



Heritage House, 79-80 High Street, Gravesend

HERITAGE STATEMENT

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The past is not dead, it is living in us, and will be alive in the future which we are now helping to make.

William Morris – Founder of SPAB

1. Introduction

- 1.1 J F Heritage provides specialist heritage advice. Jeremy Fazzalaro has over 14 years of experience working experience in the heritage and planning sectors. He is skilled in heritage conservation, planning and urban design, archaeology desk-based assessments, conservation area appraisals, historical research, and all conservation Issues. Jeremy is a Full Member of the IHBC and Associate member of the CIFA with a MSc Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University.
- 1.2 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by J F Heritage on behalf of Mr Dhaliwal in order to comply with paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), applicants are required to provide a description of the significance of the heritage asset and/or its setting and sufficient information to understand the impact on any heritage assets affected.
- 1.3 This Heritage Statement provides an overview of the significance of the site, details of the proposal and considers the impact of the development on the significance of the heritage assets.
- 1.4 The proposed works include:
- Application for Listed Building Consent for the change of use from existing use Class E to sui generis (HMO) use and office on the ground floor with alterations to the buildings.
- 1.5 The application site relates to a Grade II* listed building dating from the early to mid-18th century. The property is weatherboarded with a tiled roof, dormer windows, and cornices. The property has a modern shopfront. The application site is located within the High Street and Queen Street Conservation Area, and Nos 77 to 83 and 77A form a group
- 1.5 The relevant planning decisions have been included below:

Reference	Proposal	Decision
19840429	Listed Building Consent for internal works	Pending Consideration
20040242	Display of ten externally illuminated double sided hanging projecting signs at first floor level, one on each building.	Permitted
19980399	Erection of a three storey building to form 2 no. retail shops, reception area and walkway with offices over.	Permitted
19980398	Application for Listed Building Consent for the taking down and removing existing cellar walls to 81-83 High Street; taking	Permitted

	down and removing existing York Stone walkway to Hole-in-the-Wall Alley and providing new footpath in York Stone; building new brick wall up against the northern boundary to 80 High Street and sealing gaps between new and existing wall against ingress of water; removing existing eaves gutter along northern elevation together with downpipe and fixing new cast iron downpipe to front elevation of 80 High Street; taking up the tiling to base of roof slope and forming new valley gutter to 80 High Street against flank wall to 81 High Street, all in connection with the erection of a three storey building on the former sites of 81-83 High Street.	
19920527	Change of use of office/workshop to a 24-hour taxi office.	Permitted
19950486	Application for Listed Building consent for the attachment of a hanging sign on the front elevation of no. 79 at first floor level.	Permitted
19950485	Display of a hanging sign on the front elevation of no. 79 at first floor level.	Permitted
19860701	Use of premises as offices installation of new shop fronts and change of use of the detached storage building at the rear to a workshop	Permitted
19860700	Application for Listed Building Consent for the demolition of the existing two storey rear extension of no 79 and internal and external alterations in connection with use of the premises as offices	Permitted
19830053	Change of use to retail shop with residential accommodation over	Permitted

2. Legislation and Policy

2.1 *Heritage Legislation*

Listed buildings are afforded legal protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Sections 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the Planning Act require the local authority or decision maker to give special consideration to the desirability of preserving the listed building. There is a strong presumption against the granting of permission or listed building consent that would harm the special interest of the listed building. Any harm to the heritage assets must be weighed against the public benefit as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.2 *National Planning Policy Framework*

The NPPF sets out government policy on the historic environment which includes designated and non-designated heritage assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas and locally listed buildings.

2.3 The definition of significance is set out in the glossary of the NPPF as *‘the value of the heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historical. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also its setting’*. Significance is defined as consisting of four main constituents: architectural interest, historic interest, artistic interest and archaeological interest. Historic England’s guidance on *Conservation Principles* expands on significance and identifies four values that can contribute to significance, these are:

- Historic Value
- Aesthetic Value
- Communal Value
- Evidential Value

2.4 The requirement for a heritage statement is covered under Paragraph 200 of the NPPF which states *‘local 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 heritage assets importance and no more than is necessary to understand the impact of the proposal on their significance’* The relevant historic environment record should be consulted as part of the assessment.

Paragraphs 205 states that *‘great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)’*. This is regardless of the level of harm to its significance.

- 2.5 Paragraph 207 states that *‘where proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss’.*
- 2.6 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF also advises that *‘where a proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. A balanced judgement is therefore required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset’.*
- 2.7 *Gravesham Local Plan*

The following local policies are relevant to this application:

- Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment
- Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles

Local Plan Policy CS20 seeks to preserve or enhance heritage assets and where relevant their setting; and Policy CS19 covers development and design principles.

Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment

5.16.10 The Council will accord a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Securing viable, sustainable and appropriate futures for such assets at risk will need to be reconciled with the sensitivity to change that many present.

5.16.11 Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.

