

# Heritage, Design & Access Statement

Proposed Development at:

2-5 Highland Square, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2YB



*Project Architects*

105 West Architects Ltd  
107 Lower Redland Road  
Redland  
Bristol  
BS6 6SW

T: 0117 373 7596

E: [info@105west.co.uk](mailto:info@105west.co.uk)

[www.105west.co.uk](http://www.105west.co.uk)



*Planning & Heritage Consultants*

Aspect360 Ltd  
45 Oakfield Road  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2AX

M: 07833 570722

E: [info@aspect360.co.uk](mailto:info@aspect360.co.uk)

[www.aspect360.co.uk](http://www.aspect360.co.uk)

Prepared on behalf of:

**Mr R. Tebby**

# Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

This Statement accompanies a Full Planning application submitted to Bristol City Council on behalf of the applicant Mr Tebby. It proposes to demolish the existing buildings (formerly used by a commercial garage and an HMO) and clear the site, and redevelop it with residential apartments, retaining an existing HMO use.

The Statement provides information on the site, explains the proposals and then considers the likely heritage issues and potential impacts. It addresses the requirement set out under paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires applicants:

*"... 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".*

It should be read in conjunction with the technical documents and drawings that accompany the submission, as listed on the covering letter.

## 1.2 Location

The site is located at the northern edge of Clifton close to The Downs public open space and a short distance west of Whiteladies Road (figure 1). It sits on the south west side of Highland Square on sloping ground in a predominantly residential context although there are commercial uses associated with the site and nearby. It is centred on National Grid ST 57377 74715.



Figure 1. The site location on the southwest side of Highland Square.

## The Context & Site

### 2.1 The Context

The inner-urban context is characterised by a range of 2 or 3 storey domestic scaled buildings, the majority being built in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Historically, several quarries were operated on The Downs and close to the application site in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the minerals and stone excavated and used to support Bristol's rapid industrialisation and expansion. As the suburb of Clifton grew in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the quarries were closed, the area became densely developed with a variety of housing. Around the application site the housing built includes smaller residences developed in tight-knit streets in comparison to the larger, more formally composed townhouses developed on Upper Belgrave Road fronting The Downs.

Highland Square as a space was one of the last to be developed with Ashmead's Plan of Bristol from 1855 showing it largely open whilst by the time of the first edition of the Ordnance Survey it had been enclosed and the square created.

Leading off Whiteladies Road are a network of residential streets, the majority of which are lined by period housing. The townscape is mixed and contains buildings of varying architectural styles and materials used to face them. The design attributes of the buildings contribute to a strong sense of place and character. There are a variety

of vernacular materials that have enduring qualities, the period buildings faced in either locally quarried rubblestone, ashlar blocks, brick or as in most cases with painted render.

The townscape and character of the buildings fronting High Street and Highland Square have evolved in an unplanned and sporadic fashion, with a significant number of the buildings being redeveloped and replaced in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Public House, the Coach and Horses, has remained the dominant feature at the northern end of the square.

The southwest side of the square, where the site sits, is predominantly small residential dwellings stepping down the hill from High Street and eventually turning the corner on to the much lower Worrel Road. Much of this terrace of houses was rebuilt in the early 1980s and lacks the charm of the original mid-Victorian terrace of attractive brick-built houses. The terrace was demolished due to the bad state of repair (see photo 4, page 3)

Collectively the buildings contribute to a strong sense of place and the area has a unique character derived from the significant changes in the topography, the tight urban grain and quality of buildings. This is recognised in the area's inclusion within the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area (figure 2).

The site is a short distance from Whiteladies Road where the major traffic route is lined by a mix of shops, services, food and drinking establishments. Several bus services run along the run that connect the city centre with the northern suburbs and the regional shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway.

### 3.2 Heritage Designation

The Whiteladies Road Conservation Area was adopted in 1976 but there is no up-to-date management plan. Instead, the Council relies on an 'interim' document - PAN 2: *Conservation Area Enhancement Statements*, 1993. The Statements were not put forward as formal Enhancement Plans but as a stage in producing such plans. The Whiteladies Road Statement provides narrative on the general character of the area, it describing the site being in area three (figure 2) which is described as:

*'... a tightly-knit pattern of development based on the steep slopes of earlier quarry working. The area is predominantly residential with smaller, two and three storey terraces built generally at the back of pavements. There is a concentration of industrial and commercial uses along Quarry Steps and Highland Square. These are small-scale and in line with the close-knit character.'*

The Conservation Area is a sizeable area that includes the principal shopping street Whiteladies Road, as well as residential areas that contain a variety of house types and different sized dwellings. The significance of this designated heritage asset is mainly derived from its architectural qualities, which include the contribution made by the numerous listed buildings, as well as its historic attributes, which include the irregular street grids, plot layouts, trees and garden spaces that all form an integral part of this suburb of Bristol.

