

Heritage Statement
in connection with
Proposed Development,
Wilkin Square, Clitheroe

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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Format

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to assess and inform proposals to build a small apartment block on land (currently used as a car park) off Wilkin Square, Clitheroe. The site lies within the Clitheroe Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset. In line with the requirements of planning law and policy, care is needed to ensure the heritage significance of the Conservation Area is not unduly harmed by the proposed development.
- 1.2 In essence the Statement assesses heritage significance and guides proposals for change in a manner that conserves this significance. The approach adheres to the principle of 'intelligently managing change', which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment.
- 1.3 The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation'ⁱ and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'ⁱⁱ and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012). The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.
- 1.4 The local planning policy context is set by 'Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets' of the 'Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy (2008-2028)'. In essence these local policies follow the spirit of the NPPF in that conservation of significance is paramount.

The Author

- 1.5 Chris O'Flaherty, the author, is a Chartered Building Surveyor and professional member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). With a background in the recording, analysis and conservation of historic buildings, the author holds a Master's Degree in Building Heritage and Conservation and specialises in heritage planning matters.

Methods of Research and Investigation

- 1.6 Inspections of the site were carried out in January 2017 to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. In accordance with the NPPF, background research has been proportionate to the nature of the proposed works and their likely impact.

2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location

- 2.1 The proposals site is situated adjacent to the road known as Wilkin Square which is just south of Clitheroe town centre. A location plan is given in figure 1.



Figure 1) Site location (edged in red)

Outline Description & Historical Background

- 2.2 The site is currently used as a car park with a perimeter steel fence, gates and trees on the southern boundary. Historic mapping (figure 2) shows that the site previously had terraced housing which was built during the second half of the C19th and demolished in the C20th. Indeed in the immediate vicinity of the site very little from the C19th remains, although the houses that line the north side of Highfield Road (south of the site) appear mostly to date from the late C19th and early C20th (see figure 3).



Figure 2) OS map c.1890

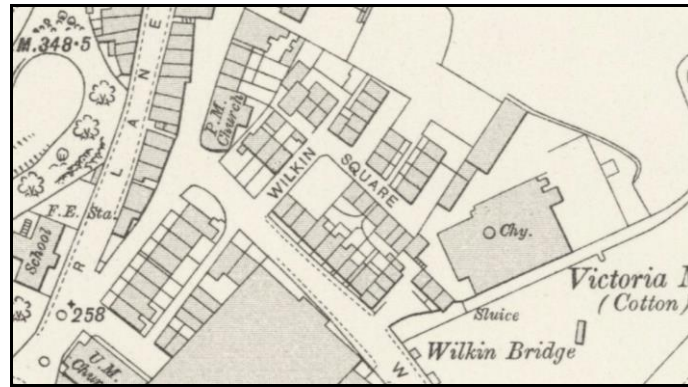


Figure 3) OS map of 1910

Heritage Asset Designations

- 2.3 The site is located in the southern part of the Clitheroe Conservation Area. The Area was first designated in 1973 and subsequently subject to a number of boundary changes.
- 2.4 In 2005 an updated Clitheroe Conservation Area Appraisal was produced by 'The Conservation Studio'. This summarised the special interest of the Area and identified its various strengths and weaknesses. Nothing in the vicinity of Wilkin Square is mentioned within the Appraisal. The Conservation Area map is shown in figure 4.

