

KeithDavidsonPartnership

PROPOSED NEW SHOP FRONT at 34 HIGH STREET & NEW WINDOWS 32-34 HIGH STREET, PRESCOT

Heritage Statement

APRIL 2021

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been produced to support the planning application for the shop front at 32 – 34 High Street to be re-instated similar to the adjacent shopfront and proposed aluminium windows to the rest of 32-34 High Street.

The proposed site lies within the boundary of the Prescott Conservation Area. Situated to the eastern half of this Conservation Area, there are the remains of the medieval street layout, as defined by Eccleston Street and High Street and the narrow alleyways which run between them of which Leyland Street is one.

The buildings in this region of the Prescott Conservation Area are two or three storey houses, built in a terraced form, although the Conservation Area does also include a number of prestigious brick houses dating to the Georgian period. The largest building is the 17th Century grade I listed St Mary's Church, with the Roman Catholic church (which is located close by). The site is in close proximity to several listed buildings, the closest being 37 High Street (diagonally opposite) and 17 Atherton Street:

No. 17 Atherton Street forms part of a long terrace of similar late Georgian houses dating to c1790. It is two windows wide, three storeys high, with a slate roof over sash windows and a late 19th Century shopfront. The importance of the building lies in the survival of an integral second floor watch-makers' workshop which is visible to the rear.

No. 37 High Street building dates to c1815 and is a small, two window wide house with a central front door with a complete fanlight. The elevations are faced in brick with stone dressings, and the windows are sashed.



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HISTORIC CONTEXT

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

Prescot is believed to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon with the name 'Prescota-cot' meaning a 'priest cottage'. It formed the centre of an extensive parish within the West Derby Hundred which included fourteen other townships including St Helen's.

In 1333 William D'Acre (Lord of the Manor), was granted the right to hold a weekly market. The town's importance was reflected by its inclusion on the Bodleian Map of Britain (Gough 1350). It is reported that the Manor was sold in 1391 to John of Gaunt and on his death passed to his son, who subsequently became Henry IV.

In 1447 Henry VI included both the Manor and Rectory of Prescot as gifts to establish a college at Cambridge University (later King's College Cambridge). This Royal Charter gave the people of Prescot exemption from paying certain tolls, it also gave them a degree of self-government and as such the town adopted the 'college's crest'.

Records indicate that a number of potteries were established in the fourteenth century; this was to provide an important stimulus to the town. By 1592 a survey carried out by King's College Cambridge, details the existence of seven kilns in the town that were apparently centred around the Eccleston Street area. The town developed a reputation for producing fine pottery, using a mixture of the local white and red clays.

The Turnpike Trust of 1726 resulted in the roads being substantially improved between Liverpool and St. Helen's.

Prescot was a major point along the route which split into two on Church Street; one to St. Helen's (via the High Street and St. Helen's Road), the other to Warrington (via Market Place and Kemble Street).