Many of the buildings are protected by statutory listing (Grades II\* and II) whilst others are locally listed as 'unlisted buildings of merit'.

Figure 3 is a map extract showing buildings in close proximity of the site that are statutorily listed (purple).

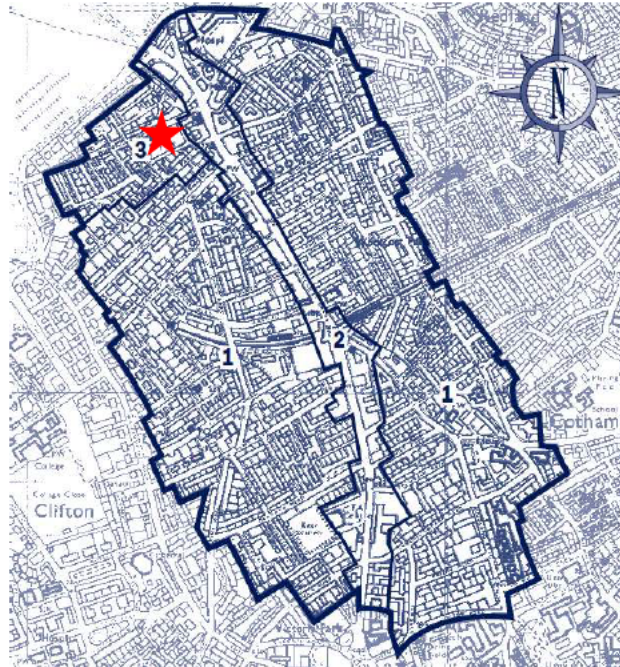


Figure 2.  
The Whiteladies Road Conservation Area with the site indicated by the red star being within Character Area 3.

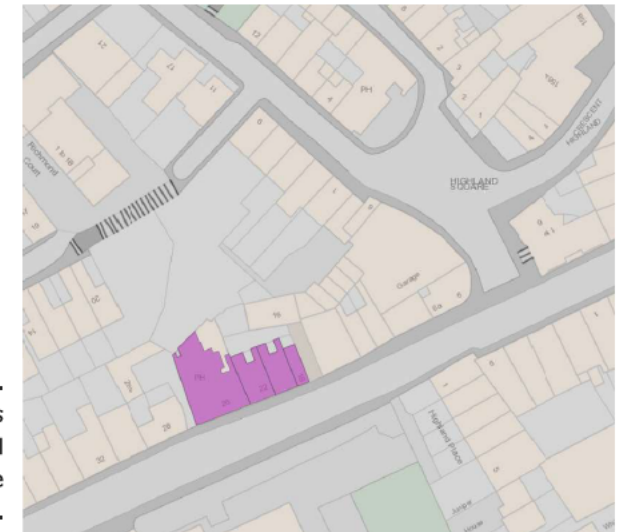


Figure 3.  
Map extract showing the site and buildings within the area that are statutorily listed (purple). The entire area is within the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area.



## 2.2 The Site

The site comprises a terrace of buildings that have their origins in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Over time they have been adapted and amalgamated into the two current uses, a Use Class B2 car repair and servicing garage, and a self-contained house in multiple occupation with 4no. bedrooms.

The commercial garage was occupied by SF Tebby & Son from the early 1970 through until January 2022 when they relocated to newer premises at the Avon Gorge Industrial Estate in Avonmouth. The premises have since only been used for some storage to maintain a presence at the property and to deter potential squatters. During this time the commercial space has gone through periods of marketing by commercial property agents.

The commercial unit comprises three inter-communicating vehicle workshops with roller shutter and pedestrian door entrances. There is ancillary first floor office accommodation with windows overlooking the frontage and rear of the site.

Within no. 2 and over part of the commercial units there is a self-contained residential unit 'The Flat' that is a small house in multiple occupation (c. 91m<sup>2</sup>) occupied by students in full-time education, all of whom attend The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School located at 1-2 Downside Road, Clifton.

The flat is accessed via an entrance door to the left of a ground floor commercial garage. From within the hallway a staircase leads up to the first floor where the accommodation is arranged with

an open-plan living/kitchen space, 4no. bedrooms, and two bathrooms.

The buildings are constructed from a mix of rubblestone, traditional brick and with metal and timber supported roofs. The roofs are covered with a mix of tiles, felt corrugated asbestos sheeting.

The buildings appear to be in a fair structural condition with no obvious defects, but the accommodation is poor and in need of major renovation.

The EPC register identifies the Flat has an EPC Rating of C (79) and the commercial unit D (80).