These include:

- *Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting;*
- *The Borough’s urban and rural conservation areas; and*
- *Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough’s maritime, military, industrial and transport history.*

5.16.12 When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles

5.15.14 New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti- crime standards. The design and construction of new development will incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques, be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles, and be resilient to the effects of climate change. This will be achieved through the criteria set out below:

- Using the collaborative approach advocated in Building for Life 12 and in line with the guidance set out in Kent Design, the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings. Account will also be taken of the wider site context, including strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place;*
- New development will encourage sustainable living and choice through a mix of compatible uses which are well connected to places that people want to use, including the public transport network, local services and community facilities; encourage sustainable travel; enhance Green Grid links and encourage healthier lifestyles;*
- New development will be located, designed and constructed to:*
 - safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land;*
 - avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution, and land contamination; and*
 - not pose an unacceptable risk or harm to the water environment, including the quality and/or quantity of ground waters, surface waters, wetlands and coastal water systems;*
- The design and layout of new residential development, including conversions, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines;*
- New development will be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community;*

- *New development will provide appropriate levels of private and public amenity space;*
- *New development will include details of appropriate hard and soft landscaping, public art, street furniture, lighting and signage and will ensure that public realm and open spaces are well planned, appropriately detailed and maintained so they endure;*
- *Car parking will be well related to the development it serves;*
- *New development will protect and, where opportunities arise, enhance biodiversity and the Borough's Green Infrastructure network. Support will be given to environmental enhancements where opportunities arise;*
- *New development will be fit for purpose and adaptable to allow changes to be made to meet the needs of users;*
- *The design and layout of new development will take advantage of opportunities to build in resilience to the effects of climate change. This will include protection against flood risk, where relevant, delivering carbon reduction, provision for low carbon and renewable energy, and minimising energy consumption and water use;*
- *New development will incorporate appropriate facilities for the storage and recycling of waste; and*
- *The layout of new development will create a safe and secure environment and provide surveillance to minimise opportunities for crime and vandalism.*

3. Historic Development

3.1 Heritage House is Grade II* listed and the list description is included below:

Early to mid C18. 3 storeys weatherboarded. Old tiled roof with 1 dormer. Wide wooden moulded and dentilled eaves cornice. Sashes now replaced by casements. Modern shopfront.

The list description is unusually brief for a building of this type and status.. The property was listed Grade II* on 19 March 1974.

3.2 The property lies within the High Street Conservation Area which was designated on 16th January 1970 by Kent County Council. The Conservation Area's boundary contains the High Street and a stretch of the riverside, the Town Pier, St Andrews Gardens and the Clarendon Royal Hotel. The High Street Conservation Area was adopted in 2009 and provides an overview of the development and significance of the area.

3.3 *Development History*

Gravesend, situated east of central London, is a sizable town encompassing residential, commercial, and industrial districts. Historically, its significance stemmed from being the initial stop down the Thames from London. A fire in 1727 devastated much of the old town,

yet in the early 19th century, the town experienced growth, marked by the construction of new buildings, including a town hall and piers. The Victorian County History, written in 1798 provides the following overview of the history of Gravesend:

It is called in Domesday, GRAVESHAM, and in the Textus Roffensis, GRAVESÆNDE. Lambarde, as well as Leland, derive the name of this place from the Saxon word Gerefa, a ruler, or portreve. In German, Greve; hence Gravesend signifies the limit or bound of such a rule or office, in Latin, Limes Prætorius. Leland, in his Itinerary, calls it GREVA.

THE PARISH OF GRAVESEND lies on the north side of the London road, which runs along the southern side of it at the distance of about one mile from the town, which is situated twenty-two miles from London and eight from Rochester, the soil towards the west is chalk, and towards the south-east much inclined to gravel; in which part of this parish, at a small distance from the London road southward is Mount Pleasant, the property and residence of Mr. Joynes, of Gravesend. Round the town, in great part owing to the manure from it, there are some rich and fertile grounds. The town of Gravesend, having the church on the west side of it, lies on a descent towards the river Thames, to which it bounds northward, opposite to Tilbury-fort, in Essex; the western part of it lies in the parish of Gravesend, and the eastern in that of Milton. The east street, and the east side of the High-street of this town being in the parish of Milton, and the west street and the west side of the High-street in that of Gravesend.

The town-hall, and market-yard, the free-school, and the ferry across the Thames to Tilbury, parcel of the manor of Paddock, alias Parrocks, in Milton, were purchased in 1695, with that manor, by the corporation of Gravesend, in which they continue now vested. It is large and populous, but the houses, about seven hundred in number, are most of them unsightly, and the streets narrow, and until within these few years, illpaved and covered with fith; the inconveniences of which the inhabitants themselves were so sensible of, that anno 13 king George III. they procured an act for the better lighting, paving and otherwise improving this town, in consequence of which great improvements have already been made in it, and in all probability it will before long put on a far different appearance even from what it wears at present. Proper machines have lately been established here, with every requisite accommodation for sea bathing.

The Victoria County History goes on to provide details of the fire that swept through the town and had a lasting impact on the town's development:

On August 24, 1727, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, a terrible fire happened at Gravesend, which burnt down and destroyed the church and one hundred and ten houses, being the greatest part of the town; soon after which the mayor and jurats sent circular letters to the several corporations, ministers of parishes and others, imploring their assistance in their dreadful scene of distress and

calamity, and in May 1731 another fire happened here, which burnt down seven houses, as did another on Nov. 9, 1748, adjoining to a warehouse, which contained a great quantity of pitch, tar, rosin, &c. which, it may be said, happily was prevented spreading further by the explosion of a considerable quantity of gunpowder contained in them.