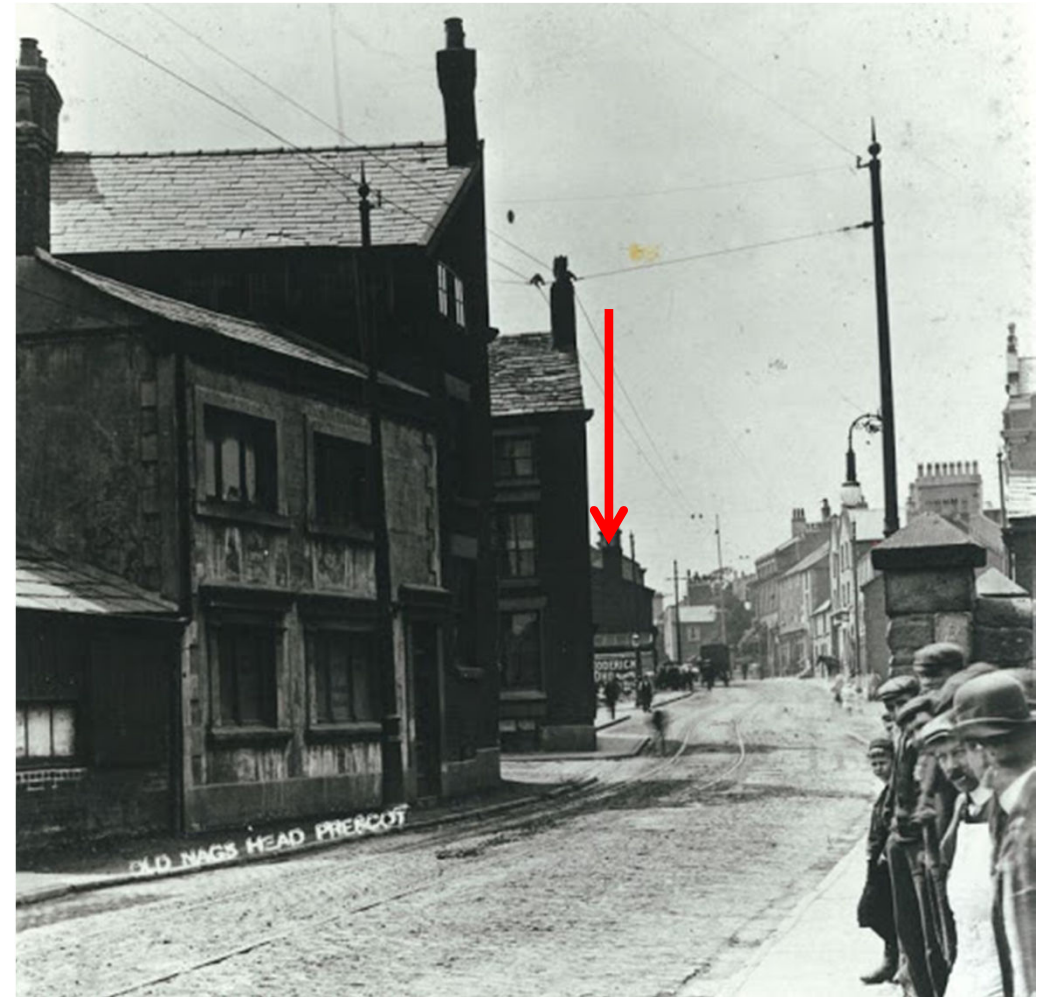
The town sits on a south-facing hill overlooking two streams and is dominated by St Mary's Church (Grade I) the most important historic building in the Conservation Area.

The accessibility of rich seams of coal close to the surface was mined from the early sixteenth century. Much of the coal produced was destined for Liverpool. It is understood that in 1746 a Newcomen Engine was installed, between Hall Lane (now High Street) and Warrington Road area, to pump-out water from the mine. The mine continued to prosper until the construction of the Sankey Canal in 1767 which broke the town's monopoly on the supply of coal to the Liverpool.

The town grew prosperous during the 17th & 18th centuries through the supply of coal to Liverpool and also from the mid 18th century by 'clock-making', 'watch-making' and 'tool-making'. The Liverpool-Manchester railway 1830 (the world's first passenger service) had a passenger stop at nearby Huyton. It was not until 1871 that Prescot got its own railway station with the construction of a branch-line between Huyton and St. Helen's.

32-34 High street was built post 1900 as the photograph from opposite demonstrates.

34-35 High Street's future position in demonstrated by the red arrow in the photograph.



View along High Street (formerly Fazakerley Street) looking west (c1900)

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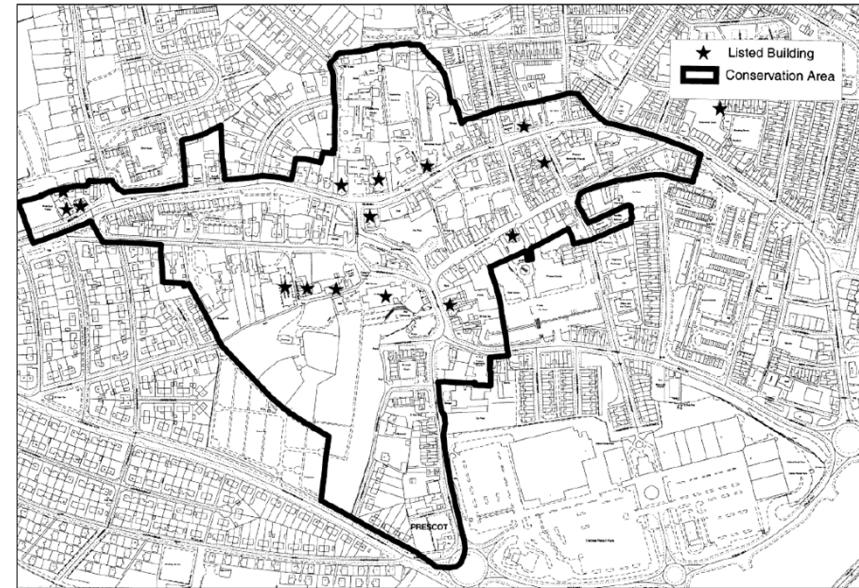
HISTORIC CONTEXT

