

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In relation to the proposals at:

16-18 Lowergate, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1AD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with your instructions, I provide below an analysis of the proposals for change at 16-18 Lowergate, Clitheroe. The proposed changes have been assessed to determine to what extent they may affect the heritage significance of the conservation area in which the building is situated. It is understood that this document is to accompany a planning application for the change of use and refurbishment of the building as well as alterations to its external façade for which this report relates. The proposals briefly concern the alteration of the building to enable a change of use from a former church/ shop to residential. The building is disused and has stood vacant for a number of years.
- 1.2 This document aims to provide the Local Planning Authority with the information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the proposals. Sustainable development is a principal tenet of the National Planning Policy Framework, promoting change in a considered manner that minimises harm. The building is not listed, this report therefore concerns the impact to the significance of conservation area that may be brought about by the proposals; identifying opportunities for enhancement, establishing priorities for conservation and justification for any harm that may arise. Internal alterations to 16-18 Lowergate are not considered to harm the heritage significance of the conservation area to any degree.
- 1.3 This statement has been prepared in reference to guidance published by English Heritage and Historic England. 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008)' provides general guidance in which to best manage and assess change in the historic environment. 'Statements of Heritage Significance' (2019) published by Historic England provides practical guidance on the analysis of significance and of proposals affecting heritage assets. Considerations regarding setting were undertaken in reference to 'GPA 3: The setting of heritage assets' published by Historic England (2017).
- 1.4 The Author is a historic building consultant with a B.Sc. (Hons) in building surveying and an M.Sc. in building conservation and adaptation from the University of Central Lancashire. Prior to specialising in historic building surveying, Daniel owned a construction company working on all types of historic buildings throughout the Northwest.
- 1.5 Inspections were undertaken in February 2023 to gain an understanding of the building, the surrounding area and the likely impacts of the proposals upon them. In accordance with the NPPF this document and the research that informs it is proportionate to the asset's importance.

2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS

Outline Building Description

- 2.2 The building is of two storeys and occupies a corner plot on the northern side of the junction of Lowergate and King Lane. It is of two stories with a pitched slate roof. Its road-facing elevations are rendered and painted, behind which are likely solid rubble masonry walls.

Historical Background

- 2.3 Clitheroe has a rich history dating to at least the Norman period whereupon the castle was originally built by the De Lacy family in the 12th century (possibly earlier) on a rocky outcrop. The castle now overlooks the townscape of Clitheroe of which to the north comprises extant medieval street planform that forms the majority of the Clitheroe Conservation area. As is typical in many historic market towns the roads within the medieval core of Clitheroe retain their historic names such as 'Castle Gate', 'Well Gate' and 'Lower Gate'. The suffix 'gate' is a modern derivation of the old English (or Norse) word for 'street' or 'way'¹.
- 2.4 16-18 Lowergate appears on historic mapping in its current form (approximate footprint) from at least the mid C18th upon what once a larger burghage plot². The building likely dates from around the mid C19th when much of Lowergate is thought to have been altered with the introduction of shop fronted buildings due to the growth of the town³. Pevsner provides a detailed account of a circular walk around the historic town of Clitheroe which does not include Lowergate⁴. In recent years the building has been occupied by The Salvation Army who have since relocated to the former courthouse building across the road.

¹ Farrer W. & Brownbill J. (1911) *A History of the County of Lancaster volume 6*.

² Anon (c.1840) Map of the Borough of Clitheroe & Lang's map of 1766.

³ LCC. (2006) *Lancashire Historic Town Survey Program: Clitheroe*.

⁴ Hartwell & Pevsner. (2009) *The Buildings of England. Lancashire: North*

Regressive Mapping Analysis



Figure 2: Lancashire Sheet XLVII. 1847. 6"/1. Site indicated in red.

