

# HERITAGE STATEMENT

Proposed three-storey extension to northeast corner of existing hotel and single upward extension. New main entrance façade, exterior cladding and dressing and new fenestration to all windows. Associated works to include internal reconfiguration and repurposing to deliver rooftop restaurant and bar, new large restaurant and bar, new reception and overflow reception, seventeen additional bedrooms together with plant rooms, luggage storage and a new sub-station.

**First Inn Venue Wimbledon Ltd Holiday Inn Express**

**200 High Street – Colliers Wood – SW19 2BH**

**Control Sheet**

Site Address	Holiday Inn Express – 200 High Street Colliers Wood SW19 2BH
Report Ref:	<b>HIEX.1083.225.1</b>
Prepared by:	<b>I Froneman B.Arch,Stud ACIfA IHBC</b>
Issue No.	<b>1</b>

## Summary

This Heritage Statement presents a proportionate understanding of the significance of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area, and the contribution of the existing building to it (including the setting of the nearby listed buildings), as well as an assessment of the likely potential impacts of the proposed development.

The assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development would preserve/enhance the significance of the conservation area, and the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

This means paragraphs 213-215 of the National Planning Policy Framework are not engaged. This also satisfies Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Policy D12.5 of the Merton Local Plan. It also means that the proposed development also complies with the statutory duties in s.66 and s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ignus Froneman, Director at Cogent Heritage, in consultation with Enviro Reporter. It supports a planning application for the recladding and extension of the Holiday Inn, at 200 High Street in Colliers Wood.
- 1.2 The author of this report is a qualified heritage consultant with over 20 years of experience in the historic environment. This includes regular appearances as an expert witness at public inquiries, on behalf of both appellants, public bodies and local planning authorities.

### Overview of heritage assets/designations

- 1.3 The application site falls in the Wandle Valley Conservation Area (specifically, Sub-Area 2: Colliers Wood). The Holiday Inn building is modern and it is not identified as making a positive contribution to the conservation area in the *Wandle Valley Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Colliers Wood Sub Area* (February 2007) (the 'Appraisal' hereafter).
- 1.4 The Colliers Wood Underground Station building, diagonally opposite the application site, on the east side of the High Street is grade II listed (it can be noted that there does not appear to be a marker for it on Historic England's National Heritage List). The drinking fountain in Wandle Park, near the southern entrance, is listed grade II. Further afield, the Singlegate School, on Christchurch Road/South Gardens, on the opposite side of the Britannia Point building (also known as the Colliers Wood Tower) is grade II listed (it is again not marked on Historic England's National Heritage List).
- 1.5 Millers Mead, at 220 High Street, to the south of the Holiday Inn, is locally listed. Further north, the buildings at 180-182 High Street are also locally listed. In the wider context, there are several other locally listed buildings.
- 1.6 For the purposes of this report, and in the interest of proportionality and avoiding duplication, the assessment is done on the basis that the conservation area overlaps the setting of the nearby listed and locally listed buildings<sup>1</sup>, and the effect of the proposed development would be similar in many ways in relation to the conservation area townscape and the setting of the closest locally listed building (Millers Mead, at 220 High Street)<sup>2</sup>. The proposed development is therefore assessed in terms of its potential effect on the conservation area, on the basis that the effect is likely to be similar in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> The listed buildings have "nested and overlapping settings" as described at paragraph 8 of Historic England's *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (second edition, December 2017) (referred to as GPA 3)

<sup>2</sup> As per paragraph 8 of GPA 3: "Consideration of setting in urban areas, given the potential numbers and proximity of heritage assets, often overlaps with considerations both of townscape/urban design and of the character and appearance of conservation areas."

the conservation area and the setting of the nearby locally listed building. The nearby listed and locally listed buildings are not covered individually, but they are specifically mentioned in the assessment, where relevant.