The town of Prescot is located in Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley created as part of the Local Government reorganisation in 1974; it was formerly part of south west Lancashire. In recognition of the town's importance and to prevent further deterioration of the town's history two separate conservation areas were first designated (Prescot Church and Prescot High Street). These conservation areas were amalgamated in 1978 to form the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area.

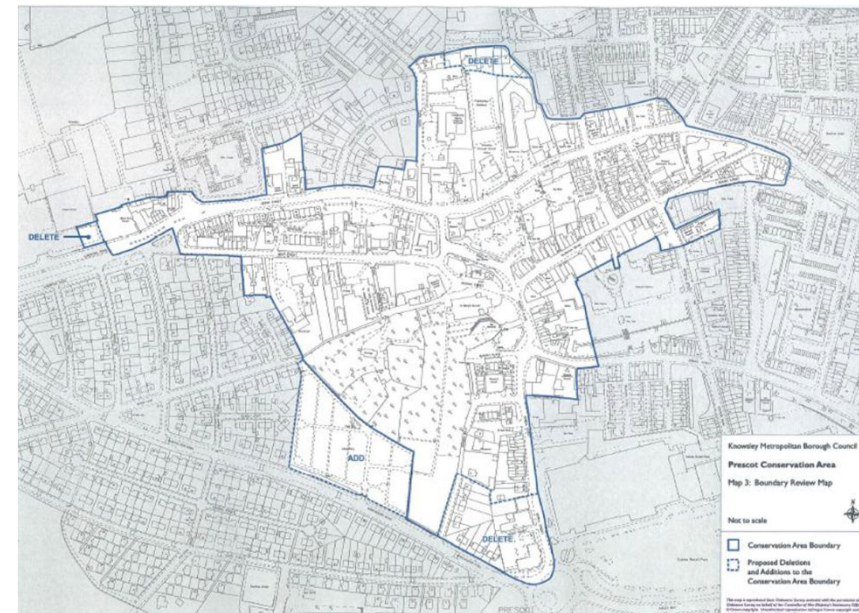
The conservation area boundary was adjusted to include Sewell Street and the churchyard area in 1997.

A further boundary review took place as part of the preparation of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. This recommended adjustment was formally approved in May 2012 as part of the Metropolitan Borough as the Local Planning Authority adopting the Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Management Plan.

The eastern half of the Conservation Area still retains its medieval street layout, as set out by Eccleston Street and High Street and the narrow alleyways which run between them, are of special interest. Atherton Street is one of the links between the aforementioned principal streets which was apparent laid out in 1770s as a grand approach to 'Atherton Hall' (demolished) that once stood on Eccleston Street. Atherton Street led directly to the front entrance of this hall.



Conservation Area Boundary 1997



Revised Conservation Area Boundary MAY 2012

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LEGISLATION, PRINCIPLE & POLICIES

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LEGISLATION, PRINCIPLE & POLICIES

Under the provisions of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Area) Act 1990 Local Planning Authorities have a general duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of their designated conservation areas.

In terms of locally adopted planning policy the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 2006. In June 2009, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) 'saved' the majority of the UDP policies under the provisions of the revised system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

In January 2016 KMBC formally adopted its Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy. The Core Strategy part of the Local Plan sets out the strategic framework for the growth and development of Knowsley up to 2028 and beyond. It also sets out how and where new development and regeneration should take place and is to promote, guide and manage the future development of the borough.