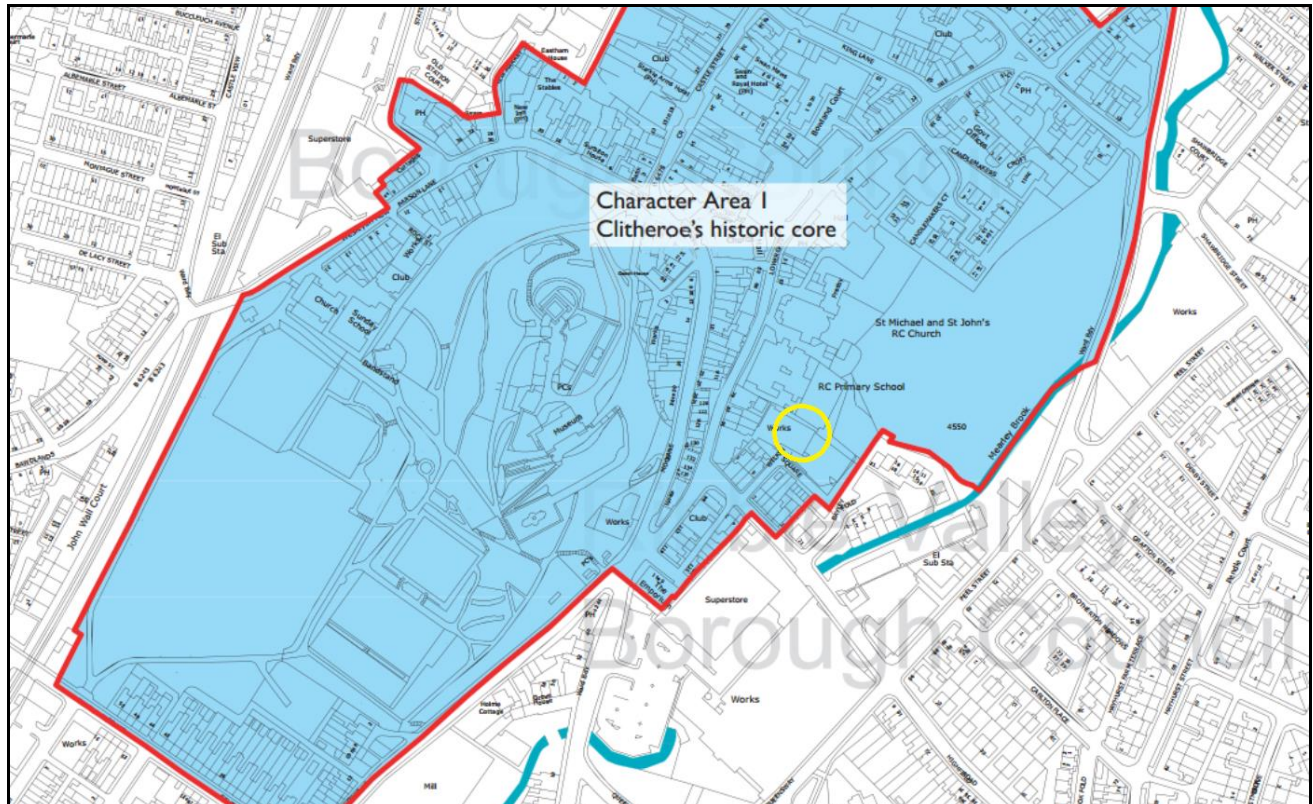


Figure 4) Conservation Area (part) map with site circled yellow.

Photographic Survey

2.5 There follows a selection of photographs showing relevant features of the site and its surroundings.



Figure 5) The site (left) and adjacent late C20th houses on Bayley Fold



Figure 6) The site (right) looking west along Wilkin Square showing backs of houses to Highfield Road and garages on rear boundary (left)

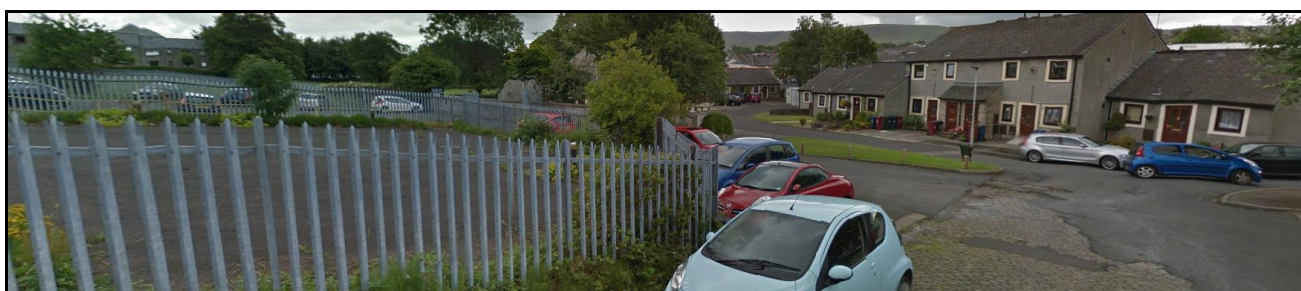


Figure 7) Looking east along Wilkin Square with the site (left) and Bayley Fold (right)



