

## Heritage Statement



## Informer House, Teddington

On Behalf of RPH Group

June 2016

Project Ref: 2133A

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**Project Number:** 2133A                      **Date:** 09/06/2016  
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**Reviewed by:**



## INTRODUCTION

1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Collective on behalf of RPH in connection with Informer House, an unlisted building in Teddington, which is proposed for redevelopment. The application site is located on the south side of High Street, Teddington and is occupied by a two storey building. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (LBRUT) is the determining authority.
2. The site is occupied by an early 1980s two storey office building with an undercroft for cars at the basement level, accessed off Enterprise Way. The north side of the building faces onto High Street as it passes over the railway line (Plate 1 and 2). Although not within a conservation area the application site is close to the west end of High Street (Teddington) Conservation Area and Park Road (Teddington) Conservation Area is located a short distance south of the application site. (Figure 1)
3. Informer House currently has a permitted development scheme granted. The permitted development on the site allows for the change of use from office into 8 x 1-bed residential units.
4. It is proposed to demolish the existing building and redevelop the site with a part six, part five storey building, articulated in three parts facing High Street. The building is proposed to be contemporary in style. It will comprise three commercial units at ground floor level and 23 affordable residential units above with car parking provided at basement level.
5. Within this document the heritage significance of the two conservation areas is assessed as well as the contribution of the surroundings to their setting. The impact of the proposed new building on the setting and character and appearance of the areas is assessed. This report therefore provides the LBRUT, as the local planning authority, information in order to aid in the planning judgements of the application.
6. Taking into consideration both the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) this report assesses the proposed works against local and national policy and guidance within the context of the townscape and surroundings of the site.
7. The site was visited in September 2015 and an understanding of the character of the area was gained through a walk around the surrounding streets, taking in views toward the application site. There are no immediately adjacent listed buildings but close by are Elmfield House, and garden wall, grade II listed, and the Claremont Hotel (now Park Hotel) also grade II listed. The setting of these buildings is also assessed within this pre-application statement.
8. In addition the author of this report has attended two pre-application meeting with LBRUT to understand any potential concerns with regard to the effect of the building on the surrounding historic built environment. The proposed building has been reduced in height and amended in design to address pre-application commentary from LBRUT.



**Plate 1:** Bird's Eye View of Informer House from the south



**Plate 2:** Bird's Eye View of Informer House from the east



## THE RELEVANT HERITAGE ASSETS

### High Street (Teddington) Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

9. The conservation area is described in a conservation area statement and a conservation area study, respectively LBRUT, 'High Street (Teddington) Conservation Area 37' (n.d.), and LBRUT, 'Teddington Lock & High Street Study' (approved 1995). The history and development of the area, as set out in these two documents, is summarised below.
10. The development of the conservation area dates from the medieval period, when the village of Teddington expanded westwards from the river. Economically, the settlement was primarily dependent on agriculture. However, its position close to the river and the Royal Parks meant that it also became a fashionable location for the wealthy to erect villas, and the conservation area retains a number of the 18th-century houses built during this time.
11. The arrival of the railway in 1863 had a significant effect on the settlement, allowing Teddington to develop as a commuter area. On the High Street, this led to the replacement and alteration of 18th century buildings; in some cases, 18th-century villas were retained behind the new 19th-century shop fronts. Edwardian shopping parades were built on the south side of the High Street after another change relating to transport necessitated the street to be widened, namely the introduction of a tramway in 1903.
12. Further infill and redevelopment occurred in the late 20th century. By 2006, the location of outlets meeting everyday shopping needs had chiefly shifted to Broad Street, with shops on the High Street becoming more specialised.
13. At its western end the conservation area boundary includes the northern part of High Street, opposite the application site which sits outside the boundary, along with the Travelodge hotel directly east of the application site (No.2 Station Road) As the road rises upward from the east the character of the buildings changes from the tight knit Edwardian High Street to much later 20th century development of a larger scale. The form and influence of this development is softened by the trees and small open space north of High Street in front of Elmfield House, a grade II listed building, north-east of the application site. The open green space on the south side of High Street also serves to distance between the historic street scape and the later development at No.2 Station Road.
14. Directly north of the application side the buildings are similar in style to those on the application site, being brick, with brown tile roofs, but are three storey and more prominent in views from the conservation area due to the bend in the road. Within this small area at the western end of the conservation area Harlequin House is a six/seven storey building set back from the north side of the road and the Travelodge is a six storey building to the south (outside the conservation area).
15. Elmfield House is a substantial 18th century brick house facing south, set back from the main street. It's list description reads;