With regard to the management of the historic environment, design quality and sustainability and the provisions of new dwellings within the Borough the proposal will be assessed under the following adopted Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy policies:

CS2 Development Principles

CS6 Town Centres and Retail Strategy

CS14 Principal Regeneration Area – Prescott Town Centre

CS19 Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

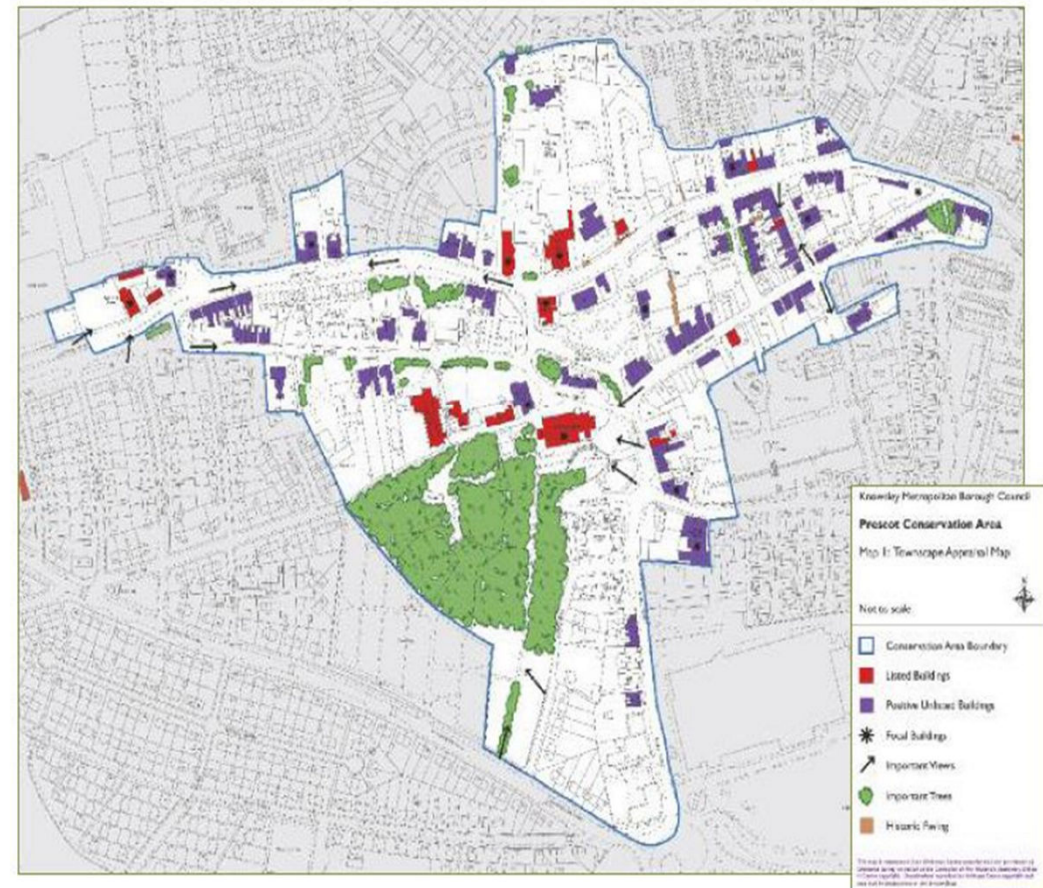
CS20 Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

CS22 Sustainable and Low Carbon Development

KMBC has acknowledged under the heading 'Historic Significance and Local Distinctiveness' (Para 6.54) of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy that:

“Prescot Town Centre is Knowsley's oldest and the only centre with a significant number of buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Prescot Town Centre has a unique character arising from its history and much of the existing town centre, including the main pedestrian shopping area along Eccleston Street, which is designated as a Conservation Area. These historic assets give the potential to create a strong and positive character and image. However, at present, a large number of buildings in the town centre are in a poor state of repair and the Prescot Shopping Centre, completed in 1988, suffers from a high level of vacancy.”

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 that replaced PPS5 - 'Planning for the Historic Environment' was revised in July 2018.



Prescot Conservation Area

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LEGISLATION, PRINCIPLE & POLICIES

It advocates that in respect of the conserving and enhancing the historic environment 'significance' can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of a heritage asset or development within its setting. The Heritage asset in this particular instance is the designated conservation area as such any change that is likely to cause harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

It is noted that Historic England has published Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning in respect of:

- The Historic Environment in Local Plans
- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- The Setting of Heritage Assets

It is the 3rd of the above advice notes that regard will be given as part of the assessment of the current proposals for a refurbished building with extension in conjunction with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018. The historic environment is a shared resource. It contains a unique and dynamic record of human activity and has been shaped by people responding to the surroundings they inherit, and embodies the aspirations, skills and investment of successive generations.