3.4 Historic Map Regression

A historic map regression has been undertaken to understand the development of the site. The Historic Environment Record, Historic England Archive and various online resources have been consulted in preparation for the assessment.

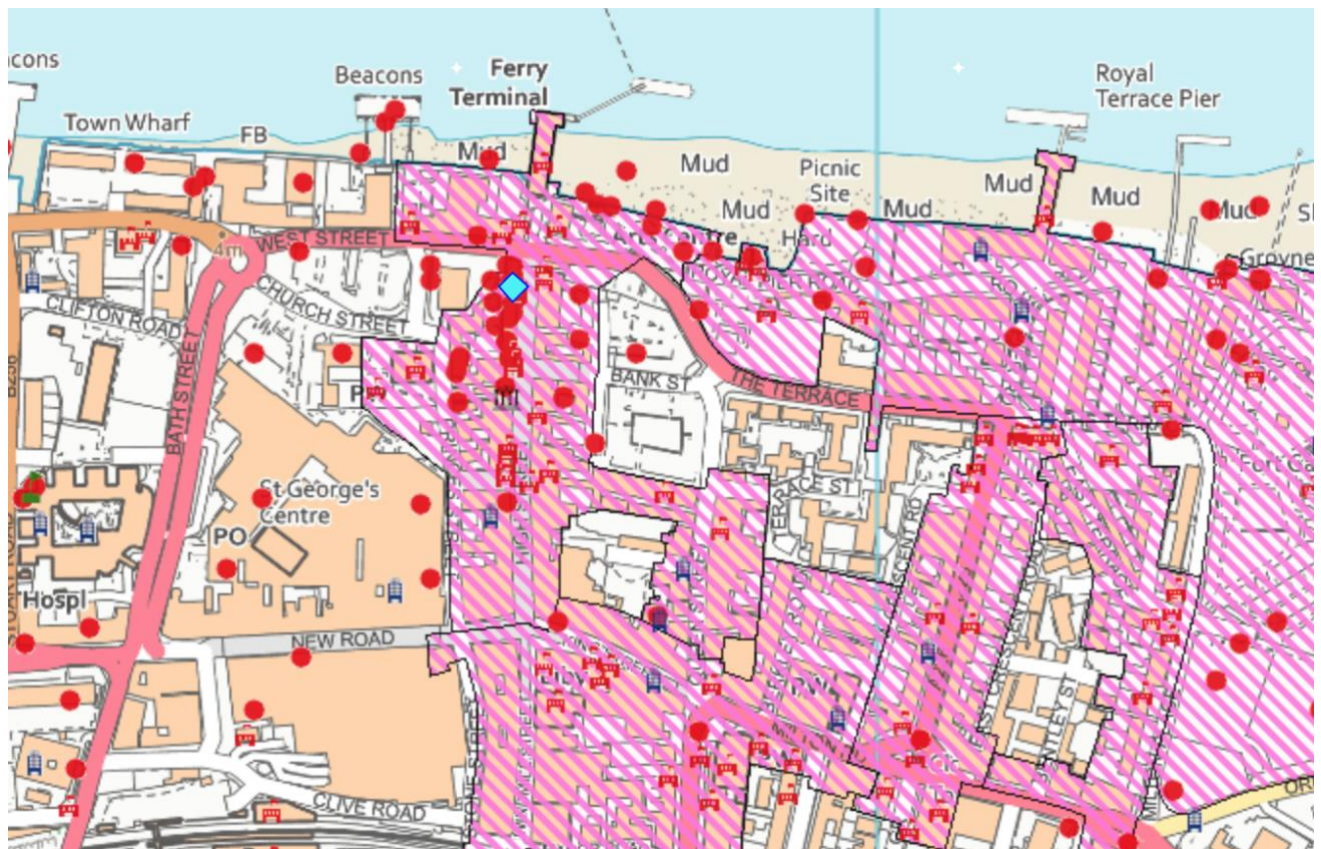


Fig 1: Showing the designated heritage assets in the area



Fig 2: The 1871 – 1890 OS map

3.5 Nineteenth Century

Gravesend's maritime importance expanded during the 17th and 18th centuries. High Street became a bustling thoroughfare, lined with merchant houses, inns, and establishments catering to sailors and traders. The architecture of this period, with its distinctive Georgian style, contributed to the street's character. The advent of the Industrial Revolution brought about changes in High Street. Increased trade and industrial activities influenced the architecture, with some buildings undergoing renovations to accommodate the evolving economic landscape. Warehouses and businesses associated with maritime trade flourished.

The earliest map consulted is the OS 1871-1890 map of Gravesend, revealing tightly packed streets. Historically, since the Early Medieval period, the High Street has served as a significant route toward the Thames and Watling Street. The closely packed plots bear resemblance to medieval burgrave plots, although much of the town suffered damage from several fires in the 18th century. The map depicts various piers, attesting to Gravesend's bustling activity in the 19th century. A vibrant High Street is illustrated, adorned with public houses, hotels, and a flourishing commercial quarter along the waterfront. Despite Gravesend's known vitality during this period, the late 19th-century OS map indicates minimal change in the built form of the area.