### **Purpose of the report, site inspection and research**

- 1.7 The Heritage Statement assesses the effects of the proposed development on the significance of the relevant heritage assets. The assessment was informed by a site visit, in February 2024, and desk based documentary research. The purpose of the documentary research was to establish readily available sources of information about the history and evolution of the subject building and its context. This is intended to be informative, but it is not intended to be comprehensive/exhaustive and it is therefore possible that other sources of information relating to the building exist. Photos were taken on the site visit, a selection of which have been included to illustrate the report; they have not been altered, aside from cropping or annotation in some instances.

### **Legislation and policy summary**

- 1.8 The section below summarises the key provisions of s.66 & s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan policies.
- 1.9 **Legislation:** Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Section 66(1) of the Act sets out the statutory duty in relation to development affecting the setting of listed buildings: and section 72(1) sets out the statutory duty in relation to any buildings or other land in a conservation area.
- 1.10 It is a well-established concept in case law that 'preserving' means doing no harm for the purposes of the 1990 Act. The Court of Appeal's decision in *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council* [2014] (EWCA Civ 137) established that, having 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building under s.66, involves more than merely giving weight to those matters in the planning balance. There is a strong statutory presumption against granting planning permission for any development which would fail to preserve a listed building or its setting (and the same for conservation areas). In cases where a proposed development would harm a listed building or its setting (or a conservation area), the Barnwell decision has established that the duty in s.66 of the Act requires these must be given "*considerable importance and weight*".
- 1.11 The key legal principles established in case law are:

- i. 'Preserving' for the purposes of the s.66 and s.72 duties means 'to do no harm'<sup>3</sup>.
- ii. The desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building, or the character or appearance of a conservation area must be given 'considerable importance and weight'<sup>4</sup>.
- iii. The effect of NPPF paragraphs 212-215 is to impose, by policy, a duty regarding the setting of a conservation area that is materially identical to the statutory duty pursuant to s.66(1) regarding the setting of a listed building (and s.72 in relation to the character and appearance of a conservation area)<sup>5</sup>.
- iv. NPPF paragraph 215 appears as part of a 'fasciculus' of paragraphs, which lay down an approach corresponding with the s.66(1) duty (and similarly the s.72 duty)<sup>6</sup>.
- v. If harm would be caused, then the case must be made for permitting the development in question, and the sequential test in paragraphs 213-215 of the NPPF sets out how that is to be done. If that is done with clarity, then approval following paragraph 215 is justified. No further step or process of justification is necessary<sup>7</sup>.
- vi. In cases where there may be both harm and benefits, in heritage terms, great weight has to be given to the conservation and enhancement of a listed building, and its setting, and the preservation and enhancement of a conservation area. It is, however, possible to find that the benefits to the same heritage assets may be far more significant than the harm<sup>8</sup>.
- vii. An impact is not to be equated with harm; there can be an impact which is neutral (or indeed positive)<sup>9</sup>.

**1.12 The National Planning Policy Framework:** Section 16 of the revised (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in paragraphs 202 to 221.

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<sup>3</sup> *South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1992] 2 AC 141 per Lord Bridge at p.146E-G in particular (obiter but highly persuasive).

<sup>4</sup> *Bath Society v Secretary of State* [1991] 1 WLR 1303, at 1319 per Glidewell LJ and *East Northamptonshire DC v SSCLG* [2014 EWCA Civ 137] (Barnwell Manor), at [22-29] per Sullivan LJ.

<sup>5</sup> *Jones v Mordue* [2015] EWCA Civ. 1243 per Sales LJ [at 28].

<sup>6</sup> *Jones v Mordue* [at 28] per Sales LJ.

<sup>7</sup> *R (Pugh) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWHC 3 (Admin) as per Gilbert J [at 53].

<sup>8</sup> *R (Safe Rottingdean Ltd) v Brighton and Hove CC* [2019] EWHC 2632 (Admin) as per Sir Duncan Ouseley [at 99].

<sup>9</sup> *Pagham Parish Council v Arun District Council* [2019] EWHC 1721 (Admin) (04 July 2019), as per Andrews, J DBE [at 38].