Figure 8) Car park to the west of the site with single storey Moqsue community centre building (part of the adjacent Mosque complex)



Figure 9) From Wilkin Square looking to Highfield Road



Figure 10) Looking east along Highfield Road with Wilkin Square access to the left



Figure 11) Looking west along Highfield Road

3 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

Introduction

- 3.1 The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by English Heritage (2008)ⁱⁱⁱ and relates specifically to the requirement contained in clause 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), given in extract below:
- 3.2 “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”
- 3.3 The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values which might be affected by the proposals, before evaluating these values and expressing them concisely within a ‘Statement of Significance’. The essential purpose of this Statement is to set priorities for conservation of significance and enable an objective assessment on the likely impact of the proposals.

Heritage Values

- 3.4 The heritage values explored below are distilled under the following headings: *evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value*^{iv}. The exploration focusses specifically on those values deemed of relevance to the proposals, and is therefore not an exhaustive assessment of the relevant heritage assets.

Evidential Value

- 3.5 English Heritage (2008) suggests that “Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity”.
- 3.6 The Clitheroe Conservation Area contains rich and diverse evidence of historic development, all of which contributes to the architectural and historic interest of the place. In the vicinity of the proposals site, however, very little of interest exists, other than the late C19th and early C20th houses that line Highfield Road. The site itself possesses no historic fabric therefore makes no contribution to the evidential values of the Area.

Historical Value

- 3.7 English Heritage (2008) suggests that - "Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be *illustrative or associative*".
- 3.8 The proposals site possesses no intrinsic historic value. Little of historic value is otherwise present in the immediate vicinity, albeit the older houses on Highfield Road possess a degree of illustrative value in the manner they depict an aspect of C19th and early C20th life in the town. The level of this value is very low.

Communal Value

- 3.9 English Heritage (2008) suggests that: "Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory".
- 3.10 The communal value of the Conservation Area is very high as it helps in the recognition and celebration of Clitheroe's rich history. The proposals site does not make a contribution in this regard and little in the vicinity could be said to have anything more than a minor contributory role.

Aesthetic Value

- 3.11 English Heritage (2008) suggests that: "Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place".
- 3.12 Once again the proposals site is not a positive contributor to the aesthetic values of the Conservation Area, but it does assert a negative influence in this regard. Herein there lies scope for enhancing the Conservation Area through the introduction of appropriate new development.

Statement of Significance

- 3.13 Having assessed the heritage values associated with the site, it is possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance, giving specific consideration to conservation priorities in light of the proposals for change. In this context a statement of significance is given below.
- 3.14 Wilkin Square is situated within the southern part of the Clitheroe Conservation. The proposals site considered within this heritage statement is at present a level car park located immediately north of Wilkin Square. The site was formerly occupied by C19th terraced housing which was demolished in the C20th. An appraisal of heritage values

associated with the Conservation Area has been conducted to determine to what extent these values are positively or negatively contributed to by the proposals site. The subsequent findings are that the site makes no positive contribution to the Conservation Area's heritage values and in its current state the site detracts from the aesthetic value of the Area. The site, thus, offers scope for enhancing the Conservation Area through redevelopment.