3.6 Twentieth Century

High Street underwent significant transformations in the 20th century, shaped by urban planning initiatives and transportation developments that influenced both its architecture and function. Some historic buildings underwent repurposing, coexisting with the emergence of modern structures. Examination of historic maps from the early to mid-20th century reveals no major alterations to Heritage House. An aerial photograph from 1946 highlights the diversity in roof forms, contributing to the unique character of the conservation area

3.7 Summary

The historic development of High Street in Gravesend reflects the town's dynamic journey through time. From its medieval roots to the present day, High Street stands as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of Gravesend. The historic map regression indicates there have been no major extensions to Heritage House.

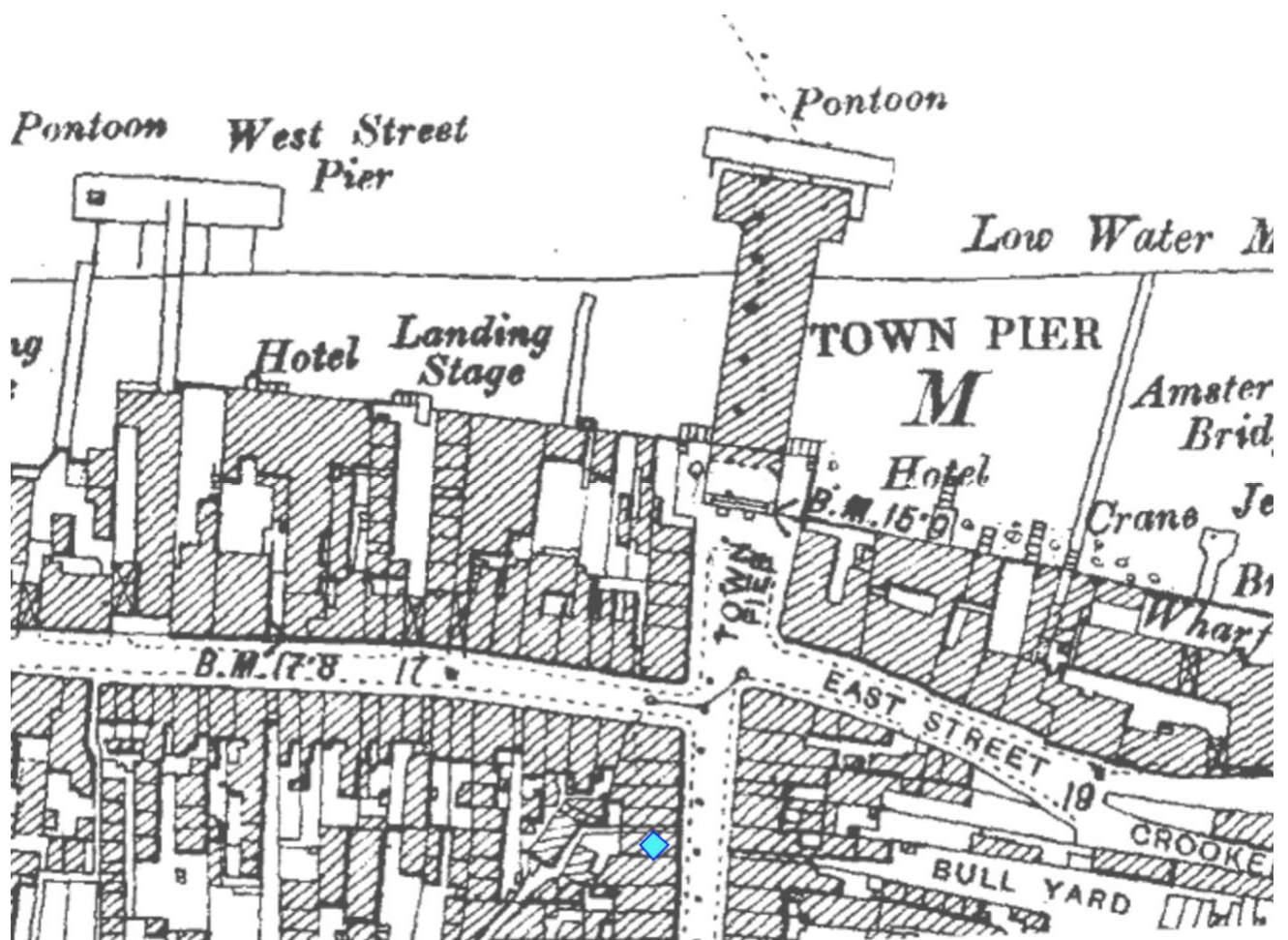


Fig 3: The 1897-1900 OS Map



Fig 4: The 1907-1923 OS Map



Fig 5: The 1929-1952 OS Map



Fig 6: Aerial photograph of the site from 1946

4. Significance

- 4.1 The NPPF defines significance as *“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.”* Historic England defines significance in *Conservation Principles* as *“The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance.”*
- 4.2 The NPPF defines setting as *“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”* Historic England defines setting in *Conservation Principles* as *“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”*

4.3 In accordance with Historic England's guidance *Conservation Principles* there are several elements and values that can contribute to the significance of the building, this includes: architectural, historic, evidential, and artistic interest and aesthetic, historic, evidential, and communal values. The setting of a heritage asset may also contribute to its significance. This statement analyses the significance of the building and is in accordance with Historic England's guidance on Statements of Significance.

