



Heritage Statement

105 LONDON ROAD, NORTHFLEET, GRAVESEND, DA11 9LY

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Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for development at 105 London Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9LY. The site lies within the designated Overcliffe Conservation Area but does not comprise a listed building.

The purpose of this statement is to assess the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposal, to describe the contribution of their setting to that significance, and to evaluate the impact of the proposed works. In accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the assessment gives special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The assessment draws principally on the Overcliffe Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Gravesham Borough Council, 2009), alongside site inspection and an understanding of the building's planning and historical context.

Site and Surrounding Context

105 London Road is an end-of-terrace, two-storey building positioned on a prominent corner plot at the junction of London Road and Thames Way. The property forms part of a late-19th-century terrace identified within the Overcliffe Conservation Area as making a positive contribution to its character and appearance.

The Overcliffe Conservation Area encompasses early- to mid-19th-century residential development associated with the historic expansion of Gravesend and Northfleet along the London Road / Overcliffe corridor. London Road represents the western continuation of Overcliffe and forms part of the linear



spine of the Conservation Area, characterised by historic terraced housing interspersed with landmark corner buildings and small commercial parades.

Although unlisted, Nos. 103–119 London Road are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as key unlisted buildings of townscape merit, contributing to the area's significance through their coherence, scale and historic form.

Planning and Heritage Policy Framework

Statutory Duty (LBCA Act 1990)

Section 72 of the Act requires decision-makers to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Courts have confirmed that this is a “strong presumption” in favour of preservation, but does not prevent well-designed change that sustains or enhances significance.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Key policies include:

- **Paragraphs 201–208:** identify the need to assess significance, understand the impact of proposals, and avoid or minimise harm.
- **Paragraph 202:** where a proposal would lead to *less than substantial harm*, this harm must be weighed against public benefits.
- **Paragraph 206:** heritage assets are irreplaceable; great weight should be given to their conservation.

The proposal results in *no harm* to significance. The building will be enhanced by reinstating traditional materials and strengthening the Victorian character of the terrace.



Significance of Heritage Assets

Overcliffe Conservation Area

The significance of the Overcliffe Conservation Area is set out in Section 1 (Statement of Special Interest) and Sections 4–7 of the Overcliffe Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009). The appraisal identifies the area as a well-preserved example of early- to mid-19th-century suburban development associated with the expansion of Gravesend and Northfleet, characterised by strong linear street form, coherent terraced and villa development, and a consistent palette of traditional materials.

Architectural significance arises from the prevalence of yellow and brown stock brick, slate roofs, parapets, vertically proportioned timber sash windows and restrained classical detailing (Appraisal, Sections 7.2–7.7). Historic significance is derived from the area's relationship with the early Dover–London road, the development of Rosherville New Town, and the subsequent residential growth associated with river-based industry and transport (Appraisal, Section 4).

Townscape significance is particularly evident along Overcliffe and London Road, which are identified as the linear spine of the Conservation Area with clear long views framed by continuous historic development (Appraisal, Sections 5.1 and 5.3). Corner buildings and individual landmarks along London Road are noted as making a strong contribution to legibility and sense of place.

The application property (105 London Road)

105 London Road forms part of the historic terrace identified in the appraisal as a key unlisted group of buildings on London Road (Nos. 103–119), which are recognised for their townscape merit and positive contribution to the Conservation Area (Appraisal, Section 7.5 and page 25). As an end-of-terrace and



corner property, No. 105 is further identified as a landmark building within the Conservation Area, contributing to the spatial definition of the streetscene (Appraisal, Section 5.3).

The building's significance lies primarily in its retained historic form, scale, roofline and street-facing elevations, rather than its internal plan form, which has evolved over time. The appraisal acknowledges that subdivision into flats is a common and historically established pattern within the Conservation Area, particularly along London Road, Pier Road and Burch Road (Appraisal, Section 3.2).

Contribution to the significance of the CA

The setting of 105 London Road makes a clear contribution to its heritage significance, as described in the Overcliffe Conservation Area Appraisal. The building's position close to the pavement line reflects the historic urban grain of London Road and reinforces the strong linear character of this part of the Conservation Area (Appraisal, Sections 5.1 and 5.2).