Therefore the following 'principles' aim to provide the foundation for a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment:

- The historic environment is a shared resource
- Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
- Understanding the significance of places is vital
- Significant places should be managed to sustain their values
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

To understand the significance of Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area it is recognised this part of the historic environment has a distinctive identity perceived by people that can be considered a place.

The significance of this particular place embraces all the cultural and social heritage values that people associate with it. It is considered by Historic England that these values will tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve.

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SIGNIFICANCE & ANALYSIS

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SIGNIFICANCE & ANALYSIS

The significance can be addressed in this particular instance by the fact that Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council designated Prescot Town Centre as a Conservation Area in 1978 with the boundary being adjusted in November 1997. A further boundary review took place in May 2012.

The designation of such historic places of special architectural or historic character and appearance as conservation areas was taken in this particular instance to enable planning and management decisions to fully respect the character and appearance of Prescot Town Centre.

It is understood that the introduction of new development will be permitted provided it meets Knowsley MBC's relevant policies pertaining to the design quality and accessibility, the management of the historic environment and the Metropolitan Borough Council's adopted Historic Environment Strategy 2013-20183 which advocates the active process of management of heritage assets, often involving striking a balance between preservation and sympathetic alteration in order to ensure the long term survival of a historic area.

In terms of 'Urban Design Quality and Variety' it is acknowledged from the Borough's published advice that: "The historic environment provides locally distinctive design, superior urban design, legible townscapes, mixed use, greater variety of urban forms and quality public realm. It provides a basis for understanding architectural design and urban morphology. It makes a positive contribution to the built environment and creates a stimulus for creative and innovative new designs and styles."

In terms of adopted Policy CS19 'Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development' it is considered that the proposed development scheme will meet the requirements of Policy CS19 (1a & 1c) in that:

- It responds to the immediate surrounding in a similar manner to that of the existing building in terms of scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of this part of Prescot town centre, and
- As an existing focal point along High Street on one of the principal thoroughfares it will meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Borough Council's strategic regeneration objectives.

The proposed development scheme will also meet the requirements of Policy CS19 (2a), (2b) & (2c).

With regard to adopted Policy CS20 - 'Managing the Borough's Historic Environment' it is understood that in regard to Policy CS20 (1) development proposals should preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets. In this particular instance, the designated conservation area and a that the preservation of the local distinctiveness and character of historic assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting

Policy CS20 (2) indicates that the Metropolitan Borough Council will encourage the re-use of vacant buildings within designated heritage assets, with favourable consideration given, where appropriate, to enable a use for a purpose sympathetic to the conservation of the character of the area.



No 34 High Street



No 32 High Street



No 32 High Street from Leyland Street

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SIGNIFICANCE & ANALYSIS

It is recognised that in dealing with new development proposals, the Metropolitan Borough Council will endeavour to strike a balance between the protection of the built heritage and the need to allow original architecture and buildings to meet the needs of modern businesses and residents.

By virtue of the application site being located within a designated Conservation Area it is recognised that such status ensures that new development is expected to integrate appropriately with the special character of the area.

The proposal will not harmfully effect the listed building 37 High Street or Prescot Conservation Area. The proposed High Street elevation aims to restore and improve the current appearance of the street by reintroducing a traditional shop front to no.34 High Street and by replacing the remaining windows to the elevations of no.32 and no.34 High Street with aluminium sash windows in a matching profile and design to the original timber windows.

In terms of the proposed development meeting the requirements of current locally adopted policies, namely: CS19 'Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development' and CS20 'Managing the Borough's Historic Environment' regard must also be given to Historic England's 'Good Practice Advice Note 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets' (2nd Edition 2017).



Existing High Street Elevation



Proposed High Street Elevation
Scale 1:100

SIGNIFICANCE & ANALYSIS

Setting as defined in the NPPF 2018 is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. The extent of the 'setting' is not fixed and is liable to change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. In order to understand the overall setting photos earlier in this section shows the development site from a number of key view points along High Street and Leyland Street.

Historic England advocates that: "While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual application or proposal, it cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset."

It is understood that elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, in this particular instance the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area. The application site in its present arrangement is considered to have negative contribution to the character of the designated conservation area. The vacant building needs to be developed in order to reinstate the focal point that once existed in the late 1800s and also to provide an appropriate architectural termination to the corner of Leyland Street and High Street.

