

WORKS AT MAPLE LODGE

THE ORCHARD, HUYTON, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF
KNOWSLEY



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 35 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

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposal building is situated at Huyton, one of the communities within the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, Merseyside. Maple Lodge is an apartment conversion located off The Orchard, amid a suburban area south of the village centre.

An application for retrospective planning consent has been submitted to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council for a two-bedroom apartment at Maple Lodge. The original consent granted was for a one-bedroom apartment. The property is itself undesignated, but lies within The Orchard Conservation Area. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value to this and future generations) of the conservation area. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and to assess how it would be affected by the proposal.

The proposal building was originally part of the former Huyton College, which was centred upon a large 19th century villa named *Fernwood*. Consent for the one-bed apartment was granted in 2010 as part of a wider residential conversion of the site undertaken in the 1990s and early 2000s following closure of the college in 1993.

The significance of The Orchard Conservation Area derives from its essential character and appearance as an example of a Victorian villa park. This character is derived from its mid-19th century villas and their relationship to each other amid the streetscene, as captured in the public views in which they are experienced. The significance of the conservation area extends primarily to the borough-wide context, with only one building listed as being of national importance.

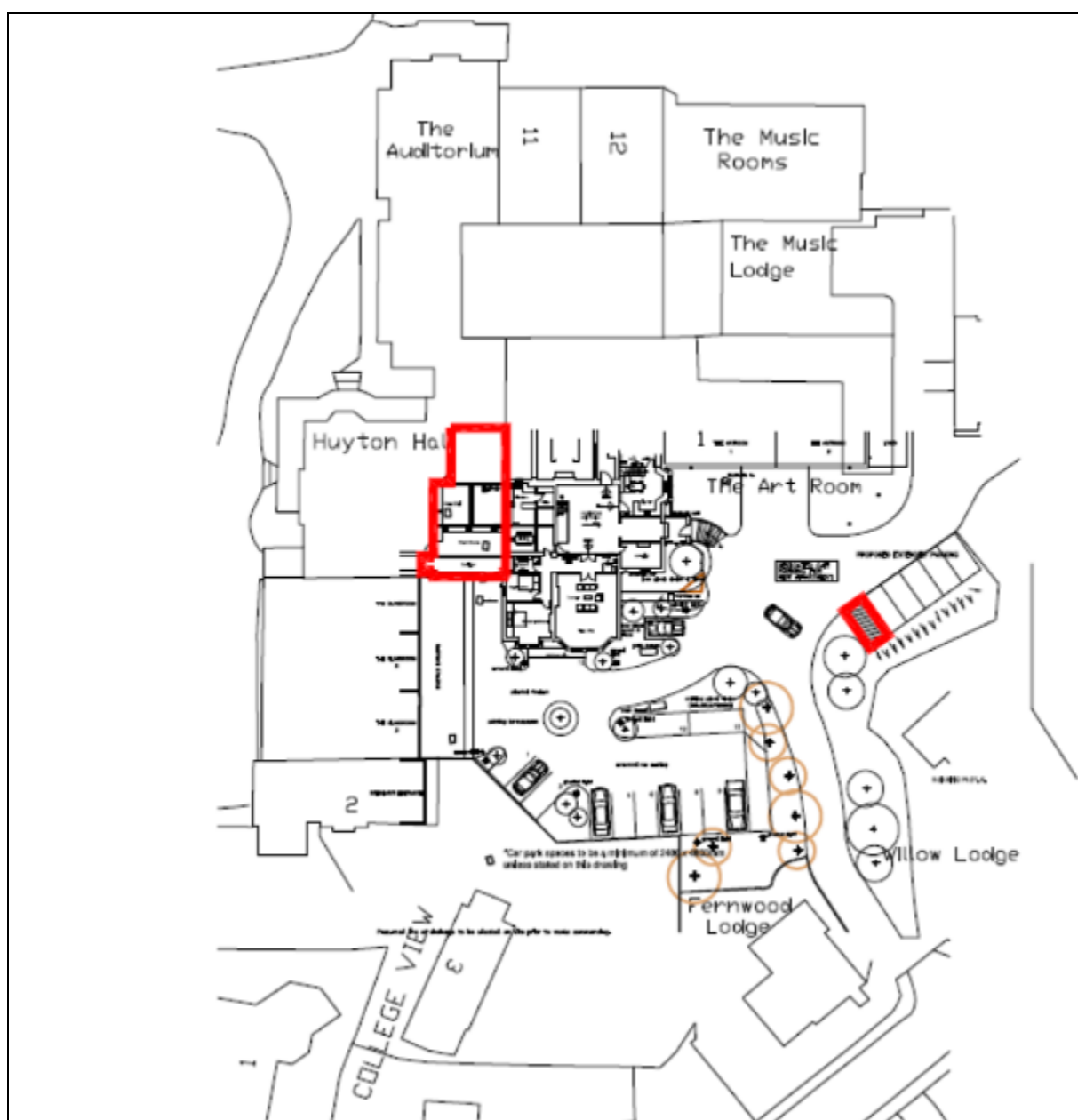
The application property, used prior to conversion as a tractor store with kitchen/scullery above, is set back within private grounds and not publicly visible. It is therefore makes no visual contribution to the conservation area and hence is significant primarily for its historical role as part of the Fernwood/Huyton College site.

