

3333_7 Belvedere Road, Westbury Park, Bristol

Heritage Statement

11th March 2025

1.00 Introduction

- 1.01 We apply for planning permission for the conversion of No. 7 Belvedere Road to care home use, as part of the Glenview Care Home in the adjoining Nos. 8-9 Belvedere Road.

The planning issues with the change of use are addressed in the Planning Statement prepared by Planning Ventures which accompanies this application. In physical terms, the proposals involve the following...

- a. Additional windows and a lightwell to the lower ground floor facing Belvedere Road.
- b. Alterations to the fenestration to the rear, to reflect the re-alignment of the half landing floors with the main floor levels and ground, first and second floor levels
- c. Dormers to the rear and side roof planes.
- d. A replacement rear extension at ground floor and lower ground floor levels, served by an enlarged lightwell.
- e. An internal link through the party wall to No. 8 on each of four levels.

Items a. to d. inclusive formed the basis of planning application no. 24/03733/F for

Replacement rear extension and works to existing building to include external alterations to window levels, new dormers to rear and side, formation of windows to lower ground floor level and creation of associated lightwells.

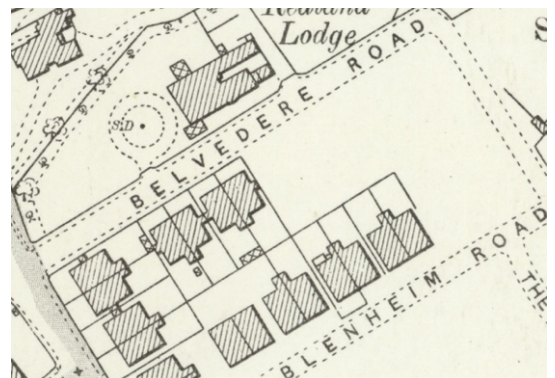
This was granted planning permission on 4th December 2024.

- 1.02 No. 7 Belvedere Road is configured as apartments, with three apartments for rent over the existing four levels. It is not known when the building was subdivided into flats; it is a long established use.
- 1.03 The lower maisonette (Flat 1) uses the original entrance (through a side porch as many houses of this date in Bristol). Flats 2 and 3 on the upper levels (and accessed from a door formed by the enlargement of an original window facing Belvedere Road)
- 1.04 The application site is located in The Downs Conservation Area. The building is unlisted, and is not on the Local List. Its heritage value is solely as part of the conservation area.

2.00 Background

- 2.01 Belvedere Road was laid out in the latter part of the 19th Century. The line of the road is parallel to the side of the now demolished Redland Lodge. This building occupied the far side of the road, and the map record shows it as a ruin in the 1947-1965 National Grid series OS mapping. It has been replaced by houses which, in their appearance, date from the 1950s.

- 2.02 The development along the south side of Belvedere Road commenced from the Redland Road end, with Nos. 1-4 shown on the 2nd Edition mapping. The remainder of the south side of Belvedere Road (including Nos. 8-9) do not appear on the OS mapping until the 3rd Edition (1898-1929). Given the relative dates of the mapping series' it can be inferred that the building date from the last decade of the 19th Century. This aligns with both its architectural style, and the significant suburban development that took place at that time.



- 2.03 The building is one half of what was originally a pair of semi-detached Victorian Villas. The other half, No. 8, has since been joined with No. 9 to form Glenview Care Home. The discrete nature of the line of semi-detached villas is therefore lost.
- 2.04 The original house has not been altered much externally. The main change is the insertion of a doorway (to give access to the upper flats) in the leftmost of a triple window screen on the ground floor facing Belvedere Road. There is also a very small slot window at first floor level. Original railings have gone (common across much of the UK), though the stone boundary wall to Belvedere Road remains, albeit altered.

Stone dressings have been painted. This is the case on many of the house along Belvedere Road. It may be reversible, depending on what lies underneath the paint.

- 2.05 The existing rear extension may be part of the original building. The OS mapping shows what may have been a scullery (mirrored on the other half of the semi-detached plan) to the rear of all of the houses. Nos. 6, 5 and 1 Belvedere Road have similar extensions, suggesting that they may be part of the original building.

3.00 Significance

- 3.01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at Paragraph 128 requires applicants to provide a description of the significance of heritage assets and/or their setting that may be affected by development proposals. The NPPF (Annex 2, Glossary) describes *conservation* as:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

The significance of a heritage asset is described 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."

The setting is described as:

"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

In 2015, Historic England published 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning' in a series of three notes. The purpose of these is to provide information to assist in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and the related guidance given in the National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG).

- 3.02 The assessment of the heritage value of the site and neighbouring buildings is based on an analytical survey and understanding of available tangible cartographic, documentary and physical evidence, as well as intangible historic, social and even spiritual associations of the site. It is evident that the nature of the significance lies the character of the particular character area of the conservation area in which the site is located.

The architectural and aesthetic importance of a building or structure relates to the physical significance in terms of their contribution to an understanding of the architectural development of a particular site and broader townscape setting. Aesthetic value includes aspects of sensory perception such as consideration of form, scale, colour, texture and material of the fabric; smells and sounds associated with the character of the place and its use.

Neither No. 7 nor the adjacent buildings are of significant merit in themselves. They are old, they have a certain visual character through the use of traditional detailing and a use of traditional skills and materials in their construction. There is also a variety in treatment along the street.