**Figure 1:** Conservation Area Boundaries (LBRUT)





*C18 house now Borough Council Offices. Brown brick, red dressings. Three storeys, 2½:1;2½ window front with centre slightly projecting and ½ window panel at either end. Brick parapet, and small brick cornice above each floor. C18 windows in moulded frame. Later Greek Doric porch in centre of front. Left side shows late C17 or early C18 work in plum brick and has 2-storey wing of this date with ground floor (partly modern) built out flush with front. Back elevation as front, but with half window inserted on either side of centre, which has an enlarged round-headed window on first floor and round I window on second floor. Later splayed bay on right. There is a late C17-early C18 plain brick garden wall running back to right of the street front. One room contains painted plasterwork of late C17 or C18.*

### Heritage Significance

16. The High Street Conservation Area is of historical and architectural interest due to a number of factors including the survival of 18th-century houses dating from when the area was a fashionable location for building villas and the survival of a high number of original shop fronts. The area has some notable single storey shop units built on the frontage of older houses; and, on the south side of High Street, Edwardian shopping parades with detailing in red and yellow brick. These retail features serve as a tangible and illustrative reminder of the boom in development associated with the arrival of the railway. The shopping parades also reflect the subsequent street widening carried out for the new tramway.
17. Architectural interest in the High Street is also provided by individual buildings, including the 'Modern' concave stone frontage of Lloyds Bank (no. 23) (grade II listed) the 18th century grandeur of Elmfield House and the variety of architectural form along the main street. Overall, the street is given interest and variety by the presence of different building forms, façades and roofscapes.
18. Beyond the High Street, the historical and architectural interest of Watts Lane stems from modest 19th-century terraced cottages set behind small front gardens and boundary walls.
19. Archaeological interest is reflected in the identification of all or most of the conservation area as an archaeological priority area.
20. The area is not of specific artistic interest.
21. Elmfield House is of high architectural and historic interest as a surviving 18th century house in the heart of Teddington. Its front elevation composited in a typically polite Georgian style is of greatest interest but its other elevations, and internal surviving features contribute to interest. The setting of the building has changed gradually over time since it was first constructed, being now built up and urban in character where it would have previously been experienced in more spacious surroundings. The gardens to the front of the building contribute to the architectural significance of the house, allowing an appreciation of its principal elevation but the development of Harlequin House to the east has affected views toward the house from the south-west. Views from the house are principally from the south front and in summer are filtered by trees close by and across the road. In winter the views are more open and the building looks onto the five storey development of No.2 Station Road (Travelodge) adjacent to the east of the application site.



**Plate 3:** View of Informer House from north-east on corner of Waldegrave Road.



**Plate 4:** View looking down High Street, westwards with Broad Street buildings visible and Informer House hidden by vegetation





**Plate 5:** View of Informer House from north-west with backdrop of Holiday Inn

#### *Contribution of Setting to Heritage Significance*

22. The surroundings of the conservation area are suburban/urban in character, with streets of Victorian and Edwardian housing running north and south from the main east-west High Street. Generally these historic buildings contribute to the character of the setting of the area, providing a transition into the historic shopping street. At the eastern and western end the urban grain is more sporadic with a less well defined building line, streetscape and architectural coherence.
23. Informer House, a 1980s building, does not contribute to the heritage significance of the conservation area and its orientation does not define the entrance into the conservation area from the west particularly well. While it accords with the character of the buildings directly north, its presence does not contribute to the setting of the area. The Western end of the High Street is a busy, trafficked street, enclosed by the height and scale of Harlequin House and the Travelodge, which shelter the green spaces within the conservation area.
24. Informer House does not form part of any views that are significant to the experience of the conservation area, save for its role on the periphery of the view outward toward the corner building on Broad Street, which sits prominently on the roundabout west of the application site (plate 4).