4.4 The following elements contribute to the significance of 79-80 High Street:

Architectural Interest

Heritage House is a three storey weatherboarded dwelling dating with a pitched roof and tiled roof. The frontage is clad with weatherboarded, a common feature of buildings in Kent during the 18th century. The front elevation has 6-over-6 sashes painted in white on the first and second floors, painted in white with two dormers at roof level. The list description describes the ground floor shopfront as modern and it also makes a positive contribution to the character of the building. In contrast to the front, the rear has black weatherboarding with timber sashes and doors, these features add the charm and architectural interest of the building.

Turning to the interior, the ground floor has been altered, however the shop fittings including the counter has interesting classical details, it is unclear how old these features are but given the recent alterations are not original. The timber staircase is an interesting feature typical of the period and makes a positive contribution to the character of the building. The timber doors do not appear to be original and were likely inserted later. Moving to the first floor, some of the ceilings have been replaced and, coving and panelling altered to accommodate services. These later modern additions hold little architectural interest. However, there are several fireplaces that remain with original features such as tiles, and grills that hold a small degree of architectural interest. Moving to the roof level, the attic has been altered with the original floor removed and an insertion of a dormer window with timber casement, while not detracting from the building's interest, this feature is of neutral interest in that it is of traditional design but likely to have been inserted at a later date, probably at some point in the 20th century.

Despite modern alterations, including modern partitions, carried out during and after the conversion to retail/office space in the 1980s, the original plan form of both buildings is discernible. The front, rear, ground and first floor of the property showcases much of its architectural interest, with important architectural features such as the timber sash windows, fireplaces, timber panelling, timber weatherboarding, modern shopfront and internal fixtures and fittings being of interesting adding to the building's architectural appeal.



Fig 7: Showing ground floor with staircase floor



Fig 8: Timber panelling on the ground floor



Fig 9: The existing doors on the first floor



Fig 10: Timber panelling



Fig 11: First floor with panelling and fireplace



Fig 12: Sash windows on the first floor



Fig 13: Fireplace on the upper floors



Fig 14: First floor showing modern fittings



Fig 15: The loft showing dormer window



Fig 16: The kitchen area in the loft space



Fig 17: Showing the condition of the interior



Fig 18: Timber sash windows



Fig 19: High Street frontage



Fig 20: Rear elevation of Heritage House

4.5 *Historic Interest*

Dating back to 1730, Heritage House has played a pivotal role in shaping the rich tapestry of Gravesend's history. Its construction followed a devastating fire in 1727 that razed much of the High Street, making Heritage House one of the oldest structures on the street and thereby imbued with a high degree of historic value. Despite numerous alterations over the years, notably in the 1980s when it was converted into office space, and substantial interior modifications, the original plan form remains discernible.

The enduring presence of Heritage House reflects the evolution of the High Street and its integral role in the town's development. Despite the changes, the building continues to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Its historical significance, stemming from being one of the oldest structures in the vicinity, adds to the overall charm and cultural importance of the property

4.6 *Archaeological Interest*

A comprehensive search was conducted on the Kent Historic Environment Record, revealing several finds within the immediate vicinity including Medieval cesspits to the north of the site. To the south and west of the site brick footings and arched openings were discovered during recent excavations and probably formed part of an access tunnel through the basements. The site is in the heart of the medieval settlement with the Saxon centre of Gravesend to the south, there remains a potential for the site to hold archaeological significance. Further investigation and exploration of the site may unveil valuable insights and shed light on its archaeological importance.

4.7 *Contribution of setting to Significance*

The significance of a heritage asset is greatly influenced by its surrounding setting, and it is crucial to take this into consideration. In the case of Heritage House, its immediate setting encompasses the High Street immediately in front of the building and the courtyard area to the rear of the property. The property can be observed from the bottom of High Street and from various points on the High Street, the views allow for an appreciation of the building's aesthetics

contributing to the overall significance of Heritage House by emphasizing their contextual relationship and enhancing their historical value and allowing for the continued appreciation of the buildings and their urban surroundings.

4.8 *Character of High Street Conservation Area*

Distinguished by its historical buildings, many of which date back to the 18th and 19th centuries, a period marked by several fires. While numerous structures were reconstructed in the 20th century, they were done so in a traditional style. The sloping topography of High Street offers panoramic views of the Piers and River Thames, contributing to the urban riverside ambiance in the northern section of the conservation area.

The buildings within this area typically range from two to three storeys, occupying narrow and irregular plots. The diverse built forms and heights contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area. The materials employed are varied, encompassing red and yellow brick, weatherboarded cladding, and stuccoed facades. Fenestration displays a range, incorporating timber sashes, casements, and, in some instances, modern aluminium windows. The combination of diverse built forms, materials, designs, scales, and the close proximity to the Thames collectively defines the unique character of the conservation area.



Fig 21: High Street Conservation Area



Fig 22: View of rear elevation



Fig 23: View of Town Pier



Fig 24: Heritage House

4.9 *Summary of Significance*

Heritage House at 79-80 High Street stands out as a site of special architectural and historical significance, with its roots tracing back to the early 18th century. Both the exterior and interior exhibit notable features, presenting a medium level of architectural interest. These features include the distinctive sash windows on the front elevation, weatherboarding, the shopfront, and internal elements such as fireplaces, staircases, and panelling.