- 1.13 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 1.14 According to paragraph 207 applicants should 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.
- 1.15 According to paragraph 212, which applies specifically to designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation (the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This reflects the provisions of the 1990 Act in that it applies irrespective of whether it involves total loss, substantial harm, or less than substantial harm to significance.
- 1.16 Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. It then deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of, different types of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 214 continues on the subject of substantial harm.
- 1.17 Paragraph 215, on the other hand, deals with less than substantial harm. Harm in this category should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) describes public benefits as "*anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress*".
- 1.18 Paragraph 209 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required, having regard to:
- i. the scale of any harm or loss; and
  - ii. the (relative level of) significance of the heritage asset.
- 1.19 The **Development Plan** is the London Plan (2021) and the Merton Local Plan 2024 – 2037/38.
- 1.20 **The London Plan:** Policy HC1, entitled "*Heritage conservation and growth*" is the most relevant of the policies in Chapter 7. Parts A and B of the policy deals with strategic considerations/requirements and these are not relevant to determining planning applications.

1.21 Part C deals with development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings. This part of Policy HC1 requires development proposals to conserve the significance of heritage assets, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The policy also requires the cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings to be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early in the design process.

1.22 **Merton Local Plan:** Policy D12.5 is entitled 'Managing Heritage Assets' and is quoted below:

***Policy D12.5 Managing Heritage Assets***

1. *Merton has a wealth of Heritage Assets including conservation areas, listed buildings and structures and scheduled monuments. This policy aims to conserve and enhance Merton's Heritage Assets, their significance, settings and distinctive local character.*
2. *Development proposals affecting a Heritage Asset or its setting will be assessed against the principles set out in national policy and the London Plan, and should take into account detailed guidance set out in the accompanying Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide.*
3. *All development proposals with the potential to impact the significance or setting of the borough's Heritage Assets will be expected to demonstrate, within a Heritage Statement, how the proposal conserves, and where possible enhances the significance of the asset in terms of its architectural or historic interest and its setting.*
4. *In accordance with the NPPF, any alteration or destruction of a Heritage Asset, or development that has an impact on the significance and/or setting of a Heritage Asset will require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*
  - a. *Grade II listed buildings or registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional*
  - b. *Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*
5. *Proposals that will lead to substantial harm to the significance of, or the total loss of, Heritage Assets will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where substantial public benefits outweigh the harm or loss in accordance with the NPPF or that all of the following apply:*
  - a. *the nature of the Heritage Asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
  - c. *no viable use of the Heritage Asset itself can be found that will enable its conservation; and,*