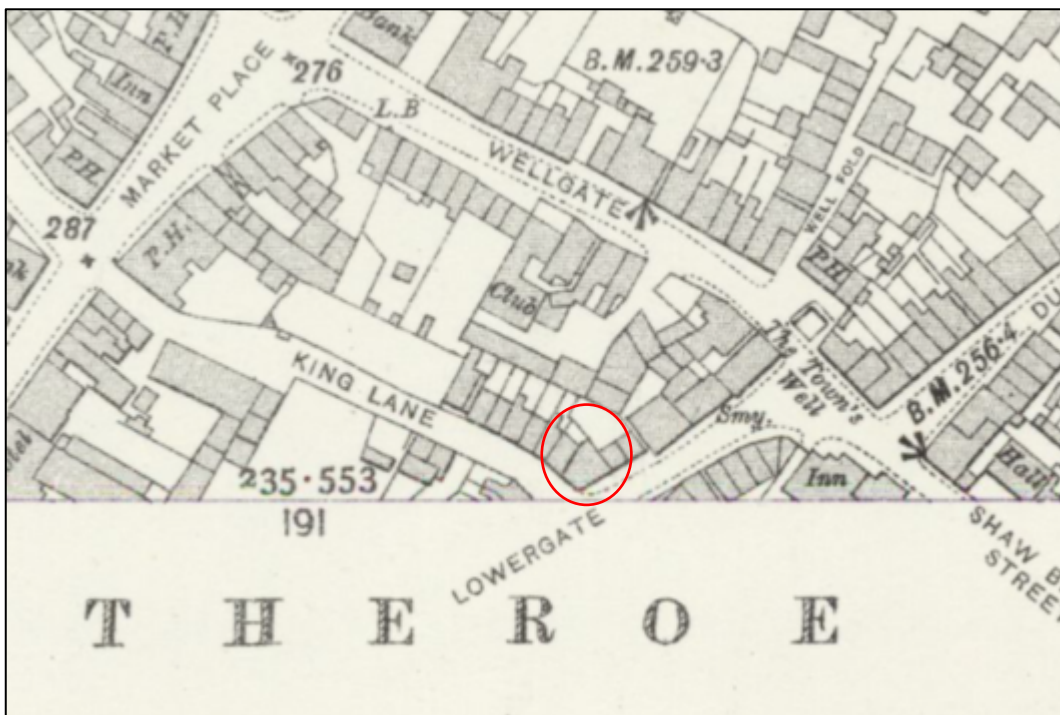


Figure 3: Lancashire Sheet XLVII.10. 1912. 25"/1. Site indicated in red. The building has been altered along with the majority of the surrounding buildings with infilling and likely re-building evident.

Heritage Asset Designations

- 2.5 The building is not listed but does reside within the Clitheroe Conservation Area designated as such for its special architectural or historic interest. However, the building is described as a 'building of townscape merit' for its contribution to the street scene on Lowergate and its historic nature.

- 2.6 Lowergate is described in the Clitheroe Conservation Area appraisal (2006):

Lowergate is an ancient route which meanders, with varying width, from Wellgate to the lower end of Moor Lane. It contains some important historic buildings but west of Stanley House its townscape is marred by the blank aspect of the car park and the 'backstreet' atmosphere of its southern end. The former Court House and adjoining buildings form an attractive group that closes the view along King Lane.

3.0 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

- 3.1 This section of the report responds to the requirements as set out in paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Under the heading "Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets" is stated the following:

- 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. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation".*

- 3.3 The overarching aim of this section is to determine the heritage values of any designated heritage asset(s) that may be affected or harmed by the proposals. The appraisal therefore begins by determining any heritage interests that may be associated with the building and other designated assets nearby (heritage asset designations).

Archaeological Interests

- 3.4 Historic England (2019) describes how *"There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."*
- 3.5 The archaeological or evidential interest apparent at 16-18 Lowergate remain in-situ within the building fabric which provides physical evidence of a mid C19th building. The building is sited on what was once a historic medieval burgage plot, however the plots have been subdivided in this area over the years with their original boundary

positions largely lost. The number of chimney stacks at the property suggest that the building was originally two dwellings, possibly three and has been altered in the late C19 to form a larger commercial shop building.

- 3.6 There is no known archaeological evidence apparent at the site or readily available elsewhere in documented or archived form. Regressive mapping does not indicate that there may be buried remains of interest. There is unlikely any further interest in this regard.

Historical Interests

- 3.7 Historic England (2019) describes these to be *“An interest in past lives and events. Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity”*
- 3.8 The building as it exists currently appears to have originated in the mid C19th almost certainly on the site of an earlier structure. It is indicative of the development and growth of the town in this period with polite design influences to its external facade. There is some minor illustrative interest in this regard. There is no known associative interest aside from its connection to its former occupant, The Salvation Army.