However, all have changed somewhat in their use and detailed appearance, not least being the infilling of gaps between original building volumes, and the painting of stone features. The setting has altered since their original construction, with the loss of Redland Lodge opposite and its replacement by a row of modest red brick houses in the 1950s. Nonetheless the 'feel' of Belvedere Road is pleasant, enhanced by the now mature street trees.



View across Belvedere Road. Note the door to the upper flats and the very small slot window at first floor.

The rear of the application site is not visible from the public realm, and therefore neither contributes to, nor detracts from, the character of the conservation area.

- 3.03 In all of the above it should be noted that the conservation area is The Downs. Belvedere Road is on the edge of this huge heritage and amenity asset.

4.00 Value

- 4.01 English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* defines the heritage value of a place using a number of different criteria:
- Evidential value
 - Historical value
 - Aesthetic value
 - Communal value (which is often related to historical or aesthetic value, but often has additional and specific aspects)

Evidential:

The site has limited evidential value, being part of a residential development in the last decade of the 19th Century, and much altered since.

Historical:

The site has some very limited historical value for the reasons given above..

Aesthetic:

The site has limited aesthetic value. The buildings are not without charm, as described in 3.02 above, but this is tempered by the changes to the buildings, and their neighbours over time.

Communal:

The site is a building sub-divided into flats. As such it has a modest community of residents and their visitors. It has no further communal value.

5.00 Assessment

- 5.01 Paragraph 138 of English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* document lists the following criteria for new work and alteration:
- New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place*
- the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;*
 - the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*
 - the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.*
- 5.02 ***Is there sufficient information:***
There is no historic information on the building. We include existing floor plans and elevations based on measured drawings made in recent years.
- 5.03 ***Do the proposals materially harm the values of the place:***
- The proposals will not alter the public character of the Conservation Area, save for a discrete lightwell formed to serve windows to a lower ground floor room along the street frontage. This is *de minimis* in its impact.
 - The side dormer will have minimal visibility from the public realm within the Conservation Area.
- The design overcomes the concerns regarding that previous submission for enlargement and conversion to 8 flats (21/00415/F), noted in the Officer's Report as...
- The proposed development, by nature of its excessive height, scale and massing would be out of keeping with the character of the host property and the Conservation Area.*
- The revised proposal contains a modest enlargement of the existing rear extension.
- There is no impact whatsoever on the setting of nearby listed buildings - these are some distance away - the nearest being the Church of St Alban on Coldharbour Road.
 - The rear extension is not visible from the public realm.
- 5.04 ***Do the proposals aspire to a quality of design:***
- The rear extension has been designed to be as visually unobtrusive as possible, and no taller than the ground floor parapet level on the neighbouring care home rear extension. It is a simple addition, which will not visually detract from the appearance of the rear of the building. The enlarged rear lightwell will give enhanced visibility of the rear bay.
 - The proposed front lightwell will be discrete with minimal visual impact on the streetscape. The window configuration echoes that on the other parts of the street facing facade.
 - The alterations to the fenestration to the rear utilises window proportions and forms that are in keeping with the original building.
 - The dormers will be simple in form, with flat roofs so not to visually compete with the gabled roof to the existing front dormer.
- 5.05 ***Are the long term consequences of the proposals benign:***
The features and benefits of the designs are described in more detail in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies this application.

6.00 Heritage Impact

- 6.01 Section 66 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 places a statutory duty upon Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

The statutory requirements relating to conservation areas are set out Section 72 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. This establishes that, in the exercise of their planning functions, local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of its conservation areas.

6.02 The NPPF states, at Paragraph 203, that:

- *"In determining planning 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".*

The NPPF places an expectation that heritage assets (listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas, etc) are assessed for their significance, importance and contribution. In dealing with development regard also needs to be taken of the significance on the Heritage Asset.

At paragraph 205 the NPPF states:

'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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).'

It should be noted that in this case the designated heritage asset is solely the Conservation Area. Any harm should thus be judged both on the immediate and wider context of the site.

6.03 Bristol Core Strategy Policy BCS22: *Conservation and the Historic Environment* seeks to safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance, such as conservation areas.

Development Management Policy DM31 sets out criteria applicants are required to address in proposals that may affect heritage assets. Principally it seeks to ensure the protection of assets from harmful change and where appropriate to record them. The Policy resists any proposals to a listed building, or within its vicinity, that would result in adverse harm to any features that contribute to its special architectural or historic interest, including its setting.

6.04 The Officer's Report on 24/03733/F stated...

With reference to the comments from the Urban Design officer, the proposed design is considered to be suitable, and not out of character with the property or the surrounding area. The proposed alterations to the host building would have a negligible impact upon the character, appearance, and historic significance of the surrounding Conservation Area. The integrity and status of adjacent heritage assets would therefore be preserved by the proposed development.

7.00 Conclusion:

- 7.01 The proposed replacement rear extension has no adverse impact on the character of the Conservation Area.
- 7.02 The altered fenestration to the rear, and proposed rear dormer has no impact on the character of the Conservation Area
- 7.03 The proposed dormer to the side roof pitch will have minimal visibility from, and therefore minimal impact on, the Conservation Area.
- 7.04 The lightwell and lower ground floor windows has minimal impact on the conservation area. The proposed design is sympathetic to the building and context. More importantly, it makes the lower ground floor space usable as part of the flat, managing a change that has been approved previously in a conservation led approach.
- 7.05 It is considered that the proposals would not result in any loss of heritage significance, and as such, are compliant with the heritage provisions contained within the local and national planning frameworks.
- 7.06 The proposed external alterations are those approved under 24/03733/F.