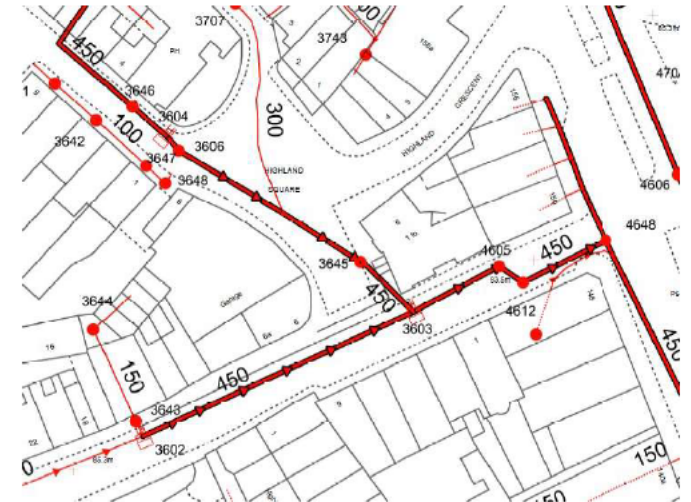


Figure 3. Extract from the Wessex Waste Network Map showing the foul water drainage.



Photo 1. Aerial view of the site showing its mix of flat and pitched roofs.



Photos 2-4. Views of the site's frontage facing into Highland Square. There are three distinct elements although they are internally connected. The entrance to the house in multiple occupation is the door on the very right. Once inside a staircase leased up to the first floor accommodation with some bedroom windows overlooking the Square. The first floor windows in the central building serve a small office associated with community unit. As there are three vehicular entrances into the building there are no parking restrictions immediately outside of these although there are a couple of bays associated with the Residents Parking Zone.



Photo 5.  
View towards the rear of the site from an adjacent courtyard. The rears of the buildings can be glimpsed rising above the garaging. However, due to the sloping topography, the buildings on the site step down in succession and so disappear from view.





Photos 6-8. Views of the interior of the commercial garage and mix of spaces.



Photo 9. View out of a first floor window and office space that overlooks the site and shows windows within the house in multiple occupation.



Photos 10-11. Accommodation within the house in multiple occupation.



Figure 5. Extract of Ashmead's Town Plan, 1855 showing the site undeveloped and part of the space that was to become Highland Square.



Figure 6. Extract of Ashmead's Plan of Bristol, 1874 showing development on the site.



Figure 7. Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey map c.1882 with further development on the site.

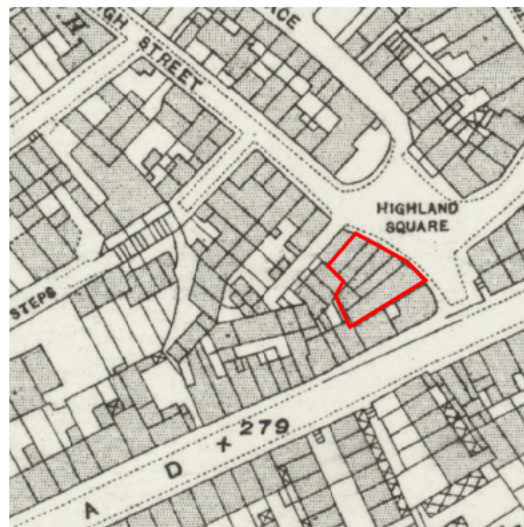


Figure 8. Extract Third Edition Ordnance Survey map extract, c.1916. The area has become densely developed



## 4.2 Significance of the Site & Setting

The buildings have undergone many alterations and the frontage (the only portion of the site visible from the public realm) has lost virtually all semblance of having a traditional appearance.

Overall, the appearance of the buildings is utilitarian and they make at best a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The large shuttered vehicular entrance and signage are features that collectively have a particularly negative impact

The assessment of the heritage value of the site and buildings as heritage assets 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.

Based on the research into the site and review of its current condition and immediate context, it is evident that other than the scale and pattern of development, the buildings have no other attributes that positively contribute to the character of the site and immediate context.

## The Proposals

### 3.1 Demolition and Development

The applicant is applying to demolish the buildings, clear the site and develop a new block that will contain a replacement 4-bed house in multiple occupation and 4no. residential apartments, as per the following schedule:

- Unit 1 – 1-bed / 1-person: 42.4m<sup>2</sup>
- Unit 2 – 1-bed / 1-person: 39.2m<sup>2</sup>
- Unit 3 – 2-bed / 3-person: 62.3m<sup>2</sup>
- Unit 4 – 2-bed / 3-person: 51.3m<sup>2</sup>
- Unit '6' – 4-bed / 4-person: 102.9m<sup>2</sup>

The internal accommodation is designed to exceed the minimum technical requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standard.

