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Heritage Statement
for
proposed replacement shopfronts at
29 Milton Road, Gravesend DA12 2RF

1.00 Introduction:

- 1.01 29 Milton Road is part of a Victorian terrace on the North side of the A226 road and is located within Gravesend's Milton Place Conservation Area.
- 1.02 The building is laid out over three floor + basement and is constructed in rendered brickwork beneath a pitched slate roof.
- 1.03 The ground floor is occupied by commercial premises with two flats occupying the upper floors.
- 1.04 As can be deduced from the numbering on the site location plan, the property occupies both 29 and 30 Milton Road with the original party wall line being immediately to the right of the central door which opens to a small lobby and staircase rising to the flats.



Google Street View image: Milton Road elevation

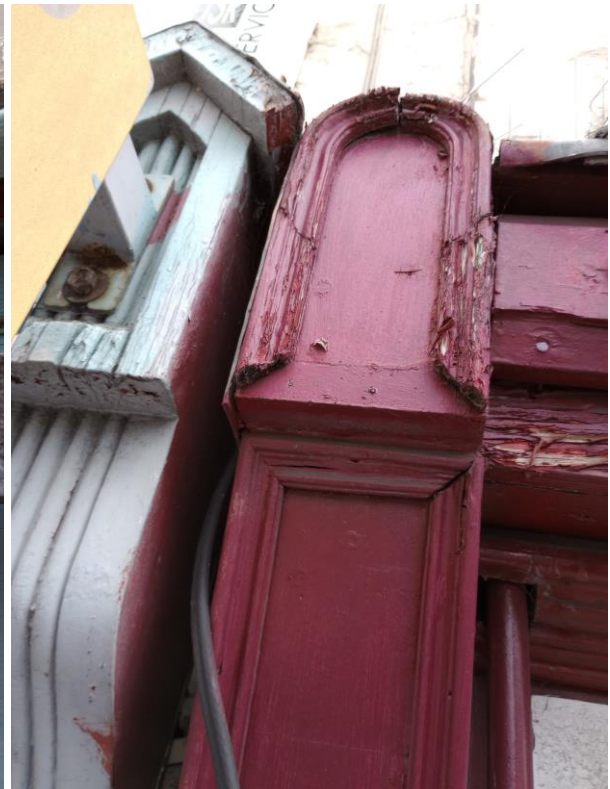
- 1.05 It is believed that the ground floor has always had a commercial use. This is reinforced by there being substantial (200mm square?) timber lintels, visible in part behind the remnants of historic shopfront fascias and above the metal roller shutter boxes.
- 1.06 Immediately within the left-hand entrance to the shop is a slightly recessed footwell about 50 - 60mm lower than the remainder of the shop floor. This modest recess is fitted with carpet

lapped up to the surrounding floor level and held in place with tape. It is clearly a trip hazard.

- 1.07 An inclined section of floor, within the hallway at the foot of the stairs leading to the flats, and a downstand wall indicate that the entrance door was previously recessed. Unfortunately, this arrangement was subject to anti-social behaviour leading to the current door being positioned tight to the pavement.
- 1.08 Some historic and possibly original elements of shopfront joinery survive and these include pilasters, blind boxes and fascias. Damage to the lower edge of a cornice is visible above the roller shutter casing to the left-hand shopfront but closer inspection is obstructed by a sheet of painted plywood secured in front of it.



Left-hand shopfront pilaster with reeding detail



Right-hand shopfront pilaster with panel moulding

- 1.09 The leadwork above the shopfront is slipping away from the face of the building and is no longer weathering the wall and joinery below.
- 1.10 Aluminium shopfronts and shutters have been fitted to both shopfronts in addition to the door to the flats. The roller shutters are unsightly, especially out of hours when they are deployed, and detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

The shopfronts and shutters have been installed without the benefit of Planning Permission and are subject to enforcement action from Gravesham Borough Council due to their harmful impact on the Conservation Area.

- 1.11 This Heritage Statement is to accompany an application for new shopfronts and a central entrance door, leading to the flats above the shop, and should be read in with drawings MRG/0724/01 and 02.

2.00 Proposals:

- 2.01 The proposals are to remove the unauthorised aluminium shopfronts, roller shutters and the central door leading to the flats.
- 2.02 Remnants of historic shopfront joinery are to be retained although further assessment will be required once plywood coverings and the roller shutter casings are removed. The new joinery has been designed to occupy the depth and height currently filled by the aluminium shopfronts.
- 2.03 The proposed shopfronts vary slightly to accord with the detailing of the surviving historic joinery. Thus for the left-hand shopfront reeded panels will be included in the stall riser and the panel in the door.

For the right-hand shop, the stall riser will have a panel moulding as will the shop door.

Dwarf walls, formed in concrete blockwork, will be constructed behind the stall risers.

- 2.04 The proposed two panel door giving access to the flats is also detailed with panel mouldings since it too is on the No.30 side of the former party wall. The door is also fitted with two brass framed 'portholes' for vision and to provide a small amount of daylight within the lobby.

A pilaster is introduced between the door to the flats and the right-hand shopfront in order to separate the shopfront and its awning box/fascia. The existing metal mechanism is to be detached and re-used as illustrated on drawing MRG/0724/02.

- 2.05 Ideally, the tenant of the shop would like external security shutters to protect the shopfronts and shop. I have tried to assess whether it might be possible to incorporate the existing roller shutters (with their bulky casings removed) within the historic awning boxes possibly in conjunction with extending the awning boxes and pilasters forward but my assessment is that there isn't sufficient space. However, if the Council would consider external shutters then my Client is prepared to undertake some opening up to enable the voids to be assessed further.

If the Council is opposed to the principle of external shutters then internal shutters will be fitted but this is not the preferred option for the tenant.

- 2.06 Both shopfronts would have a skirting detail to conceal the masonry base which is currently visible.
- 2.07 Internally, the well behind the shop door (left-hand side) is to be removed to level the shop floor and eliminate the trip hazard. This will lift the door threshold to approximately 245mm above pavement level which is in excess of the Building Regulations which looks for a maximum rise of 180mm for a publicly accessible stair/step riser. The tenant does not wish to lose space internally thus an 'in go' is not an option especially if internal shutters are to be fitted.

Similarly, the door to the flats already has a step riser of approximately 240mm measured to the top of the threshold due to the need for the door to clear the sloping floor of the formerly

recessed entrance. This too exceeds the maximum rise of a step stipulated by the Building Regulations.

In response, it is proposed to provide a single elliptical step outside each entrance door and these are shown dotted on the plan on drawing 02. Each step would, of course, halve the riser height and achieve compliance with the Building Regulations.

- 2.08 The leadwork to the heads of both shopfronts will be renewed in compliance with the recommendations of the Lead Sheet Association.
- 2.09 A colour scheme will need to be agreed with Gravesham Borough Council.
- 2.10 The timber fascias offer scope for painted signage but this would be subject for a further application for advertisement consent.

3.00 Access Statement:

- 3.01 The existing step up to each door exceeds the height permitted by the Building Regulations.

It is proposed to add a step to each door to halve the step heights and achieve compliance with the Building Regulations.

- 3.02 Internally, removal of the recessed well will eliminate the trip hazard.

4.00 Conclusion:

- 4.01 Surviving historic fabric will be retained.
- 4.02 The proposed shopfronts have been detailed to incorporate mouldings extant in the remnants of the historic shopfronts
- 4.03 The proposed shopfronts and entrance door to the flats will enhance the character of the Conservation Area.