Being one of, if not the oldest building on High Street, the property holds a high degree of historic interest. Over time, it has undergone various alterations, including changes to fixtures and fittings and the insertion of modern partitions. Despite these modifications, the original essence of the building is preserved, contributing to its unique character. The immediate surroundings, with the High Street at the front and a courtyard area at the rear, further enhance the significance of these heritage assets. In summary, the importance of both buildings is derived from their architectural and historical features, encompassing materials and design. This significance is underscored by their Grade II* listed status, and they actively contribute to the overall importance of the High Street Conservation Area.

5. **Proposed Development**

- 5.1 The applicant has submitted an application for Listed Building Consent for the change of use from existing use Class E to sui generis (HMO) use and office on the ground floor with alterations to the building.
- 5.2 The Design and Access statement submitted with this application provides an overview of the works. The ground floor layout will remain unaltered, maintaining its existing configuration. The front office's staircase will be left untouched, extending to the first floor to create a sealed-off space. The envisioned residence is designed to feature a ground floor encompassing a lobby, offices, storage, and a WC. The first floor will comprise a lobby, storage, three bedrooms with attached en-suites, and a kitchen. On the second floor, there will be a lobby, storage, and four bedrooms with attached en-suites. The loft floor will house a lobby, storage, utility spaces, kitchen, and boiler/utility. The proposed rear outbuilding will consist of one bedroom with an attached WC and kitchen on the ground floor, along with a basement storage area. The doors will undergo repair and refurbishment, and secondary glazing will be employed for enhanced sound insulation. These proposed works reflect the applicant's vision to repurpose the building into a holiday let, thereby breathing new life into the property while respecting its architectural character. By combining necessary modifications with the preservation of the original plan form.