- 3.15 In normal circumstances, the design of any new development within a Conservation Area should respect the characteristics of the Area (in the vicinity of the site) in order to ensure enhancement accrues. Given proposals to build an apartment block on the site in question, it should be acknowledged that the only extant housing currently facing the site is the relatively recent development lining Bayley Fold, where there are rows of two storey and bungalow properties. These do not offer a notable enhancement to the Conservation Area and are therefore not a characterful feature worthy of consideration. Otherwise, the older terraced housing on Highfield Road (late C19th and early C20th) does possess some historic character worthy of note, albeit it is unlikely that the facades of these houses will be visible within shared views of the new development. The relevant precedents for consideration are therefore difficult to establish, hence the primary aim should be to ensure any new design is of high quality and respects the dominant scale and materials of nearby structures.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSALS

General Principles

4.1 General guidance on assessing proposed changes to heritage assets is given in chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). The policy establishes the premise that conserving significance should be a guiding principle when developing proposals for any new scheme. In order to satisfactorily do this, it is first necessary to conduct an appraisal of heritage values and identify the significance(s) of heritage assets before commencing with design work. Part 3 of this appraisal fulfils this need, and the findings of part 3 have informed the development of the new scheme. There follows, here in section 4, an objective review of the finalised scheme to verify to what extent conservation of significance has either been secured or compromised.

Summary of the Proposals

4.2 The proposals comprise the building of a new compact apartment block, three storeys in height and containing 10 no. units. The appearance of the block will be that of a contemporary terraced row of houses. A site plan and elevations are shown below.