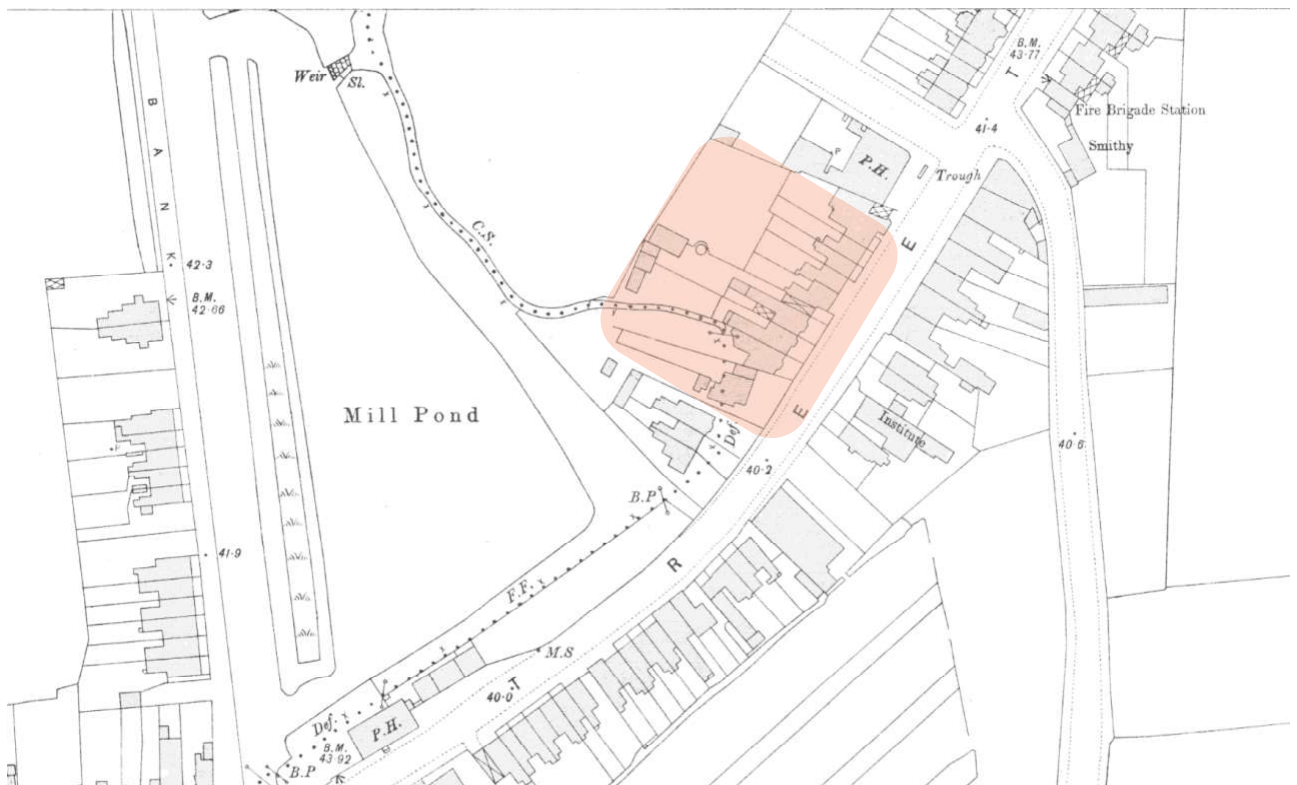
- d. conservation by grant funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is not possible; and,*
  - e. the harm or loss is substantially outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*
- 6. The loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area or the setting and/or significance of a Heritage Asset should be avoided. Proposals involving the loss of such buildings will not be supported unless any harm caused is clearly and convincingly justified and satisfies the requirements of national policy relating to the conservation of Heritage Assets.*
- 7. Proposals affecting the layout, design, character, use and function of both designated and non-designated Heritage Assets or their settings should conserve and look for opportunities to enhance their significance and have regard to the following:*
  - a. The conservation, or reinstatement of lost features that contribute to the asset or its setting. This may include original chimneys, windows and doors, boundary treatments and garden layouts, roof coverings or shop fronts. In listed buildings, internal features such as fireplaces, panelling, ceilings, doors and architraves as well as surface treatments, the proportion of individual rooms and historic layout may also be of significance.*
  - b. The removal of harmful alterations such as inappropriate additions, non-original windows and doors and the removal of paint or pebbledash from brickwork.*
  - c. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or damage to a Heritage Asset, the current condition of the Heritage Asset will not be taken into account in any decision.*
  - d. Proposals should not prejudice the future restoration of designated historic parks and gardens.*
- 8. Proposals relating to existing Heritage Assets should seek to improve energy efficiency effectively and sensitively and without detrimental visual impact on the Heritage Asset, or the wider significance and setting of the Heritage Asset.*

## **2.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION**

### **Historic background overview**

- 2.1 As the Appraisal notes, the Colliers Wood High Street roughly follows the alignment of the Roman Road, Stane Street. The village was historically known as 'Singlegate', the name derived from a toll booth (that is still reflected in the name of the Singlegate School of 1897).

- 2.2 Colliers Wood historically formed the focus of riverside industry, from at least the medieval period and onwards, with several corn mills having been located along this stretch of the Wandle during that period.
- 2.3 The 1895 Ordnance Survey map (**Fig 1**) shows Colliers Wood as a linear village, before the arrival of the Underground Station. The building stock at this time comprised traditional houses (terraced, semidetached and detached), some probably incorporating ground floor shops, alongside pubs and institutional buildings. The application site, like the site of the Britannia Point tower, was taken up by housing at this time, and the Victory pub to the NE can be seen in place.



