



DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Repairs and Alterations - 25 Ecclestone Street, Prescott

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1.1 Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement has been produced on behalf of JRD Property Development Ltd to support the application for planning permission to replace the existing shop front at 25 Eccleston Street with one more in keeping with the conservation area, together with other work including replacing missing slates, relining the stone gutter with lead, cornice and brick repairs, repointing and window replacement to the front elevation.

This document is to be read in conjunction with drawings prepared by Paddock Johnson Partnership, which accompany this application submitted to Knowsley Borough Council.

Proposals have been developed in consultation with Hannah Sharp, Prescot Heritage Action Zone Project Officer, as proposed works are subject to a building grant application as part of the Prescot High Streets Heritage Action Zone funding programme.



23-27 Eccleston Street



1.2 Context

The application site is located on Eccleston Street, one of the main retail streets in Prescot town centre which is located approximately 8 miles east of Liverpool City centre in the Borough of Knowlsey. The building is located within character area 1 of the Prescot town centre conservation area and the Prescot High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), which focuses around Market Place, the commercial heart of the town for centuries.

Eccleston Street and Market Place also formed part of the Prescot Townscape Heritage Initiative project which sought to repair, restore and re-use historic buildings and spaces in Prescot town centre capitalising on Precots diverse heritage as one of the oldest settlements in Merseyside. HSHAZ builds on the momentum of this project and the nearby Shakespeare North project to further improve and upgrade this part of the conservation area.

Adjacent 27 Eccleston Street has recently benefited from grant funding through the above programmes to repair and restore the building.

1.3 Identity

The character and identity of Eccleston Street is defined within the Precot town centre, character appraisal, being part of the Town Centre: High Street, Eccleston Street and Market Place. Key positive features of relevance to 25 Eccleston Street being;

- Medieval street layout with some narrow alleys connecting Eccleston Street with High Street
- Commercial core of Prescott with a number of shops and offices
- Good views westwards towards St Mary's Church
- Some high quality paving details using natural stone

Key negative features of relevance to the project at 25 Eccleston Street;

- Dominant advertising hoardings
- Many poor quality shop frontages
- Poor condition of prominent buildings

1.4 Building Description

No. 25 Eccleston Street along with No. 27 and 29 form part of one larger building built around 1830. The building is a 3 bay, 3 storey, symmetrical fronted late Georgian property with retail units at ground floor and residential accommodation above thought originally to have been offices associated with the shops at ground floor.