The application building, in its current vacant state is having a negative effect on the character of the conservation area in which it is situated. The façade of the building needs to be regenerated to regain it's status as a cohesive part on the main thoroughfare.

The proposed new shop front re-instates the original use of the building. The scale, mass and design of the proposed shop front is inspired by the original features of the shopfront adjacent and period photographic evidence. The new shopfront will make a positive contribution to the conservation area with the new aluminium windows not having a positive or negative effect due to the fact they will be the same design as the windows they are replacing.

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SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

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In terms of meeting both local and national adopted conservation policies it is considered that in terms of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (January 2016) the submitted scheme addresses Policy CS19 'Design Quality and Accessibility' by enhancing the local distinctiveness and identity of this part of the designated Conservation Area.

The proposals respond to and integrate the positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, in terms of local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment which has been inspired by existing part of the building that is on the site.

In terms of enhancing local distinctiveness and identity it is recognised that it is necessary to adopt high standards of design. Creating a positive image for Prescott is vital to encouraging investment and to improve quality of life for residents.

Image is strongly influenced by buildings, spaces and cultural landmarks. The approach taken seeks to reflect positive characteristics of the existing building and adopts the precedence that is displayed by the character and original features of the existing building.

With regard to Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (January 2016) Policy CS20 'Managing the Borough's Historic Environment' it is recognised that Development proposals in Knowsley should preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets and to prevent demolition or development that would result in substantial harm or the loss of a designated historic asset or its setting.

It is acknowledged that the application site has lain vacant for a number of years. It is apparent from preliminary exchanges of correspondence with the Local Planning Authority that a refurbishment of the shop front is likely to be met with favourable consideration given that the proposal is considered to comply with respective parts of adopted Policy CS20.

Conservation Area status ensures that important that development is expected to integrate appropriately with the special character of the area. It is acknowledged that the Metropolitan Borough Council has a general presumption in favour of the preservation of buildings or structures that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. In this case the application site has been unused for a number of years.

The design approach to the submitted proposal adopts the Metropolitan Borough Council's aims and objectives in respect of not intending to prevent change or development, but to ensure that where change does take place, it helps to preserve or enhance the special character of the area.

As such it is considered the proposals meet locally adopted Policy CS20 for managing the historic environment by:

- Preserving the local distinctiveness and character of historic assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting and immediate landscape.
- Prevents demolition and/or development which would result in substantial harm or the loss of a designated historic asset or its setting.
- Will facilitate the long term conservation and enhancement of local assets and areas of historic importance.

With regard to Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) the proposals are considered to meet the requirements of Paragraph 185 as the local authority has set out its strategy for the protection of the historic environment.

The submitted documents meet the requirements of Paragraph 189 by describing the significance of any heritage assets affected in relation to its contribution made by the setting. The level of detail is proportionate to the assets' importance and is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.

It is recognised that in relation to Paragraph 192 of the NPPF 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.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm of the significance of this designated conservation area, this harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use, NPPF Paragraph 194. The optimal value in this particular instance is to provide the Borough with much needed retail space along High Street.

In terms of NPPF Paragraph 200 local authorities are required to look favourably on proposals that will help preserve those elements of the setting that will make a positive contribution to the evolving character of the designated heritage asset.

The proposed development scheme will not result in the loss of any historic fabric. However, in terms of setting the following criteria have been used to assess the proposal.

- Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
- Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
- Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
- Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

The site has been assessed by using Historic England's techniques pertaining to the 'Zone of Visual Influence' or 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility'. Using the latter it has been possible to understand the proposed development in relation to the non-designated heritage assets within the designated conservation area to better identify those that may be affected.

Should Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority be mindful to approve the current development proposal then it considered that the overall affect on the character of the designated conservation area and the immediate neighbouring buildings will be beneficial and result in less than substantial harm to the significance of Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area.

The proposed store front will add some distinctiveness to the character of this part of the of conservation area and main route through Prescott. This should be seen as a benefit positive contribution to the conservation area. The new aluminium windows will be of the same profile and design of the existing, for this reason there will be no harm to the fabric of the conservation area. Increased thermal properties of the new windows will upgrade the thermal performance of the external skin, bringing the glazing up to current building regulation standards.