**Fig 1:** An extract of the 1895 Ordnance Survey map, with the approximate location of the application site highlighted red.

- 2.4 The area is recorded on an aerial photo of 1924 (**Fig 2**), which shows increased development and village expansion, as well as what appears to have been some industrial development. The Underground Station can be seen under construction and the former lido in what is now Wandle Park can be seen on the bottom left.



**Fig 2:** An extract of an aerial photograph of 1924, showing the previous buildings on the application site.  
© Historic England

2.5 The 1947 vertical aerial photo (**Fig 3**) shows the lido infilled and some industrial development on the application site. The Underground Station is seen in place, and the distinctive H-shaped block at Olso Court, a Local Authority housing development dating from 1937, is now also visible. Part of the park was given over to allotments, no doubt a remnant of the wartime effort.



**Fig 3:** An extract of an aerial photograph of 1947, showing the approximate location of the application site in red. © Historic England

### **The significance of the Colliers Wood sub-area of the conservation area**

2.6 The following section draws heavily on the Council's Appraisal; although the document is now c. 18 years old, the descriptions of the character of the conservation area remain generally valid, and provide insights into the Council's assessment of the significance of the conservation area.

- 2.7 According to the Appraisal, Colliers Wood High Street provides the focus to this subarea, “*which has a much more commercial character than other parts of the conservation area*” (p.9).
- 2.8 The Appraisal notes that the Wandle, and the industries it supported, combined with the commercialising influence of the high streets of Colliers Wood and Merton continued to inform the development of the area until the present day. In recent years the industrial land uses have been in decline and have gradually disappeared, but the main Connolly’s Mill building survives and has been converted into residential use.
- 2.9 Today the sub-area is mainly dominated by Wandle Park and mixed-use, mainly retail and residential, development. This includes the bus garage and a number of public Houses along the two High Streets.
- 2.10 Colliers Wood Underground station dates from 1926 and is located at the junction of the High Street and Christchurch Road, and marks the site of the former tollgate and cottage.
- 2.11 The sub-area includes a number of statutory listed and locally listed buildings, as well as other buildings of historic interest, including a parade of part timber framed shops at 4-8 Merton High Street, and a surviving section of an early C19 terrace and adjoining locally listed public house at 182-192 High Street, Colliers Wood.
- 2.12 The Appraisal describes the locally listed Millers Mead as follows:  
*“Located on the site of a former laundry this late 19th Century building is of differing character to other residential development within this part of the conservation area being of an Italianate style. Originally a short terrace of three properties 1-3 Millers Mead the building was divided into flats in 1981. The building is two storeys with a shallow hipped slate roof. The building has been rendered and painted and had double hung sash windows sub divided into small panes with narrow glazing bars.”*
- 2.13 Today, Millers Mead is almost completely obscured by a tall and impermeable evergreen front boundary to the High Street (**Photo 1**).



**Photo 1:** The locally listed Millers Mead is almost completely obscured by a tall and impermeable evergreen front boundary to the High Street.

2.14 The Appraisal notes that the flats behind Millers Mead were built as part of a mixed development in 1981, which included the conversion of Millers Mead and the erection of the office building that has since been converted into the Holiday Inn (the application site). The buildings are noted to have a *“good location with views over Wandle Park but architecturally are considered to be neutral to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area”*.

2.15 Of the former Victory (now the Holden) Public House to the NE of the application site, at 198 High Street (**Photo 2**), the Appraisal states:

*“A late 19th Century public house, located on the corner of High Street Colliers Wood and Baltic Close. Built of yellow stock brick with red brick string courses and detailing around windows with double-hung sliding sash windows divided into small panes with slender glazing bars and a tiled pitched roof with two gables each with a decorative terra cotta panels above the first floor windows. Features include the decorative aprons in soft red brick beneath the first floor windows the finely gauged flat arches over the first floor windows also in a soft red brick and the detailing of the pub frontage including timber pilasters and cornice feature over the fascia.”*



**Photo 1:** The former Victory Public House to the NE of the application site, at 198 High Street.

2.16 The Appraisal notes that the Underground Station was one of a number of Northern Line stations, designed by Charles Holden in connection with the 1926 extension to the City and South London Underground Railway, now the Northern Line. The station (**Photo 3**) incorporates Holden's hallmark stripped Classical design featuring a symmetrical Portland stone main facade, a large tripartite clerestory window incorporating the London Underground roundel in stained glass and cantilevered canopy with the station signage in enamel, supporting two further London Underground roundels.