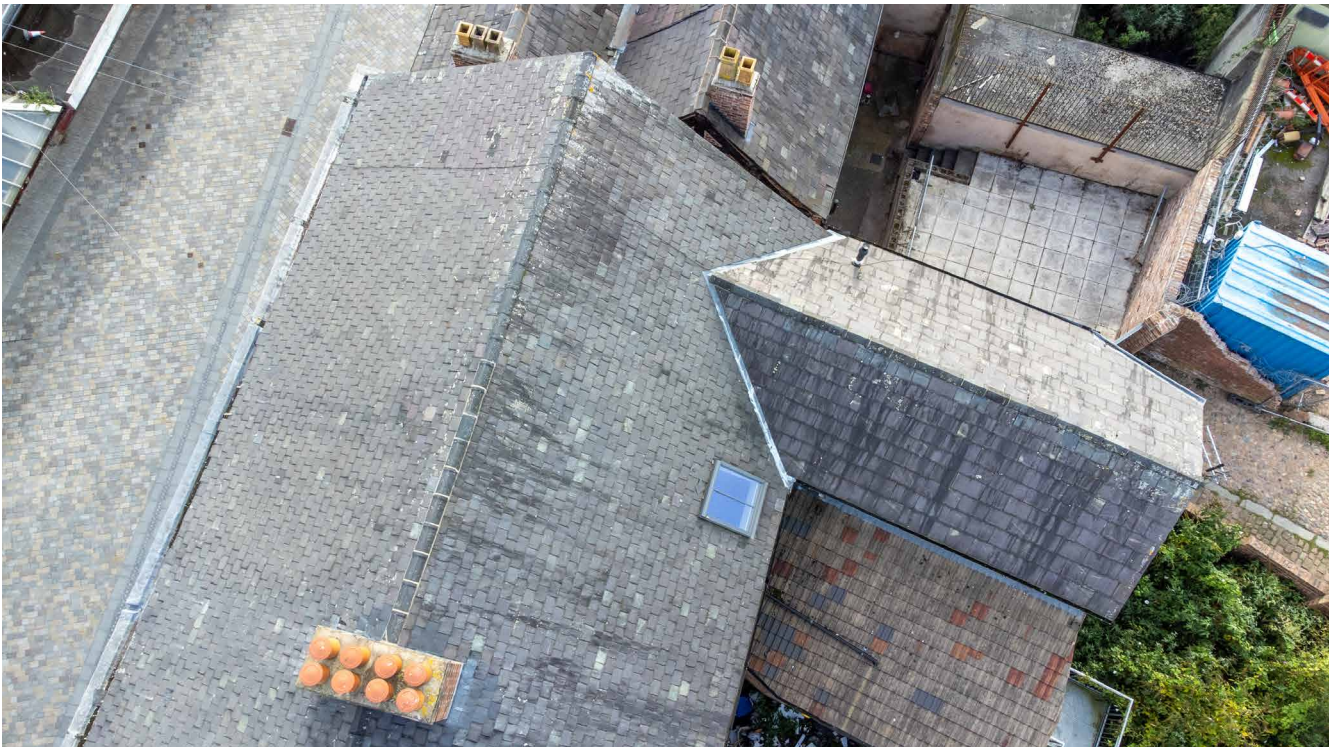
The building is constructed in Flemish bond brickwork to the front elevation with slate roof, lead lined stone gutter, timber sash windows and wedge shaped lintels. The formality of the front elevation sits in contrast with the rear of the plots which follows a more irregular arrangement of outriggers a product of building across several historic, narrow burgage plots. The rear elevation is in garden wall bond.



As existing front elevation of 25 Eccleston Street

1.5 As Existing Photographs





2.1 Historical Interest

Prescots' origins date back to anglo-saxon times. However it was in the early 14th Century that Precot grew to become an important market town, evidenced by its inclusion on the Gough Map dating from around 1360.

St Mary's Church at the end of Eccleston Street, a key focal point within the conservation area has a list of rectors dating back to 1179. However, much of the current fabric of the building dates back to 1610, with later additions in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The establishment of a number of potteries in the fourteenth century provided an important stimulus to the town and over the next few centuries Precot developed a reputation for the manufacture of watch parts, files and pottery. The other key factor in the towns development was the accessibility of rich seams of coal, close to the surface in the vicinity which was mined from the early sixteenth century.

As industry grew so did the town resulting in considerable changes throughout the 18th century as the population grew from 700 in the 1690's to 3,645 in 1801. Much of the town was rebuilt in the 1750's with some older medieval properties replaced with fine Georgian houses. Rebuilding of the town continued through the 19th century and it was at this time that Eccleston Street and particularly the area to the north side began to evolve from a dense network of side streets, back streets, yards and closely packed buildings on burgage plots. As the area was rebuilt buildings began to break the confines of the individual narrow burgage plots and larger buildings were introduced which span across several plots as the building which is 25,27 and 29 Eccleston Street does.

25, 27 and 29 Eccleston Street was built as a single symmetrically fronted three storey building sharing a common roof and front stone gutter. Its date of construction appears to have been circa 1820-1830. The building stands near the middle of a long run of burgage plots on the north side of Eccleston Street. By spanning three burgage plots the building will have had a very different architectural language to the rest of the narrow fronted properties in the street and would have stood out in the largely medieval town.

It is unclear why the decision was taken to break the mold in this location, however it could be due to the fact Lyme House stood opposite, one of the highest status and largest houses in Prescot (see map extract opposite with 25-29 Eccleston Street highlighted in green and Lyme House in yellow). It is unclear if the three properties were built as purely townhouses, or

townhouses with shops occupying the front of the property at ground floor.