#### **Park Road (Teddington) Conservation Area**

25. The conservation area is described in a conservation area statement and a conservation area study, respectively LBRUT 'Park Road (Teddington) Conservation Area 22' (n.d.), and LBRUT, 'Character Appraisal & Management Plan. Conservation Area – Park Road no. 22' (approved 2006). The history and development of the area, as set out in these two documents, is summarised below.
26. During the 18th century, Park Road formed an important route between Teddington and Bushy Park, Hampton Wick and Kingston. At this time Teddington, as seen above in the case of the High Street, was attracting wealthy residents through its rural setting and riverside location. The west side of Park Road was developed during this period, with large villas being constructed in the 18th century.
27. Development increased with the arrival of the railway in 1863, which as described above led to the growth of Teddington as a commuter area. By that year, many Victorian houses had been built on the east side of Park Road, Albert Road and the north side of Clarence Road. The remaining parts of these roads, as well Victoria Road and the south side of Adelaide Road, were mainly completed by 1896. Further housing was added to Clarence Road at the turn of the 20th century and in the 1920s-1930s.
28. The Park Road conservation Area is characterised by 19th century development, largely in brick and tile. Its northern boundary is drawn tightly around the Park Hotel, formerly the Clarence Hotel which is listed grade II and described as;

*2. Mid C19, 2-storey large public house. Nine bays wide (2:5:2). Centre bays stand forward and have higher first floor. Stock brick with stucco dressings. Entablatures at first floor and parapet level. Centre bay door and window openings have elaborately enriched dressings.*

29. To the north of the hotel are two large red brick 1980s buildings on the east and west side of Park Road as it rises up to cross the railway line adjacent to the application site. These buildings are unlike the more detailed historic frontages within the conservation area and do not serve to contribute to the character of the views into the area or out of it. They are neutral buildings of a more solid and sizable scale than the historic buildings further south and frame views out of the area looking up the hill and into the area from the roundabout at the top of Park Road.
30. Informer House does not play a role in the setting of the conservation area given its age, location and orientation in relation to the designated asset. It is not visible from Park Road and is not visible from further south within the conservation area, from around Teddington Railway Station for instance (see visual influence over the page).

#### **Heritage Significance**

31. The historical and architectural interest of the west side of Park Road derives from surviving two to three storey detached 18th-century villas set within generous plots. These coexist with later large buildings. The edifices have continuous front boundary walls to the road with spaces in between.
32. The area around the railway station presents historical and architectural interest through its relatively dense grid of mid to late Victorian houses. These are stylistically eclectic and are set behind small gardens and consistent front boundary treatments.



- 33. The historical and architectural interest of the south part of Clarence Road derives from its identity as a cohesive suburban development dating from the turn of the 20th century. The houses are mostly red brick or stock brick, the latter having red dressings and stone detailing.
- 34. Archaeological interest is reflected in the identification of the north end of the conservation area as an archaeological priority area.
- 35. Artistic interest is derived from elements such as the drinking fountain (1887) erected to commemorate Queen Victorian's Silver Jubilee, situated on the west side of Park Road.
- 36. The Park Hotel is a building of special architectural and historic interest with a strong presence within the conservation area. This heritage value is derived from its external appearance and fabric and its surviving internal plan form, although the ground floor is almost one space and has been entirely refitted. Its setting is dominated by car parking areas either side and to the rear and the front boundary treatment has been lost, harming its setting to a limited degree. The building is experienced in an urban context, with modern buildings visible in views toward it from the south. Opposite, to the west the set back villas on the west side of Park Road contribute to its setting, as does the listed water fountain opposite.