**Photo 3:** The grade II listed Underground Station.

2.17 Under the heading 'plot widths and building heights' on page 22, the Appraisal notes that Sub-Area 2 of the conservation area divides into distinct areas. The application site falls within area A, which the Appraisal notes is the commercial, predominantly retail development along Colliers Wood and Merton High Streets and Christchurch Road. These comprise narrow plots, interrupted by larger commercial buildings, either built up to the back of pavement line or slightly set back with small private areas in front. In the context of the application site, **Photo 4** below shows the generally narrow plots along the High Street to the NE of the application site, whereas **Photo 5** then shows the present building on the application site as an example of a larger commercial building that has interrupted the pattern of narrow plots.



**Photo 4:** The generally narrow plots along the High Street to the NE of the application site.



**Photo 5:** The present building on the application site as an example of a larger commercial building that has interrupted the pattern of narrow plots.



2.18 The application site is adjoined by 'area D' structures, which the Appraisal describes as larger, more recent residential buildings, mainly in more substantial three and four storey blocks set back behind the historic fabric fronting Colliers Wood and Merton High Streets. One of these, the four storey Oslo Court, can be seen above at **Photo 4**, behind the former Victory (now the Holden) pub.

2.19 In the discussion of the areas, the Appraisal notes that the narrow plot widths, interspersed with larger plots, and the surviving Wandle Park, give a picture of:

*"a cyclical development of the area starting with annexation of agricultural land for large estates, subsequently sub-divided for more intensive development which have then in places been combined together to form larger plots for more major development. This cycle has informed the pattern and grain of development within this sub area resulting in a distinctive rhythm to the street frontages. The majority of buildings are two storey in height, some with additional accommodation within the roof incorporating dormer windows, usually set behind brick parapets. Buildings which extend above the overall height of development within the area are generally important industrial, cultural and religious buildings, such as the former mill building in Wandle Bank and Singlegate School.*

*Some more recent developments are also extend aboven [sic] the prevalent building height, including Oslo Court [**Photo 4**] which is four storeys, the new flats behind Millers Mead which is three storeys and the former office building, which is now the Holiday Inn Express which is also of three storeys."*

2.20 Under the heading 'urban spaces' on page 26, the Appraisal notes:

*"The main urban space within the conservation area is the space in front of the Underground Station at the junction of Christchurch Road and High Street Colliers Wood. For people arriving in the area by underground this is the main gateway to the area. The space is enclosed by the station and adjacent parades of shops along the east side of Christchurch Road, the "Brown and Root" office tower to the south and 180-192 High Street Colliers Wood to the west. The space is distinctly urban with hard landscaping augmented by softer landscaping and tree planting at the base of the Brown and Root tower."*

### **The contribution of the Holiday Inn building**

2.21 The Appraisal describes the Holiday Inn building on page 17:

*"Developed from the re-use of an existing commercial building in 1998 this represents a successful example of adapting existing buildings to new uses as a sustainable alternative to redevelopment. The design is of no particular architectural merit and the area in front is dominated by hard landscaping and car parking. There would be scope to improve the*

*relationship to the street possible with imaginative extension and creation of external seating areas."*

2.22 The Appraisal describes the Holiday Inn building as a neutral contributor. However, it is clear from the images below (**Photos 6 & 7**) that the present building on the application site, with its concrete rendered elevation and flush white uPVC window frames, which is given accentuated prominence by the somewhat oversized coved cornice, has a somewhat lacklustre, bland and dated appearance. The building has been extended over several phases leaving the building somewhat disjointed in appearance. It evidently represents an evolved townscape, where a larger block has replaced the historic, tightly packed smaller buildings that once stood on the site.