There is no certainty over the use and occupiers of 25 Eccleston Street with the property only appearing in the 1901 Census where it is noted as being uninhabited, in occupation suggesting it has operated as shop for at least the last 120 years.

2.2 Architectural Interest

Architecturally, the building retains its Classical character to the upper floors, while at ground floor the original shop front has been replaced with a modern interpretation on a traditional shop front. The image opposite taken in 1951 shows an earlier iteration common to 27 & 29 thought to have been installed in the 1920's or 30's which had the entrance door set back within the shop front.

To the upper floors, the sash windows flanked by narrow side lights. These types of window are associated



Extract from 1848 Ordnance Survey Map.



Historic photograph of 25-29 Eccleston Road from 1951

with Regency architecture, and so it follows that the building is early 19th century. 25-29 are also united by a moulded stone gutter with a stone band below. The scale and height of 25-29 would have been unusual for Eccleston Street in the early nineteenth century, given that, apart from a couple of three-bay timber-framed houses, most buildings would have been confined to a narrow burgage plot frontage with low storeys. The three units were probably built as town houses with integral shops and would have had a uniform front elevation, and hence appeared as a striking composition in a narrow street made up of individual buildings. From the detailed OS of 1840 it appears that no. 25's doorway was to the left, no.27's doorway central, and no. 29's doorway to the right, giving the three houses a near-symmetrical frontage. This was reinforced by there being two chimney stacks serving the row of three, arranged to be evenly spaced along the ridge.

It seems that the shopfronts reinforced the symmetry of the three units, with the shopfront of no. 27 being noticeably taller than those of nos. 29 and 25 (which were at the same height). This arrangement of the three shopfronts is just visible on a photograph taken of Eccleston Street in the early twentieth century, when all three units were occupied by different part of Johnson's outfitters, boots and shoes. This arrangement of the shopfronts would have reinforced the symmetry of the group.

25-29 Eccleston Street are fronted with Flemish Bond brickwork with wedge-shaped lintels to the windows. The rear elevation is in Garden Wall Bond.

25-20 Eccleston Street is noted as a building that makes a positive contribution to the conservation area owing to its historic and architectural significance.



Extract from Precot Conservation Area; Townscape Appraisal Map



2.3 Heritage Environmental Record (HER)

A search carried out via www.heritagegateway.org.uk provided the following heritage record for 25-29 Eccleston Street, published by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service.

The building was described in 1978 as: "Large three storey brick building, with gradation of window height, projecting moulded cornice at eaves. Stone lintels and sills, ? Altered sash windows. First floor windows and No. 27 reglazed with Art Nouveau type stained glass". (2)

It was surveyed and described in 1982: "This terrace of houses (Nos. 25, 27, 29), built 1870s (?), was originally a single unit, but converted into three shop units in 1930s. The large back yard is still shared. No. 29 has thick slate, gabled roof, with one central chimney stack. Back of building opens out onto yard, but there is no door. Windows: top floor, left - elongated semi mullioned, with narrow wood sill; top right - small tall window with large panes and vertically sliding sash, wood sill. First floor, left - large square window with small (watchmaker type) panes, vertical sliding sash (?), relieving brick arch lintel and wood sill; First right - large square, semi mullioned relieving brick arch lintel. Ground floor, left - large square window (blocked), concrete lintel; right - large square window (bricked up), with relieving brick arch lintel. Present condition: The back outside wall has had bricks replaced in areas, especially around the ground floor left window". (1)

The properties were included in an architectural condition survey carried out in 1980. (3)

'Whoever designed and built 25-29 Eccleston Street wanted to make a statement. The building has a very orderly frontage with large, evenly spaced window openings and a full width moulded stone gutter along the top. When you consider that when this building was erected Eccleston Street would have been lined in the main by a jumble of timber framed and low brick buildings squeezed into narrow plots (the big exceptions being Atherton Hall and Lyme House which are believed to have been large timber framed mansions), 25-29 Eccleston Street would have stuck out like a sore thumb due to its consistent height and large scale. The large windows would have been another distinguishing feature. The big first floor windows with timber mullions became fashionable after 1800 (during the Regency), first cropping up in fashionable resorts like Brighton and Cheltenham where some of the finest Regency buildings were erected, and finding its way to the North West. We can tell from the highly detailed 1840 Ordnance Survey Map [sic, the OS town plan of 1848] where the front doors to 25, 27, 29 and 31 Eccleston Street were. They might well have been built as houses