Plate 6: View from east down High Street



Plate 7: View from north down Waldegrave Road



Plate 8: View from west up Broad Street



Plate 9: View from south-west from within Park Road Conservation Area



Plate 10: View from west side of Teddington Station



Plate 11: View from east side of Teddington Station



Figure 2: Map showing location of viewpoints 6-11



## VISUAL INFLUENCE OF THE APPLICATION SITE

37. Informer House is not a visually dominant building and the application site location is also not a visually dominant location when viewed from the two conservation areas. This is due in part to the location of the site at the junction of two main routes that both curve away from the site. Informer House does not terminate any important views from within either conservation area.
38. It is visible from Broad Street, looking west, which is not a conservation area. Here Informer House is seen together with a backdrop of No.2 Station Road beyond it, a significantly taller building. And from Enterprise Way Informer House is viewed looking north in the context of entirely modern development. The photographs opposite demonstrate how well screened from the locality the application site is in the summer months.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

### Legislative and Planning Framework

39. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had for the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of a conservation area. This provision needs to be given considerable importance and weight in any planning judgement involving development within a conservation area. Section 66 includes a similar duty as regard to the special interest and setting of a listed building.
40. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the national policy framework for decision making affecting historic buildings and areas (Section 12 primarily). Paragraph 17 of the NPPF makes it clear that one of the government's core objectives is to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
41. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires applicants for planning permission to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, in proportion to their importance. This report fulfils this requirement and has been prepared by a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) with over ten years experience dealing with the historic environment.
42. Paragraph 129 of the NPPF urges local planning authorities to avoid or minimise conflict between a heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal, by assessing the particular significance of heritage assets.
43. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, of the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
44. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF describes the weight to be given to conservation when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a heritage asset, including development within its setting. The latter part of paragraph 132, and the whole of paragraph 133, is devoted to substantial harm. Taking into consideration the significance of the conservation areas and the proposed works this concept is not relevant for this site. All the effects, should they result in harm fall within the less than substantial category.
45. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF refers to the balance between public benefit on one hand, and less than substantial harm on the other. In effect it is one of a number of material considerations for the decision maker in weighing the planning balance. Nevertheless the statutory duty in s.72 does have considerable importance and weight, no matter what the level of harm.
46. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF also refers to the setting of heritage assets in the context of preserving those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or which better reveal the significance of the heritage asset.



**Local Policy - London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames**

47. The following local policy is taken account of in assessing the acceptability of the proposed development and its affect on the historic environment surrounding it.

*Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2009)*

- Policy CP7 – Heritage

*Development Management Plan (adopted 2011)*

- Policy DM HD1 - Conservation Areas - designation, protection and enhancement
- Policy DM HD3 – Buildings of Townscape Merit.
- Policy DM DC1 – Design Quality.

48. These policies require the historic environment to be preserved and for new development to be of a high quality, taking into account its surroundings, urban grain, townscape and views.