**Photo 6:** The present building on the application site.



**Photo 7:** The present building on the application site.

2.23 It is understood that there were previous attempts to 'respect' the adjacent former Victory (now the Holden) pub, by inseting the corner of the Holiday Inn building. However, this has not been especially successful; regardless of the corner inset the pub is clearly juxtaposed with a later, modern commercial building (**Photos 8 & 9**). The inset has, instead created a gap in the townscape, which exposed an awkward junction of built forms, and fragmentation in the townscape (**Photo 9**), in contrast with the tight urban townscape recorded on the aerial photographs at **Figs 2 & 3** above. There is clearly an opportunity to improve the architectural design and appearance of the current building, and address issues with the awkwardly inset NE corner.



**Photo 8:** The pub is clearly juxtaposed with a later, modern commercial building regardless of the corner inset.



**Photo 9:** The inset has created a gap in the townscape, which exposed an awkward junction of built forms, and fragmentation in the townscape.

2.24 Turning briefly to the listed buildings, there is nothing about the Holiday Inn building that can be seen to enhance or reveal the significance of Colliers Wood Underground Station, and neither does it fulfil such a function in relation to the drinking fountain in Wandle Park, near the southern entrance. Instead, the experience of the underground station is very much that of being set in a mixed/evolved townscape that includes unrelated modern buildings of contrasting scale, materials, etc. (e.g. **Photo 10**). A similar observation can be made in relation to the locally listed Millers Mead, at 220 High Street, to the south of the Holiday Inn and just visible on the left of the photo below.



**Photo 10:** The Colliers Wood Underground Station (red arrow), seen in context with the present building on the application site and Britannia Point.

### 3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 The proposed development is summarised below, and each of the elements are then considered in turn, before an overall conclusion is made:

- i. a wholesale facade refurbishment to the High Street, and the western return elevation, to aesthetically enhance the building;
- ii. an extension of the awkwardly inset NE corner; and
- iii. the addition of a single storey, set back glazed rooftop extension (with an integrated corridor at the rear, connecting with the stairs core at the SW).

3.2 **Facade refurbishment:** The proposed High Street frontage can be seen at **Fig 4** below.



**Fig 4:** An extract of a proposed High Street elevation.

3.3 The proposed facade refurbishment would visually transform the building from a lacklustre, bland and disappointing building to a much more articulated and interesting element in the streetscape. The pollution-stained rendered finish would be replaced. The shallow arcade at the ground floor would also be replaced with a coherent building line, where the ground floor has been expressed as the base of the building, with a clearly articulated entrance clad in patinated copper. The somewhat oversized covered cornice, which looks to be of Post-Modern design and which gives the building an exaggerated presence, is completely omitted in the proposed remodelling. Instead, the elevation is clean and rational, with the patterned aluminium cladding (see below) providing a visual flourish and a subtle reference to the local context/history.

3.4 The pattern of the anodised aluminium cladding uses the motif of one of William Morris' fabric patterns. This is a local reference to Morris & Co, which moved premises to the Merton Abbey Works in 1881 (an earlier printing works). The move to Merton brought all of the Morris & Co activities under one roof, and carried on a tradition of textile manufacture in Merton. This therefore reflects the Wandle Valley's industrial history. However, even without this reference, the delicate patterns and play of light and shadow at different angles and times of day would add interest and depth to the elevations, which the building in its present state sorely lacks.

3.5 This proposed transformational change to the façade would materially elevate the architectural interest of the presently bland and lacklustre building. It would enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area, and likewise the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

3.6 **Extension of the awkwardly inset NE corner:** As has been noted above, the existing setback corner is the result of a previous attempt to 'respect' the adjacent pub, but this has not been especially successful. The pub is, in any event, clearly juxtaposed with a later, modern commercial building that it is seen alongside of. That is regardless of the corner inset. The inset corner has created a gap in the townscape, which exposes an awkward step in the building line and a somewhat unresolved junction of three dimensional forms. It also allows a view of the pylon in the park behind (**Photo 10**). This gap or fragmentation of the street frontage is in contrast with the historically tight urban townscape, as recorded on the early C20 aerial photographs.