The proposal's effect is principally internal, and as the special interest of the conservation area is defined by its character and appearance as experienced in external public views, there will be no impact whatsoever as a result of these works. The external changes required are limited, and will not be visible from any public viewpoint. Accordingly, there will be no adverse effect upon the conservation area, and the historical associations that are the basis of the application building's significance will remain.

The special interest, character and appearance that defines the significance of The Orchard as a high-quality 19th century villa park will be entirely sustained by the proposal. The application is thereby compliant with national guidance and relevant local development plan policy, and therefore merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The proposal building is situated at Huyton, one of the communities within the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, Merseyside. Maple Lodge is located off The Orchard, amid a suburban area south of the village centre. The property was originally part of the former Huyton College, which was centred upon a large 19th century villa named *Fernwood*. Consent for conversion to a one-bed apartment was granted in 2010 as part of a residential conversion of the wider site undertaken in the 1990s and early 2000s following closure of the college in 1993.



Map 1. Location of the application property

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

An application for retrospective planning consent has been submitted to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council for a two-bedroom apartment at Maple Lodge.

3.2 Designations

The property is itself undesignated, but lies within The Orchard Conservation Area.

3.3 Heritage impacts

The heritage issue arising from the proposal is its impact (as regards the external works only) upon the significance (heritage interest and value to this and future generations) of the conservation area.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised July 2021) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the conservation area, along with the contribution made by the application property, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. The level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, in accordance with paragraph 194, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A brief description of the conservation area (Section 4) and of the contribution made by the application building (Section 5)
2. A summary of the heritage significance of the conservation area and contribution of the application building (Section 6)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
4. Evaluation within this context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the conservation area (Section 8).

4: THE CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 Overview

The Orchard was first designated by Knowsley MBC in 1978 and takes its name from the winding road that bisects the area. It incorporates the core of a prestigious villa development begun in the mid-19th century on what was formerly rural land on the fringe of Huyton village, and whose proximity to the railway station made it convenient for affluent commuting Liverpool businessmen.



Map 2. Location of the application property within the conservation area

4.2 Special interest

The conservation area has the typical characteristics of a high-status Victorian suburb, with villas set amid large gardens with mature trees. These characteristics are summarised as follows by the character appraisal adopted by Knowsley Council in December 2014:

The Orchard Conservation Area serves as an attractive, and to a large extent, well-preserved example of a Victorian suburb, characterised by large villa style houses and extensive gardens. The mature trees which populate the entirety of the area form an important feature, with many overhanging the gardens and lane; significantly enhancing the visual appearance of the area and helping to create a strong sense of place.

It is further described as ‘architecturally one of the most important areas of Huyton, contributing significantly to the town’s rich cultural heritage’ and ‘a classic example of a Victorian suburb.’ The appraisal states that the built character of the area derives from its villa residences, some in the Italianate and Greek styles, located within an essentially unaltered road pattern. Most houses are situated upon The Orchard and set back amid extensive grounds defined by boundary walls and mature trees. The winding nature of The Orchard offers only limited views, those of note taking in Huyton Hall and Greenhill, the latter a Grade II Italianate detached villa that is the area’s only listed building. Modern development is notable however, with old and new properties standing together in the many views.



1. View along The Orchard, principal road in the conservation area

5: CONTRIBUTION OF THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

The application property was originally part of the former Huyton College, where it was located between its Huyton Hall and Fernwood Hall buildings and prior to conversion contained a ground floor tractor store and kitchen and scullery above. The building is set well back from the road within the private, gated grounds of the new residential development and cannot be seen in the public views from The Orchard, which are obtained principally from its junction with the College View access to the apartment complex.



2. View towards the application building, hidden from sight, from the College View/The Orchard junction

6: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the Revised 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 minimize 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 The conservation area

The significance of The Orchard derives from its essential character and appearance as an example of a Victorian villa park. This character is derived from its mid-19th century villas and their relationship to each other amid the streetscene, as captured in the public views in which they are experienced. The significance of the conservation area extends primarily to the borough-wide context, as one of the most architecturally important areas in Huyton, with only one building listed as being of national importance.

6.3 The application property

The application property is hidden from public view and hence makes no contribution to the visual qualities of the conservation area. It is therefore significant primarily for its historical role as part of the Fernwood/Huyton College site.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area.

7.2 Relevant policies

Section 16 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is 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 guidance is reflected by policies of the local development plan, principal of which is CS20 (*Managing the Borough's Historic Environment*) of the Knowsley Core Strategy. This requires development proposals to preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Assessment

The proposal's effect is principally internal, and as the special interest of the conservation area is defined by its character and appearance as experienced in external public views, there will be no impact whatsoever as a result of these works. The external changes required are limited, as detailed on the submitted drawings, and will not be visible from any public viewpoint. Accordingly, there will be no adverse effect upon the conservation area, and the historical associations that are the basis of the application building's significance will remain.

8.2 Conclusion

The special interest, character and appearance that defines the significance of The Orchard as a high-quality 19th century villa park will be entirely sustained by the proposal. The application is thereby compliant with national guidance and relevant local development plan policy, and therefore merits approval without delay.