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

49. It is proposed to redevelop the site with a part six, part five storey building comprised of affordable residential apartments from first floor upwards and commercial use at ground floor. The basement undercroft will provide car parking as it does now.
50. No harm will arise from the demolition of the existing building due to its lack of architectural or historic interest. It makes no contribution to the historic built environment and no contribution to any listed buildings and their setting and its demolition should be acceptable.
51. Replacing it with a higher quality piece of architecture provides the opportunity to enhance the application site, its contribution to the rather bland townscape of the area and its presence at the centre of Teddington. Its context of modern buildings between three and six storeys enables the this well designed building of similar height to its immediate neighbours to sit comfortably within the application site.
52. The proposed development has been designed in three modules, with a set back central entrance to provide legibility from the road side. A series of 3D street views have been produced by Wimshurst Pelleriti to show the massing and materiality of the proposed development in the existing context (see Design and Access Statement). These views serve to demonstrate the locations from where the building will be most visible and are not the views of most importance with regard to the heritage significance of the buildings.
53. Materials proposed are in keeping with the surrounding area. A light yellow stock brick will provide the primary material with the punctuation of the facades with metal balconies and window reveals, in steel and aluminium (painted a bronze colour). The elevation of the building is specifically designed with modulation and texture in mind to break up the mass of the building, creating shadows for windows and against the corners of the angled facade elements. The footprint of the building, which steps in and out along its frontage and rear elevations, allows the mass to be reduced in views from the surrounding area, adds variety to the street scene and provides visual interest.
54. A building of the proposed bulk and height will bring about a change to the setting of the High Street Conservation Area. This change will be experienced when standing within the western end of the conservation area and on approach to it from the west. The building will sit beside and be visible in the same views as the existing modern building at No.2 Station Road, as demonstrated by the viewpoint from the southern end of Waldegrave Road, looking south-west. This view does not contribute to the heritage significance of the conservation area and its change, although visually striking, will not result in harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area. The green open spaces will be preserved and the leafy character of this part of the area will remain unchanged. The viewpoint demonstrates how the proposed building steps down towards the buildings on the western side of the railway over the hump of the bridge, with the tallest elements responding to the adjacent hotel on Station Road to the east.
55. A greater sense of enclosure will be provided by the larger building at the application site, framing views out of the area down Broad Street but not interfering with the visibility of the historic buildings on the corner of Broad Street and High Street when looking west. When looking into the conservation area the new development will be highly visible from Broad Street but the experience of the conservation area and its heritage interest is only strong once the viewer is upon it and the visibility of the new building will not harm any appreciation for the fact that this is a High Street and an urban setting for the conservation area. It will not harm views toward the green open space in front of Elmfield House.



56. From further within the conservation area along High Street the new building will not be visible due to the height of the existing streetscape and the orientation of the road. In views from the grade II listed Elmfield House the new building will be an visible new addition, but a view from the front of the listed building is defined by a large modern building and the addition of another one, further away and of a much higher quality design, will not harm the appreciation of the surviving streetscape.
57. On the opposite side of the application site, to the west, the impact on the historic environment will be similarly benign due to the lack of clear views toward the application site from the Park Road Conservation Area and the lack of these views being significant to setting. From Park Road the new building will be an obvious landmark at the top of the slope but only when leaving the conservation area, heading northward, away from the area of heritage interest and surrounded by the existing modern development.
58. No views of listed buildings or view of importance within the conservation area from the southern and western sides will be affected by the proposed mass of the building due to the intervening screening of buildings and trees. In winter, the very top storeys of the proposed development may appear above and through the trees when looking north past the Railway Station (on the west side). However, this will be in the context of the existing building at No.2 Station Road.
59. The application site is not very sensitive to change because it does not fall within views or vistas of key importance to the heritage significance of the surrounding conservation areas hence there is an ability to develop the site with a high quality contemporary scheme, providing affordable housing within a town centre location without dominating the built form within the conservation areas.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

60. This Heritage Statement has identified and assessed the designated heritage assets affected by the proposed works. It has taken account of two conservation areas and two listed buildings close by and has been informed by a site visit.
61. Although the proposed building is of a greater mass and scale than the existing building, in considering the context of the application site, the modern built form surrounding it, the orientation of views toward and from it and its town centre location it is considered appropriate to develop a building of this size and scale.
62. The increased scale at the application site will serve to provide enclosure to the streetscape at the western end of the High Street in Teddington and will improve the architectural offering of the townscape on the edge of the conservation area. No key views, that contribute to an appreciation of the historic and architectural interest of the conservation areas will be harmed by the proposed development.
63. By designing a building to fit within the surrounding context the proposed building will not devalue the heritage significance of the conservation area and will not harm the relationship between the listed buildings close by and their settings.
64. Local policy seeks to preserve the character and appearance of a conservation area and this development will comply with that policy. No harm to heritage significance is assessed.