Fig 25: Proposed elevation plans

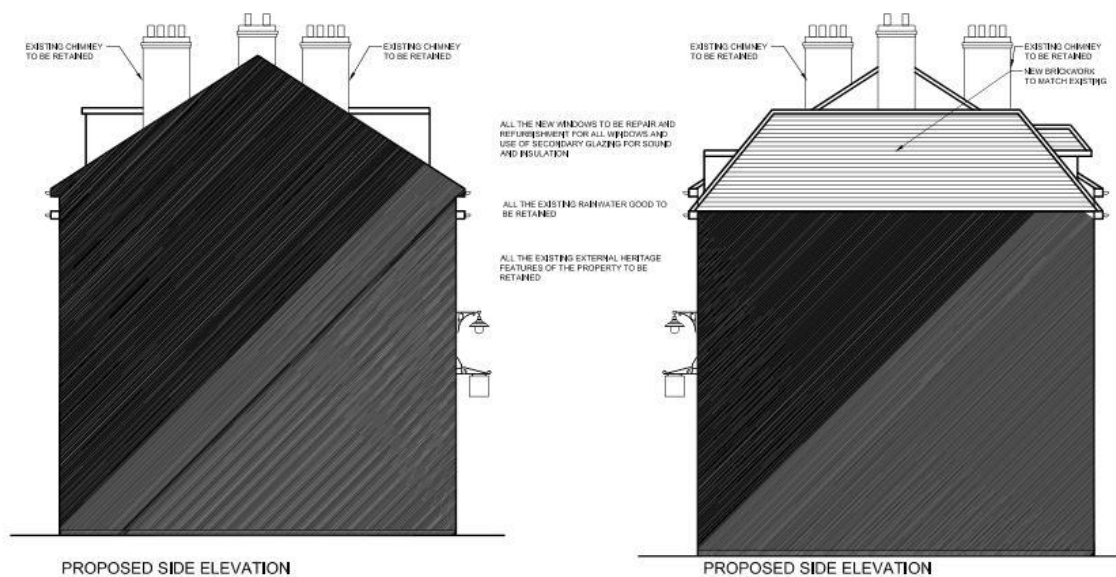


Fig 26: Proposed side elevation plans

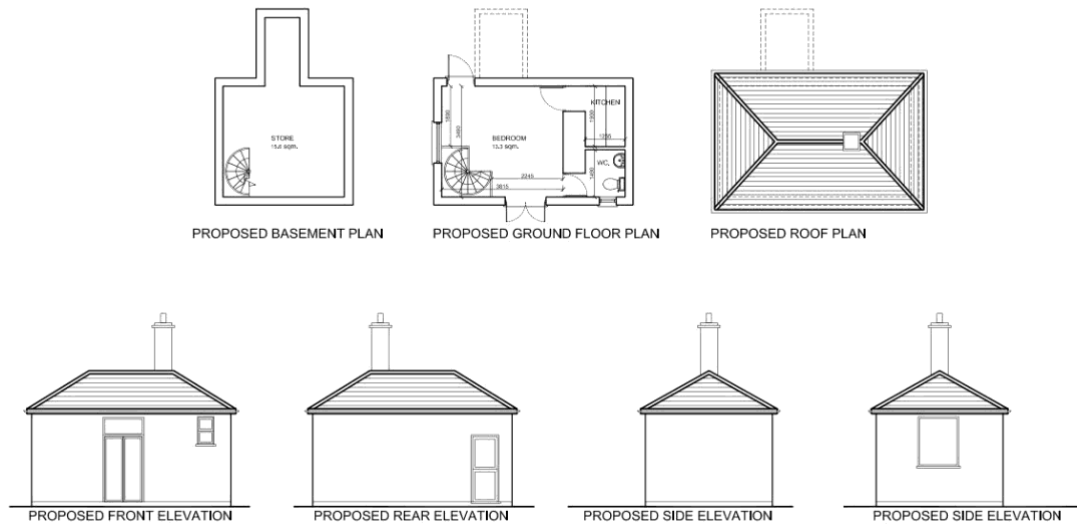


Fig 27: Proposed side elevations

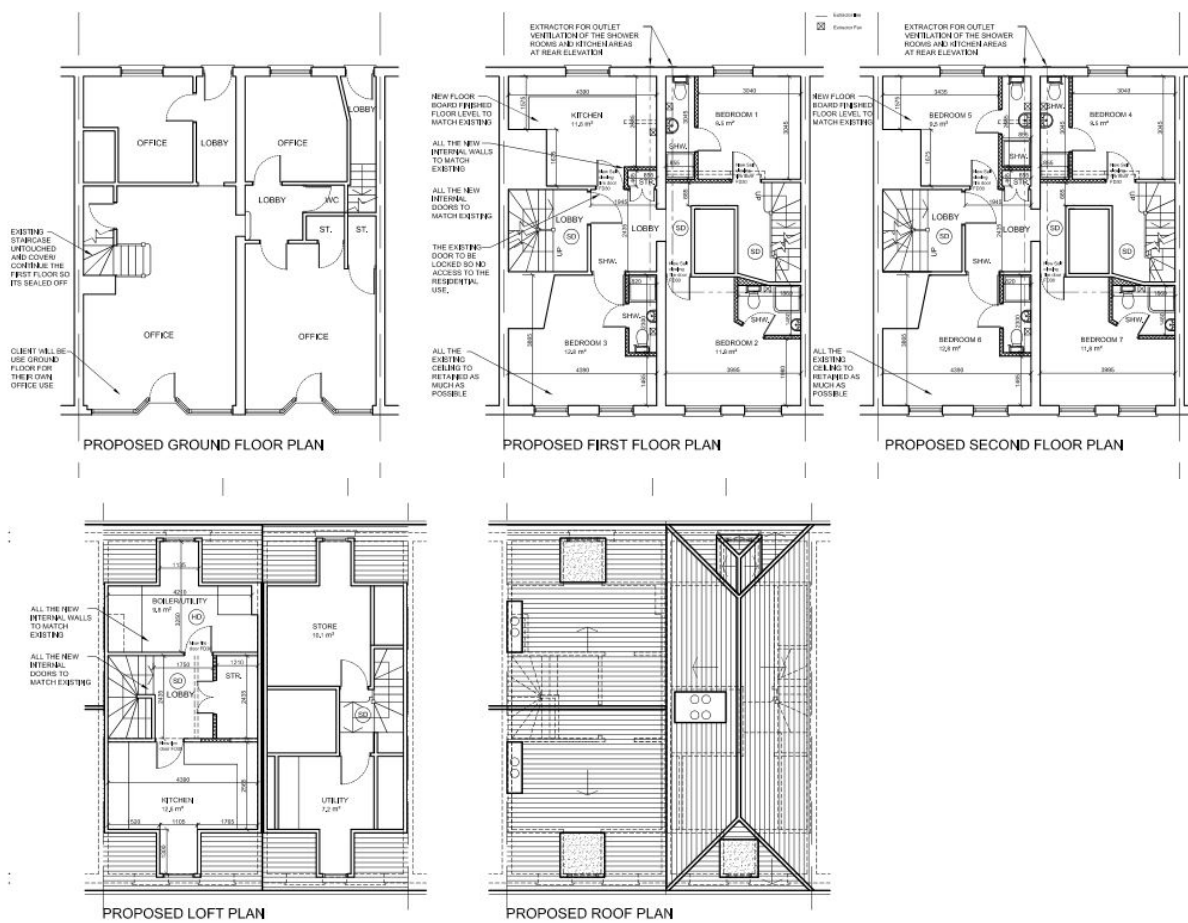


Fig 28: proposed floor plans

6. Impact of Development

6.1 This heritage statement has been produced following concerns raised by statutory consultees that insufficient information has been provided regarding the significance of the building. Historic England stated " *Heritage Impact Assessment produced by DAP in May 2023 is not supported by thorough desk-top and site investigations to offer an understanding of the original layout of the houses, as well as to establish and clearly illustrate which historical components contributing to their significant survive and, therefore, should be preserved.*" Historic Buildings and Places also commented on the application noting " *At a minimum, the heritage statement should identify the age, nature and condition of the interiors, particularly those areas to be altered*". The historic development and significance sections of this statement has identified the areas of importance which addresses the above.

6.2 *Internal alterations*

The applicant proposes to use the ground floor as office space and no alterations are proposed to the ground floor, the existing staircase will remain untouched. Moving to the first floor, the existing space formerly used as office space will be converted into three bedrooms and a kitchen to the rear, in order to facilitate the conversion into residential, three ensuites are proposed in each bedroom and this will require the removal of existing partitions and the installation of new partitions. On the second floor four new bedrooms with ensuites are proposed. The existing walls are modern additions of no special interest and although the proposed changes will result in a slight change in layout, the impact will be low. All new floors and ceilings are to match the existing and there will be no loss of significant historic fabric.