Architectural and Artistic Interests

- 3.9 Historic England (2019) describes how *“These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.”*
- 3.10 The building is of a simple design that is indicative of the polite architectural themes of the mid C19th. The stuccoed frontage and large window openings with four pane frames are common features of similar buildings throughout the town that illustrate the architectural fashions of the era. There are a number of timber frame single-hung sliding sash windows from this period to the southeast elevation that add a degree of historic detailing that are a positive contributor to the building’s aesthetic. The timber frame windows that affront King Street are later top-openers and are in a poor condition.
- 3.11 The PVC window that forms the main shopfront on the ground floor is of no heritage interest and detracts from the architectural significance of the conservation area. The white painted render that covers the roadside elevations is of late C20th origin and comprises a thin coat of OPC mortar. This is in a poor condition with numerous cracks and hollow sections evident. The render also forms pilasters either side of the ground floor window openings. These appear to be formed atop timber, likely with reinforcing

mesh behind. The ground floor window openings are also partially infilled beneath the existing windows in a similar manner. The render is of no heritage interest.

- 3.12 The building has fallen into disuse in recent years and as such is suffering a degree of deterioration to its external elevations. This presents a detraction to architectural interest at present and will only worsen over time if left unattended. Overall, the architectural interests of the building either aesthetically or derived from the rarity of its design are minimal, however the timber windows should be retained (or repaired/replaced like-for like as far as practicable).

Communal Interests

- 3.13 Whilst interest derived from local residents has not been assessed it is likely that the building is of low communal interest. However, it is also likely the case that its vacant and deteriorating condition is viewed as an increasingly negative aspect of the local street scene.

Setting and Views

- 3.14 The site resides within the Clitheroe Conservation Area, designated as such for its overall special historic and architectural interest. Therefore, how the site forms a feature within the setting and views of the conservation area is of great importance. Whilst the building does not possess notable heritage values itself, changes to it could affect the significance of the conservation area.
- 3.15 The building is set within the medieval core of the town with various phases of historic development apparent nearby from which the building derives the majority of its heritage interest. However, as is apparent when walking through Lowergate there are numerous aesthetic detractions from the street scene that include modern development, vacant buildings, car parks, plastic windows and poor adaptation and conversion of historic buildings. Whilst the building does retain some historic features which are positive contributors to heritage interest the overall condition of its external façade detracts from the street scene visually.
- 3.16 The primary views of interest of the conservation area from within the proximity of 16-18 Lowergate are when looking southwest towards the castle which is partially visible as are a number of other historic buildings (33 & 35 Lowergate GVII & 39 & 41 Lowergate GVII). The building is also partially visible from further away at the Wellgate junction and does form a feature within the wider views of the castle keep. To a lesser degree the views to the north and west are of interest also, again with numerous historic buildings apparent (27 Lowergate GVII). The views to the west comprise King Lane with a mixture of modern development along its length until its junction with Market Place and historic terraced cottages and the former courthouse towards the Lowergate junction.
- 3.17 The paragraphs above serve to provide discussion on the relevant heritage interests of the building and those associated with it. It is now possible to collate the information gained from this evaluation. A statement of significance is given below.

Statement of Significance

- 3.18 16-18 Lowergate is a mid-late C19 building that likely replaced an earlier medieval structure. Such redevelopment in the Victorian era is typical and can be seen throughout the town with many other similar buildings nearby. The building was constructed due to the growth of the town and the need to replace smaller, likely overcrowded buildings. Originally, the building was likely two separate dwellings but has since had its road-side elevations and internal layout altered to form a shop front with display windows. The decline in small shop retailing along Lowergate in recent years has rendered the building obsolete like many other neighbouring buildings. The property has now stood vacant for a number of years and is suffering deterioration to its building fabric.
- 3.19 The building retains a number of historic details such as the timber sash windows to the southeast elevation and the general silhouette of its street facing elevations. Such details are indicative of the period in which it was built and reflect the architectural fashions, building use and development of the Lowergate area in the Victorian period.
- 3.20 The building forms a feature within the surrounding street scene and is visible when looking along Lowergate, either north or south from further away. The building does feature to a small degree in the primary views of interest of the castle keep when looking southwest along Lowergate from the Wellgate junction. The views from Lowergate allow the appreciation of a number of historic buildings and interpretation of the origins of the town by virtue of the extant medieval street planform and views of the Norman keep of Clitheroe castle. As identified in the conservation area appraisal the group of buildings around the junction of King Lane and Lowergate form a cohesive group of historic buildings. However, the worsening condition of the building and poor-quality modern alterations on Lowergate detract from the heritage interest of the conservation area in this regard.

Illustrative Photographs



PL01: Lowergate elevation.



PL02: King Lane elevation.



PL03: Ground floor sash window, likely re-glazed late C20.



PL04: First floor sash window. Original cylinder/ drawn glazing in-situ.



PL05: Junction between ground floor sash and pilaster. Render overlies timber forming the projecting pilaster detail.



PL06: View looking southwest from Wellgate junction. Keep central.



PL07: View looking east along King Lane.



