitive.
- 6.48 The removal of outbuildings is a necessary part of the proposals, and whilst these are accepted to cause a less than substantial harm, the low level of harm is considered to be outweighed in this case by public benefits.

Conclusion

- 6.49 It is also demonstrated that the proposal complies with heritage policy advice set down in the NPPF (paragraphs 189 to 208) and complies with policy CS20 of the KLPCS and policy DQ5 of the KRUDP in relation to impact on heritage assets and impact of development in conservation areas.