– the ground floor being used for shops might well have come about later on. The positions of the doorsteps on the 1840 map [sic] suggest that the doors and windows of 25-29 Eccleston Street were arranged to give an ordered, near-symmetrical front elevation – again giving the building a neat



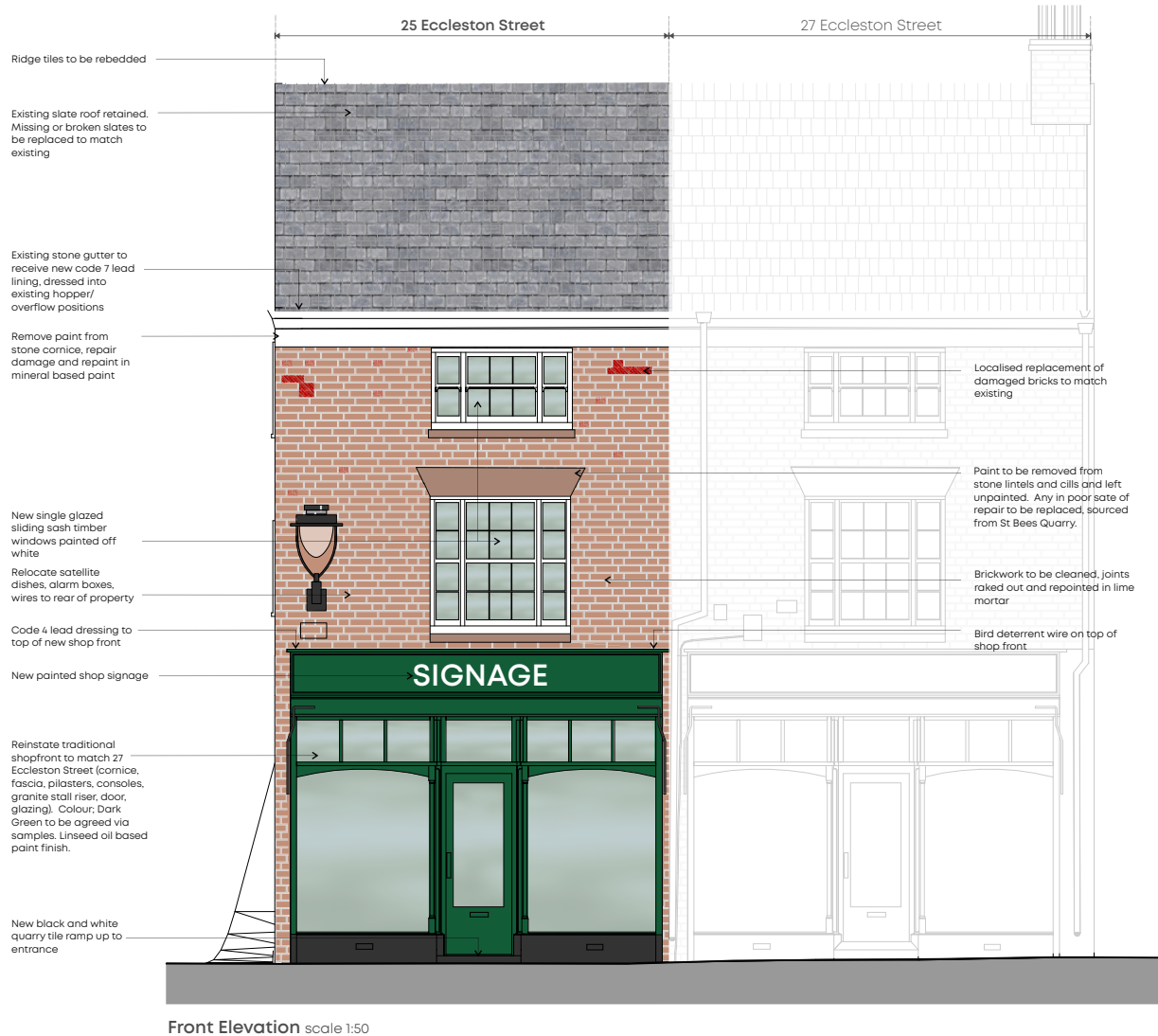


and balanced elevation among the diverse building styles and types along Eccleston Street. I guess you could say the frontage provided 'order' and composure amongst the 'chaos' of smaller medieval and post-medieval buildings... ..It appears that the shopfronts of Nos. 25 - 29 formed a continuous group, with the middle shopfront (at No. 27) slightly taller than those of Nos. 25 and 29. This appears to be because they were in the early 20th century all part of the same business, Johnson's, who had a boot and shoe makers, outfitters and drapers in adjacent units.

A sort of 'mini-department store' spread across three neighbouring shops, something that was not uncommon, many traditional department stores grew from one shop to a few shops before consolidating in one big shop. In the early photos of Prescott, all three shopfronts at 25-29 Eccleston Street had strongly projecting cornices, fascia's and consoles, with each shop having an awning. It seems that the three shopfronts were replaced as a group in the 1930s. The stepped heights of the shopfronts were retained, but the detailing was vaguely art deco in style with unusual consoles, shallow fascia's and etched geometrical designs on the glass. These deco details are still visible on a photo of the building taken in 1979. The shopfronts to Nos. 29 - 31 were completely removed by the installation of the present shopfront around 1998, but its consoles echo the unusual deco details that previously existed. Johnson's dissolved in the mid-twentieth century and since then its three shops have had various occupiers".