In the loft area, there will be a new kitchen, storage and utility room. To facilitate a larger lobby area an existing partition will be removed, this is a later addition of no special interest. Ventilation is important consideration and the applicant proposes an extractor fan for the kitchen and shower areas to be located to the rear of the property. It is important to consider the impact of the internal alterations on the significance of the building. While the proposed alterations will result in a change of use and slight change in planform, the alterations are minor and the key architectural features outlined above in the significance section of this heritage statement will be retained. The removal of existing modern walls is unlikely to cause any harm. Reversibility is a key consideration when assessing application for listed building consent and in this instance the proposed partitions are reversible. The overall impact is low and there are a number of public benefits, most notably the reuse of a Grade II* listed building that has been vacant for several years. The proposed development will preserve the significance of the building and ensure its future use for many years to come.

6.3 *External alterations*

Minor alterations are proposed to the exterior to include the installation of four vents on the rear elevation of the property, these are in black to match the existing black weatherboarding. While this will require the removal of a small area of weatherboarding, the harm would be negligible, the vents not being visible from the street scene. No other changes are proposed on the exterior of the property. All windows will be retained and secondary glazing installed on the interior which will improve the energy efficiency of the property while preserving the significance of the building.

6.4 *Alterations to outbuilding*

The existing outbuilding located in the courtyard to the rear of the property will be reconfigured to provide a self-contained apartment with storage area in the basement. A new staircase is proposed which will improve access to the basement. No changes are proposed to the exterior, the impact on the outbuilding will be low and will not result in the loss of any historic fabric.

6.5 *Impact on setting*

It is important to consider the impact on the setting of the listed building and the wider High Street Conservation Area. As outlined above, the immediate setting of the listed building is the courtyard area and the street immediately to the front of the property. The proposed external changes are considered to be minor and include vents to the rear of the property, these have been designed to blend in with the existing black weatherboarding and would not be visible from the street scene. No external alterations are proposed for the outbuilding. The development will preserve the significance of the listed building and cause no harm to its immediate and wider setting, rather reuse of an important heritage asset will enhance the character of the conservation area.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Heritage Statement has considered the significance Heritage House, provided details of the proposal and the impact of the development on the setting and significance of the listed building and High Street Conservation Area. Both internal and external works are sensitive to the heritage significance of both heritage assets. Great care has been taken during the design stage to ensure the proposed works will have minimal impact upon the historic fabric of the heritage asset. The current owner wishes to respect and enhance the character, history and setting of the heritage assets while also providing modest changes the building.
- 7.2 The internal works are considered minor and would in no harm to historic fabric. The removal of existing modern partitions would cause no harm to historic fabric and the insertion of new partitions and facilities is reversible. The property has seen numerous alterations but key architectural features that contribute to the significance of the building will be retained. The external changes are also necessary to ensure there is sufficient ventilation and the impact will be low. The scale of the development is low and this assessment has shown there will be no harm to the setting of the listed building or wider conservation area.

7.3 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is essential to carefully consider the balance between potential harm and public benefits. In this case, any harm would be negligible and would amount to a very small degree of less than substantial harm, and would be significantly outweighed by the numerous public benefits associated with the proposed works. The public benefits put forth by the applicant encompass various aspects. Firstly, the reuse of Heritage House as an important heritage asset ensures its continued relevance and significance within the conservation area. Moreover, the proposed works aim to enhance the energy efficiency of the buildings, resulting in more sustainable and environmentally friendly structures. Improvements to the existing facilities will enhance the functionality and usability of the building, further benefiting the public. By positively responding to the significance of the listed building, the proposed alterations will enhance its character and appearance. This compliance with local planning policies signifies a thoughtful and responsible approach to the development.

In summary, the proposed works not only preserve the character of Heritage House and the High Street Conservation Area but also contribute to their enhancement. By securing the future use of this important heritage asset and incorporating improvements to energy efficiency and existing facilities, the public benefits of the development far outweigh the minimal harm identified. These considerations highlight the positive impact the proposed works will have on both the building and the wider community.

Appendix 1 – List Description

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II*

List Entry Number:

1089059

Date first listed:

19-Mar-1974

List Entry Name:

79, HIGH STREET

Statutory Address 1:

79, HIGH STREET

Details

TQ 6474 SE 1/109 5277

HIGH STREET (West Side), No 79

19.3.74.

II* GV

Early to mid C18. 3 storeys weatherboarded. Old tiled roof with 1 dormer. Wide wooden moulded and dentilled eaves cornice. Sashes now replaced by casements. Modern shopfront.

Nos 77 to 83 (consec) and 77A form a group.

Listing NGR: TQ6475974396

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J F Heritage provides specialist heritage advice. Jeremy Fazzalano has over 14 years of experience working experience in the heritage and planning sectors. He is skilled in heritage conservation, planning and urban design, archaeology desk-based assessments, conservation area appraisals, historical research and dealing with all conservation Issues. Jeremy is a Full Member of the IHBC and Associate member of CIFA with a MSc Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University.