### 3.2 Design & Appearance

The intention is to create a contemporary-modern development that reflects key characteristics of the existing townscape and design of buildings that prevail in the area, whilst responding to the constraints and opportunities of the site's particular location. It seeks to replicate the pattern of development along the west side of the square. The building will rise to have 2-storeys with a flat roof behind a parapet.

The large well-proportioned rectangular window openings, simple brick detailing and roofs hidden behind tall brick parapets are typical of this part of Clifton and have been the primary influence for the scale, massing and materiality of the current proposed design. The historic subdivision of the site into three distinct parts has been retained and utilised to create a dynamic interplay of forms and to ensure that each unit benefits from a pleasant outlook either across the square or into the rear courtyard. The soft clay facing brick façade will reflect the historic character of the immediate setting which was formally predominantly red brick.

### 3.3 Sustainable Design & Construction

The development has been designed to accord with the council's adopted policies addressing 'heat hierarchy' and need for a 20% saving of residual carbon emissions with use of an air source heat pump and a renewable energy source in the form of solar panels. These will generate 6.27 kWp and combined with the CHP system will result in a 74.34% saving on residual carbon emissions. Further details are included within the accompanying Sustainability and Energy Assessment.

### 3.4 Access

The existing vehicular crossovers will be removed and the footway made good. A s278 for highway works agreement can be entered into by the applicant for these works.

In removing the need for vehicular access space will become available within the road which can potentially be used for additional residents parking bays.

### 3.5 Cycle Storage

The development will be 'car free' but as a means of promoting sustainable travel will include secure and weather-tight cycle storage. This will accommodate 7 spaces with bikes either being located to hoops in the wall or Sheffield Stands bolted to the ground.

In freeing up the space at the front of the site it is hoped that the future residents will be eligible to join the Residents Parking Scheme

### 3.6 Refuse & Recycling Storage

As illustrated on the drawings, a dedicated communal refuse store is provided for general waste and recycling wheelie bins. The provision accords with the council's most recent BCC standards. On days of collection, those bins that are full will be moved to the pavement edge ready for collection before being returned to the store.

### 3.7 Surface Water and Foul Drainage

The existing connection to the 450mm foul sewer pipe within Highland Square (Figure 3) will remain but adapted to suit the new development.

All existing surface water flows into the combined sewer. The intention is to improve the existing situation with the new open area at the rear of the site being paved with a permeable sub-base and for two areas of soft landscaping to receive surface water.

Further details could be provided as a condition of any future planning permission.



Photomontages 1-3.

Views of the proposed development shown in context.  
The scale and pattern of development seeks to reflect the character of buildings that surround the square.





## Planning & Heritage Review

### 4.1 Overview

The site is within an inner urban area of Bristol, and as it is developed, it falls into the definition of being 'brownfield', i.e. previously developed land.

The location is highly accessible to public transport and it is within easy walking distance of a range of shops and services, as well as transport services.

The principle of redevelopment would therefore adhere to key sustainability principles, and given the predominantly residential context, the proposed use should be acceptable in land-use planning terms. There are no apparent policy reasons why the site shouldn't be redeveloped for the proposed use.

The site has been marketed for continued commercial use without success. This, along with the poor condition of the building and local contact has led to the conclusion that redevelopment to create residential units is the most appropriate future for the site.

### 4.2 Design and Heritage Impact

The proposals are to create a sustainable development that has enduring qualities and high quality accommodation. The design approach seeks to positively respond to the character of the area and the constraints of the site. The built form and appearance of the buildings will enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. On this basis, we believe the local planning authority will be able to fulfil its statutory duty to pay special regard to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area when assessing proposals for development as required under s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended). Furthermore, in terms of the NPPF, the conservation policy principles have been met as there is no harm arising from the proposed development.

At the local level, from a planning policy perspective, the design proposals are regarded to comply with Core Strategy Policy BSC21: *Quality Urban Design* which provides a list of design criteria which new developments are expected to meet. It also complies with Development Management Policy DM29: *Design of New Buildings* which promotes inter alia, a high standard of design for new buildings, development that responds appropriately to their

importance and reflecting their function and role in relation to the public realm.

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. Given the design approach, the proposals are deemed to be policy compliant.

Development Policy DM31: *Heritage Assets* cross-references to Policy BCS22 and seeks to ensure development proposals preserve, and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets or their setting. Under the heading *Conserving heritage assets*, a list of expectations are set out and again, these have been adhered to in preparing the proposals.

Overall, the proposals will enhance the significance of the conservation area and its setting in a way that is consistent with its long-term management and development will provide accommodation for which there is recognised demand.