PL08: View looking northeast along Lowergate. 16-18 visible centre frame.

4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides general guidance regarding proposed changes to heritage assets. The principal tenet that underpins such changes is that of conserving and enhancing significance whilst achieving sustainable use of the asset in question. Section 3 of this document provides analysis of the significance of the heritage asset. The following section aims to assess the impact to the identified heritage interests.

PROPOSED ALTERATION OF 16-18 LOWERGATE – DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS & HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
PROPOSAL/LOCATION	REASON FOR PROPOSAL	IMPACT ON SIGNIFICANCE	MITIGATION/JUSTIFICATION
Internal alteration.	To repurpose a disused and vacant shop building into 3 no residential dwellings.	None. (change of use)	None required.
Re-rendering the elevations facing King Lane and Lowergate.	The existing render is in a poor condition and requires wholesale replacement.	Enhancement. Replacement render will improve the aesthetic of the current cracked and deteriorated mortar and surface finishes. Loss of architrave mouldings around and above the corner door. (assumed to be render)	Material will be replaced with a like-for-like cement-based product and painted as existing. A stippled render finish is proposed by the architect which will more accurately reflect the earlier lime render that the modern and cement render has likely replaced. A possible enhancement here would be to remove the paint

		The first-floor panel is heavily cracked, it is not practical to replace. May be possible to retain the moulding detail around the door.	from the jambs, heads, cills, stone gutter brackets and wall head plinth stones and leave them exposed. Please see paragraphs 4.1- 4.7 for policy justification.
Replacement of existing windows and doors of the King Lane elevation. Including corner door.	Windows are decayed and in a poor condition. Doors are dated and require upgrading.	Potential to detract from street scene.	Windows to be replaced on a like-for like basis. Proposed glazing to comprise narrow profile sealed double glazing units. Sympathetic replacement of the doors and windows is considered an enhancement to aesthetic of the building.
Removal of the signage and pilaster details to the ground floor windows on the King Lane and Lowergate elevations.	Functionally obsolete and are in a poor condition. Proposals are for a residential dwelling, such signage is inappropriate.	Potential to detract from street scene. Loss of details that enable the identification of the building as a former shop.	Please see paragraphs 4.1- 4.7 for policy justification. Signage and timberwork, including pilasters are not original and date from the late C20th and possibly later.

Re-size ground floor window on King Lane elevation.	To be in proportion with the windows on the first floor.	Potential to detract from street scene.	Opening to be the same size as the other windows on the King Lane elevation. New window frame to match existing windows (timber frame, top openers).
Insert bin store with double doors to the ground floor aspect of the King Lane elevation.	To enable the change of use via providing enough space for the storage of the necessary recycling bins.	Potential to detract from street scene.	Gritstone jambs and lintel and timber frame doors. Not visible within the primary views of interest when looking southwest towards the castle keep (PL06). Not visible within the wider views northwards along Lowergate (PL08). This element of the proposals is the least required in order to enable the re-use of the building. Visible within views from King Lane (PL07). Please see paragraphs 4.1- 4.7 for policy justification.

Refurbishment of sliding sash windows.	In a deteriorating but possibly salvageable condition.	None. Potential for enhancement and conservation of historic fabric.	None. Refurbishment would comprise a considerable enhancement to the aesthetic of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area. Specialist refurbishment to Include: - Removal of decayed timber - Splice timber repairs - Install narrow profile double glazing units (if possible) – will allow removal if internal secondary glazing - Service internal pulley system - Re-putty glazing - Refinish and repaint timber to match existing - Seal window frames against jambs with linseed-based material.
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Removal of PVC double glazed shop front window opening. Close up opening with masonry and insert new central pedestrian access door,	Functionally obsolete.	Potential to detract from street scene. However, the nature of the PVC is a significant aesthetic detraction itself. Loss of details that enable the identification of the building as a former shop. Signage and timberwork are not original and date from the late C20th and possibly later.	Clearly there is going to be a loss of features that define the building as a shop. However, these proposals are the least required in order to enable a new and sustained use for the building. The proposed window and door opening will be formed with locally sourced gritstone, jambs, heads and cills to match the other openings. The window frame will be a timber frame sliding sash unit to match the existing on this elevation. Painted and installed to match existing. Same size as the ground floor window to the left on this elevation. The proposed door will be timber in a timber frame and will comprise painted hardwood. Please see paragraphs 4.1- 4.7 for policy justification.
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Planning Policy Context and Analysis