The appraisal highlights London Road and Overcliffe as routes with long, uninterrupted views framed by historic development, with corner buildings acting as focal points within these vistas (Appraisal, Section 5.3). As a corner building at the interface between London Road and the land falling away towards Thames Way, No. 105 has heightened visual prominence, particularly when viewed obliquely along the street.

The dramatic change in topography to the north, created by historic chalk excavation, is identified in the appraisal as a defining characteristic of the Conservation Area's setting (Appraisal, Section 3.3). This condition increases the visual exposure of buildings along London Road when viewed from lower ground, further emphasising the importance of preserving the integrity of the street-facing elevations and roofscape.



Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal seeks to re-convert the property back into two self-contained flats, supported by the addition of a single-storey rear extension and a rear dormer extension. All external alterations are confined to the rear of the building and do not alter the principal street-facing elevations.

The rear extension is modest in scale and designed to be clearly subordinate to the host building. The dormer extension is located on the rear roof slope, away from public viewpoints, and does not disrupt the established roofline when viewed from London Road or other key public vantage points within the Conservation Area.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

The impact of the proposed development has been assessed against the specific characteristics and sensitivities identified in the Overcliffe Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

The re-conversion of the building into two self-contained flats accords with the established pattern of use described in the appraisal, which notes that many of the larger 19th-century properties within the Conservation Area have been subdivided over time (Appraisal, Section 3.2). The proposal therefore preserves the historic functional character of the area and does not introduce an incongruous or alien use.

In terms of built form, the appraisal places particular emphasis on the importance of retaining historic street-facing elevations, rooflines and townscape relationships (Appraisal, Sections 5.2, 7.2 and 7.5). The proposed single-storey rear extension and rear dormer are confined entirely to the rear of the property and do not alter the principal elevations or the building's landmark role within the streetscene. As such, the key attributes that contribute to significance are preserved.



The rear dormer does not disrupt the characteristic roofscape of London Road when experienced from public viewpoints identified in the appraisal, including long views along the street and key visual routes through the Conservation Area (Appraisal, Section 5.3). Given its discreet siting and subordinate scale, the dormer results in no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposal fully accords with the appraisal's guidance that change within the Conservation Area should preserve historic form, respect established scale and avoid harm to significant views and townscape elements.

Design Approach and Mitigation

The design approach has been directly informed by the objectives and guidance set out in the Overcliffe Conservation Area Character Appraisal. The appraisal identifies the preservation of historic form, coherence of terraces, and protection of key views as central to maintaining the area's significance (Appraisal, Sections 5 and 7).

In response, the proposals retain all street-facing elevations and architectural features that contribute to the Conservation Area's character, consistent with the appraisal's emphasis on safeguarding the public realm and primary townscape relationships. New built form is confined to the rear, ensuring that the linear streetscape and landmark qualities of the building remain unaffected.

The modest scale and subordinate massing of the rear extension reflect the appraisal's guidance that additions should not overwhelm the host building or disrupt its historic proportions (Appraisal, Section 7.2). The rear dormer is positioned and designed to avoid intrusion into identified key views, in accordance with the appraisal's townscape analysis (Appraisal, Section 5.3).



Through this approach, the proposals respond positively to the Conservation Area Appraisal and demonstrate full compliance with its stated objectives to preserve and reinforce local character.

Other Legislative Considerations

The proposals have been developed having regard to other relevant legislative requirements, including the Building Regulations and the Equality Act 2010. The reconfiguration of the building aims to deliver safe, accessible and high-quality residential accommodation, with improved internal layouts and modern living standards.

Where requirements relating to fire safety, accessibility or thermal performance necessitate intervention, these have been balanced carefully against the need to respect the significance of the heritage asset. Importantly, such interventions are focused internally or to the rear of the building, ensuring that compliance with modern standards does not result in harm to the Conservation Area's character or appearance.

Conclusion

This Heritage Statement has demonstrated that 105 London Road is a non-designated heritage asset that makes a positive contribution to the Overcliffe Conservation Area, principally through its external form, corner siting and relationship to the London Road terrace.

The proposed development preserves this significance by retaining all principal elevations and limiting new built form to the rear of the property. The reinstatement of two self-contained flats reflects a historically established pattern of use within the Conservation Area and does not undermine its character or appearance.



In accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the Overcliffe Conservation Area and are therefore considered acceptable in heritage terms.