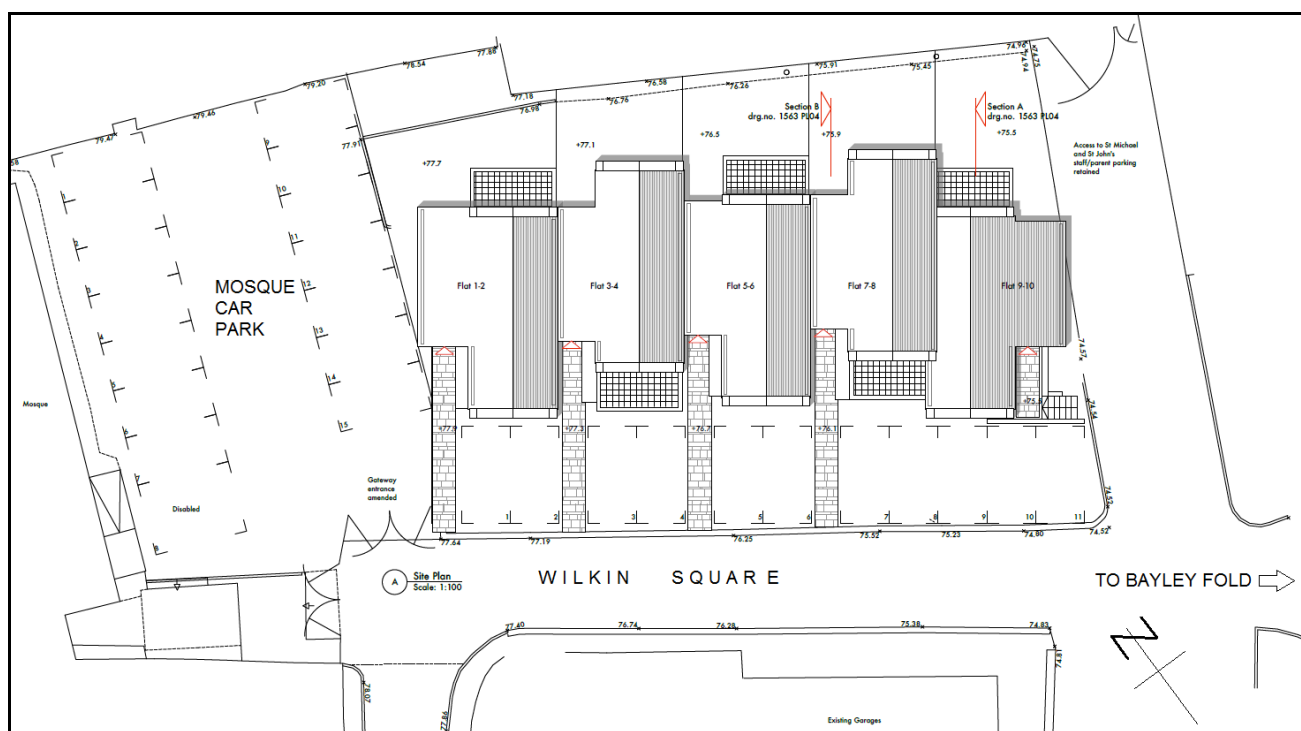


Figure 12) Proposed site plan



Figure 13) Proposed elevation to Wilkin Square



Figure 14) Rear elevation

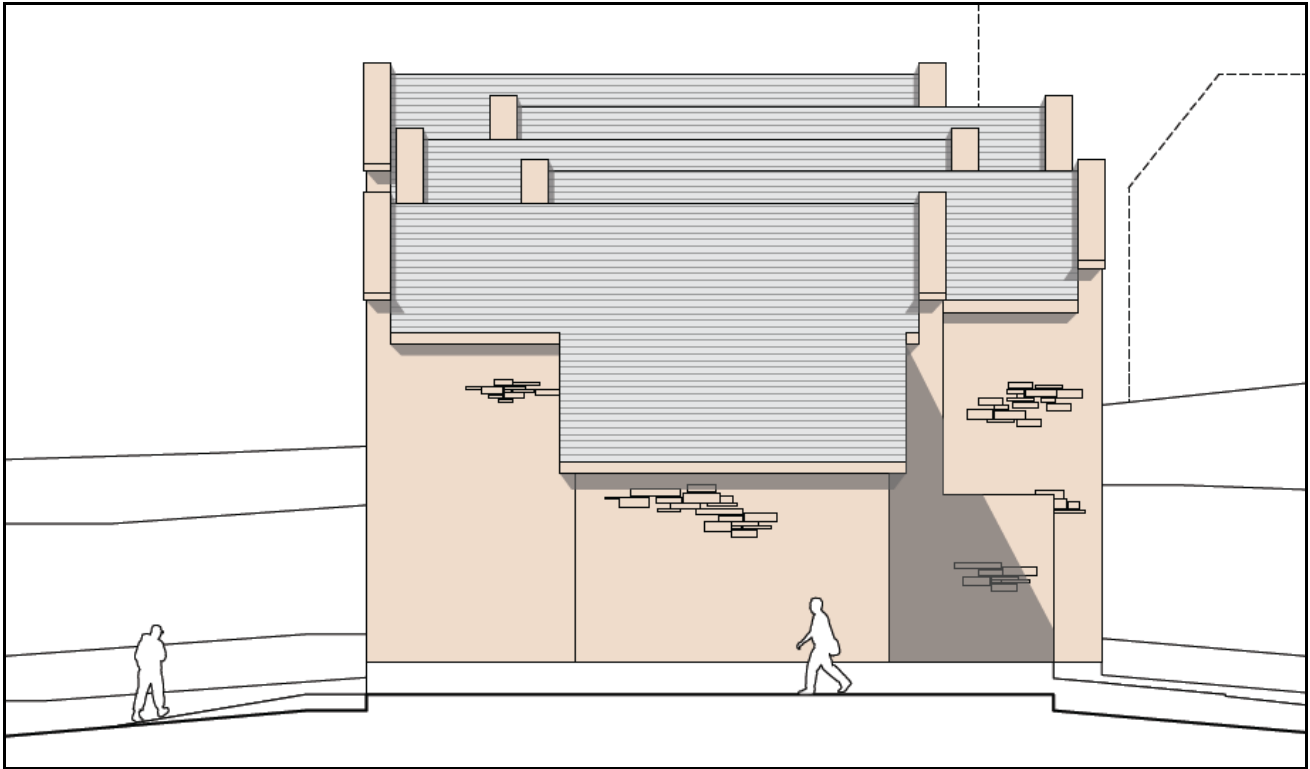


Figure 15) Elevation from Bayley Fold

Analysis of the Proposals: National Planning Policy Framework

4.3 As discussed earlier, section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2012) considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

4.4 The NPPF unifies the overall approach to planning, in order to ensure that deliberations over decisions relating to heritage assets are made in the full planning context. Securing sustainable development is the primary driver of the NPPF: in the heritage context this relies on maintaining active use (long term) in a manner that seeks to limit potential harm to significance.