- 4.1 The national planning policies regarding heritage assets are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework [2021] specifically section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. The requirements of paragraph 194 are fulfilled by sections 2-3 of this report.
- 4.2 **Paragraph 202** states: *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*
- 4.3 The concern here is whether the implementation of the proposals will amount to less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area. This could occur due to the appearance of the proposals and the manner in which they may intrude within views/ setting to an extent that harms heritage significance.
- 4.4 As is well understood and is apparent at 16-18 Lowergate, vacancy and disuse of a building will inevitably lead to further deterioration and harm to the visual appearance of Lowergate. The proposals relate to the alteration of the building to create three residential dwellings. The proposals of concern regarding harm to heritage significance are those to the external façade of the building that are visible from the public domain within the conservation area. Similar conversions are evident around the town and make the best use of what where vacant and obsolete commercial buildings, however a number have been poorly implemented.
- 4.5 The external aesthetic of the building will be altered due to the changes in fenestration, but harm will be minimised with the alterations of a high quality and the least required in order to facilitate the proposed new use of the building. From further afield the proposals will be partially visible but will not intrude beyond that of the existing fenestration on the primary views of interest when looking southwest towards to castle keep. Accordingly, the proposals will have little adverse impact on the ability to appreciate the significance of the wider conservation area. The proposed re-rendering of the building and refurbishment of the sliding sash windows, assuming the works are undertaken on a sympathetic basis will improve setting in this regard.
- 4.6 The proposed bin store on the King Lane elevation will be visible within the views of the former courthouse and the neighbouring GVII listed building adjoined to its south and visible when looking at the building from nearby on Lowergate. The store is required to house some of the multiple recycling bins that will be required for the proposed 3no residential dwellings. The addition of the bin store presents a minor intrusion to views in this regard but is the least required in order to provide practical bin storage for the proposed dwellings. As such, whilst it likely comprises a low order of 'less than substantial harm' the wider benefits of the scheme outweigh the small intrusion to setting.

- 4.6 The planning practice guidance (PPG) provides discussion on obtaining the optimum viable use of a building within a historic context. itself Paragraph 015 states *If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use... The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be the original use... However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between alternative economically viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner.* The vacancy of the building since the departure of the Salvation Army and the failure to obtain a new occupant in its current form demonstrate that the function of the building is obsolete. It is considered that a change of use to much needed town centre housing will achieve the optimum and only viable use of the building.
- 4.7 The public benefits of the scheme are that a vacant, historic building within a conservation area will be refurbished and given a new use consistent with the housing needs of the town. The scheme will secure the long-term maintenance of the building and will ensure that views and streetscape aesthetic are conserved as far as possible given the nature of the proposals. Additionally, the primary public benefit is the change of use. Here, the building will provide affordable rented accommodation (affordable due to proposed size) in a town centre location. On balance, given the wider public benefits of the scheme the proposed alterations are supportable under paragraph 202 of the NPPF.
- 4.8 **Paragraph 206** states: *Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas or World Heritage sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*
- 4.9 Guidance for change within the setting of a heritage asset that may harm its significance are contained within Historic England's (2017): The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) and advises a staged approach should be taken when considering such change. This has been followed within this document and is described below.
- **Step 1:** *Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected:*
 - **Step 2:** *Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated:*
 - **Step 3:** *Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it:*
 - **Step 4:** *Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm:*

- 4.10 Section 3 of this report found that the primary views of interest are to the southwest of the castle keep and to a lesser degree of the street scene looking northwards along Lowergate towards the Wellgate junction and southeast along King Lane. The potential impact of the proposals on the identified heritage interests with regards to setting and views is minimal and offers opportunities for enhancement via the refurbishment of the exterior of the building (render, doors and sliding sash windows). Accordingly, the proposals largely preserve the interest derived from the available views of the conservation area alongside providing aesthetic improvements of the building generally.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This heritage statement and heritage impact assessment have been produced to determine the extent the proposed alterations at 16-18 Lowergate may harm the heritage significance of the Clitheroe Conservation Area. The report has found that the risk of harm derived from the proposals is minimal and will achieve the optimum viable use of a building that for a number of years has stood vacant and has begun to deteriorate. It is reasonable to suggest that in order to enable the reuse of the building a degree of change is unavoidable. The alterations to the building as presented in this application comprise the minimum required in order to create three residential dwellings. On balance, any doubts that do remain regarding less than substantial harm accruing (as per NPPF para 202) are adequately offset by the wider public benefits of the proposals and the sustainable, adaptive refurbishment of a functionally obsolete and deteriorating building.

Daniel Noblett issue 1: 20/03/2023

Daniel Noblett issue 2: 05/04/2023