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3.0 Proposals



3.1 Proposal Aims

The proposals seek to address the negative features highlighted within the conservation area character appraisal relevant to 25 Eccleston Street namely, poor condition, overly dominant signage and the poor quality shop front. Internal work is limited to that associated with the replacement shop front and a replacement internal security shutter.

The overall aim of the project is to upgrade the property so that it makes a positive contribution to the conservation area rather than detract from it.

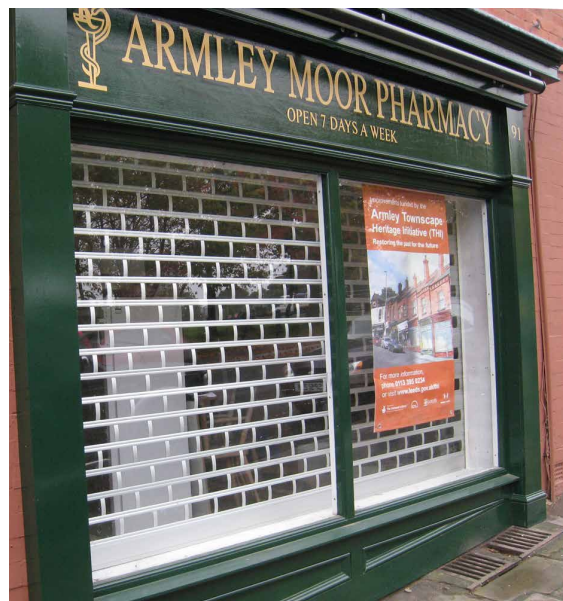
3.2 Shop front replacement

The proposal to replace the shop front has been prepared in accordance with guidance provided by the Prescott Heritage Action Zone Project Officer, which aims to reinstate the character of 25-29 Eccleston Street and build upon the work carried out at no.27. The replacement shopfront will match an earlier iteration dating back to the 1920's/30's which was uncovered and repaired at no.27.

3.3 Repairs

Repairs are limited to the external envelope apart from a replacement open shutter to be installed as part of the replacement shop front, similar to that shown in the image opposite.

Repair work includes replacement sash windows, brick repairs and repointing, replacement of missing/slipped slates, relining the stone gutter with lead, cornice repairs, new cast iron rainwater goods and removal of satellite dish and other services boxes and cables from the front elevation.



Open shutter to be installed behind shop front



Proposed replacement shop front