**Photo 10:** The inset has created a gap in the townscape, which exposed an awkward junction of built forms, and fragmentation in the townscape.

3.7 It can be noted that the southern elevation of the pub was originally blind (a window has been inserted later) and, unlike the remainder of the building, it is plain and unadorned (**Photo 11**). The elevation was evidently not designed to be seen, despite it being slightly emphasised by the uncharacteristic gap that now exists here. The proposal takes the opportunity to improve the architectural design and appearance of the current building, and address issues with the fractured building line at the awkwardly inset NE corner, and re-provide some of the lost enclosure and definition to the street.



**Photo 11:** The southern elevation of the pub was originally blind (a window has been inserted later), and unlike the remainder of the building, it is plain.

- 3.8 The proposed corner extension would, quite literally, round off the existing building, with the curved corner providing a visually pleasing, softer transition to the adjacent pub, whilst still providing definition and enclosure, in place of the present fragmentation. A glazed top floor completes the composition, providing a slight flourish at the corner. When seen in context and proportional to the existing building, the proposed height here would be suitable.
- 3.9 As has been noted in the assessment above, today the pub is already very clearly juxtaposed with the later, modern commercial building on the application site, regardless of the present corner inset. This is seen in views from the north and the south. Along the north there is a context of smaller, traditionally scaled and proportioned buildings with which the pub forms a group. To the south, however, the situation is very different. There is nothing about the existing building that harmonises with the pub, or meaningfully relates to it. The baseline position is that of a juxtaposition of contrast.
- 3.10 In essence that would be the same with the proposed extension in place, albeit that the awkward, inset corner would be replaced by a properly expressed, rounded corner element that celebrates and articulates the northern end of the building, which faces the *"main urban space within the conservation area"* and a 'gateway' to the area (as the



Appraisal describes the area in front of the Underground Station, on page 26). The pub would continue to be seen juxtaposed with a contrasting modern block. Although the massing and appearance would be different, the contribution that the pub makes to the conservation area would remain unaffected; to some extent it may be said that the cleaner lines and more rational design of the Holiday Inn building would emphasise the pub to a greater extent, and the visual contrast would accentuate the presence of the pub.

- 3.11 As noted, the south elevation of the pub is a blank wall and the closer proximity of the corner extension would not obscure anything notable about the building. This would not affect the contribution it makes to the conservation area.
- 3.12 **The glazed, set back extension (with integrated corridor):** Only the top part of the proposed glazed extension would be visible in some longer street views, due to the setback, and the way in which the perforated metal screen would sit in front of it. It is a lightweight structure that would be instantly understood as a modern rooftop structure that fits in a complementary way with the rational, clean lines of the elevation below. The partial visibility of this lightweight, glazed element in some views would not affect the contribution that the building makes to the conservation area. It would be visually lightweight, and would not give rise to a sense of undue heaviness or weight at the top of the building.
- 3.13 **Overall conclusion:** In conclusion, the proposed development would notably enhance the High Street frontage of the application site. The proposed extensions would be proportionally appropriate to the host building and the context, and visually coherent with the façade improvements. There are no indications of harm to the significance of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area, or the setting/significance of the nearby listed/locally listed buildings.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 This Heritage Statement presents a proportionate understanding of the significance of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area, and the contribution of the existing building to it (including the setting of the nearby listed buildings), as well as an assessment of the likely potential impacts of the proposed development.
- 4.2 The assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development would preserve/enhance the significance of the conservation area, and the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

4.3 This means paragraphs 213-215 of the National Planning Policy Framework are not engaged. This also satisfies Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Policy D12.5 of the Merton Local Plan. It also means that the proposed development also complies with the statutory duties in s.66 and s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990.