NPPF Policy 132

4.5 Policy 132 of 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.”

4.6 In this instance the Clitheroe Conservation Area is the designated heritage asset under consideration and the issue for assessment is whether the proposed development will harm the significance of the Area.

4.7 As discussed earlier in section 3, the proposals site is not a positive contributor to the heritage values and significance of the Conservation Area. Indeed the site asserts a negative visual impact, albeit this is upon a part of the Conservation Area which possesses low levels of architectural and historic interest and exists away from the busy public realm. The risk of harming the significance of the Conservation Area is therefore low, however there exists great scope for enhancing the Area in accordance with the basic requirements of the 1990 Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act.

4.8 Guidance on the design of new developments within historic areas is provided within the ‘Building in Context’ (BiC) guides, first published jointly by CABI and English Heritage^v and now updated by the Design Council. The basic principle of BiC is to ensure that an appreciation of the context of the place acts as the basis of an informed design response. This includes developing an understanding of the significance of related heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings and conservation areas). As previously discussed, in the immediate vicinity of the site there is little of great quality, but in a wider sense there is a proliferation of terraced housing and a common use of stone and/or rendered walling and slate roofing. Otherwise, details such as window styles and proportions vary widely and prominent roof styles include both gabled and hipped structures, some with dormers. These variations are reflected in the images shown earlier (figures 5-11).

4.9 BiC also advises against pastiche replicas of existing historic buildings, and favours well-designed contemporary interpretations (of houses etc). In essence new buildings are to be ‘of their time’, but they also must not detract from the extant qualities of the historic built environment. The issue herein relates most specifically to conservation of ‘setting’ and the need for harmony.

4.10 The proposals in this instance utilise a palette of traditional and contemporary materials

and adopts the precedent of terraced housing for the enclosing built form. Whereas the accommodation is in fact a series of apartments, it has the appearance of a terraced row of townhouses, which are clearly of contemporary appearance and respond to the urban situation. Visual interest is provided to all elevations, thereby ensuring pleasing views of the block from any direction and avoiding the common problem of contrasting high and low status facades, such as can be seen to the nearby houses lining Highfield Road. The monotony of flat facades is also avoided through the use of recesses and projections, which accentuate the impact of light and shade and ensure the new block is a characterful and memorable addition to the urban space, albeit in a position of relatively low visibility from the busy urban realm.

- 4.11 In summary, the proposals represent a design which is informed by its spatial context and the respects the relevant significances of the Conservation Area, most specifically in the immediate locale. There can be no doubt that the apartment block will enhance what is currently a space that is visually unappealing and which detracts from the overall qualities of the place. The proposals also possess the potential to demonstrate the ability of new design to enliven an unappealing brownfield site, in the manner which, arguably, the most recently built housing lining Bayley Fold failed to achieve.

5 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1 This heritage statement has assessed whether a new apartment block on land adjacent to Wilkin Square, Clitheroe, will harm or enhance the significance of the Clitheroe Conservation Area. The findings of the statement are that two major factors will ensure the proposals enhance the Area, namely:

- i) The proposals site currently asserts a negative impact upon the Conservation Area and therefore represents an opportunity for enhancement, and
- ii) The proposals have been well designed, responding to the extant qualities of the place and the need to inject some visual interest and aesthetic appeal.

The scheme is therefore in full accord with the requirements of the 1990 Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act and aligned to the recommendations of both local and national policy aimed at conservation of the historic built environment.

ⁱ Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation*, Historic England 2003

ⁱⁱ Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, 2008

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Ibid

^v <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-context-new-development-historic-areas>