

57 RIVER ROAD, LITTLEHAMPTON, SUSSEX

HERITAGE STATEMENT



JPHERITAGE

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PROJECT: 57 River Road, Littlehampton, Sussex

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CLIENT: Brownfield Estates

PREPARED BY: Jamie Preston, Heritage Consultant
JPHERITAGE
Worting House
Church Lane
Basingstoke
Hampshire



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57 RIVER ROAD, LITTLEHAMPTON - HERITAGE STATEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by JP Heritage Ltd on behalf of Brownfield Estates to inform a proposed development for 6 units at 57 River Road and on adjacent land. 57 River Road is included on the Council's Buildings or Structures of Local Character and is located within the Littlehampton Conservation Area.
- 1.1.2 The document provides a description of the historic development and significance of 57 River Road and the adjacent land and assesses the impacts of the development. This has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the LPA in accordance with paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Revised 2019).

1.2 Nature of the proposals

- 1.2.2 The proposals are set out at section 3 of the DAS and summarised in the Planning Statement, as follows:
- Partial demolition of the existing building while retaining and repairing the front gable elevation;
 - Removal of a section of the flint boundary wall to the yard for access and repair of the remainder of the wall;
 - Erection of two buildings on the site which are connected by a glazed link/stairwell.

1.3 Heritage designations



Figure 1: 57 River Road

- 1.3.1 57 River Road is included in Arun District Council's List of Buildings or Structures of Local Character (adopted September 2005). 57 River Road was included on the list because it was considered to meet the following criteria:
- Buildings which are extremely good examples of traditional or established, or unusual type;
 - In special cases, buildings or structures which contribute towards the local townscape or have important historical associations;

- All buildings must be largely intact and not adversely affected by later extensions or alterations;
- Preferably, although not exclusively, they should make a positive contribution to their surroundings or the street scene.

1.3.2 57 River Road is located within the River Road Conservation Area which was first designated in 1989 and extended in 1991 to include some of the remaining riverside buildings. A Conservation Area Statement for all of the conservation areas within Arun District Council was adopted in 2000 as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The River Road Conservation Area Statement is focused on the historic residential area on the eastern side of the Conservation Area. The riverside buildings are not mentioned.

1.3.3 A Historic Character Assessment Report was produced for Littlehampton in 2009. This report makes a note of the warehouses along River Road, as follows:

Further west along River Road, the eastern part of the works at No. 57 is the earliest surviving riverside warehouse and dates from c. 1800 (with more extensive western part of what is now Riverside Autos dating from the mid-19th century).

There are two unlisted locally important buildings, which are rare survivals of the east bank wharves and quays: at 57 River Road an early riverside flint and brick warehouse survives, with a mid-19th century warehouse built adjoining to the north-west (now Riverside Autos).

1.3.4 49 River Road is also included in Arun District Council's List of Buildings or Structures of Local Character. This building is located adjacent to the yard at 57 River Road.



Figure 2: 49 River Road

1.4 References in the West Sussex Historic Environment Record (Heritage Gateway)

1.4.1 The West Sussex Historic Environment Record does not include any entries for 57 River Road.

1.5 Planning history

1.5.1 There are a number of planning applications of relevance to the current proposals, as follows:

LU/291/17/PL – Addition of a new segment to the Littlehampton East Bank Tidal walls Reach 4 Flood defences (Approved).

LU/106/14/PL – Demolish existing building, retaining the existing façade (part) on River Road and party wall on the South East boundary. Change of use to residential. Construct new three storey building consisting of 4 no. four bed houses and open parking at ground floor level (Refused).

LU/72/14/PL – Replacement of existing river wall and new floating pontoon and access ladder (Refused).

1.5.2 In 2020 the following application for planning permission was submitted:

LU/247/20/PL – Partial demolition of existing building, retention of boundary wall and street façade, partial demolition of boundary wall to incorporate new pedestrian gateway and gate, erection of 6 No. flats in 2 blocks connected by shared stair and lift core, on site parking yard for 8 No. cars and 8 No. cycles and space for communal refuse and recycling bins. This application affects the character and appearance of the Littlehampton River Road Conservation Area and is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as flats (Refused).

1.5.3 The heritage related reasons for refusal are as follows:

1. The site lies within the Littlehampton River Road Conservation Area and given the height of the southerly unit and the impact of the development on non-designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area it is not considered that the proposal would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in conflict with policies HER DM3 and HER SP1 of Arun Local Plan and the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to heritage assets which is not outweighed by public benefit and is therefore contrary to paragraphs 192, 194, 196 and 197 of the NPPF.

2. The proposal results in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset and it has not been adequately demonstrated that the building cannot be repaired and put to a viable beneficial use of re-use in conflict with policies HER SP1 and HER DM2 of Arun Local Plan.

1.5.4 Following refusal of planning permission in 2020 (ref. LU/247/20/PL) a request for pre-application advice for the *proposed development of former warehouse site* (ref. PAA/17/21) was submitted to Arun District Council. A summary of the Conservation Officer's comments with regard to each element of the proposed scheme is as follows:

Yard - *The development of this section of undeveloped land would result in the loss of this space. Whilst it would be desirable to retain such a gap site in order to preserve the pattern and rhythm of development in the street, it is also acknowledged that the site and the building are both in a poor state of repair which detracts from the generally positive nature of the conservation area, when taken as a whole. It is considered that the redevelopment of this site offers the opportunity to improve this part of the conservation area, which is positive.*

Loss of the asset – *The existing building is considered to be a crucial dimension to the sense of place and local history, and it is considered that its loss would be harmful to the local character of the conservation area. However, it is thought that the loss of the building could be considered acceptable as a result of issues related to its lack of structural stability to tolerate conversion.*

However, I would want for the building to be recorded prior to its demolition, so that the information can be placed on the Historic Environment Record and provided to the local museum.

The Proposed Development – *The proposed development consists of two blocks of apartments with a glazed central area which incorporates the access stairs. The concept of splitting the building with a glazed area in between seems to be a positive approach, as it allows some of the existing space between the buildings to be retained. It also replicates the spaces between the other buildings along this side of the street. Likewise, the use of pitched roofs is also positive and reflected in buildings in the local area. The modern design elements also reflect those of the neighbouring building, which also incorporates some elements of former warehouses.*

The southern block ‘steps’ down towards the neighbouring locally listed building, and this is a positive feature of the proposal. Such a proposal is an improvement on the previous scheme.

If carefully detailed and high quality materials are used, I am of the opinion that the development would reflect the recently built adjoining terrace and the character/appearance of the conservation area when taken as a whole.

Conclusion – *The revised scheme is an improvement on the previous one and would result in the removal of an unkept site in the conservation area. Subject to confirmation over the condition of the existing building, the consideration of increasing the separation between the new building and the neighbouring locally listed heritage asset, along with the use of high quality materials, I am of the opinion that the proposed scheme would result in a successful development.*

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 NPPF (Revised 2019)

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It advises that in determining planning applications ‘*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to 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* (paragraph 189).
- 2.1.2 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as being ‘*a building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.*’ Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.1.3 In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of (paragraph 192):
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 2.1.4 Specific guidance on the treatment of designated heritage assets (listed buildings) emphasises the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset in order to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 193). It advises that *‘when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*
- 2.1.5 Paragraph 194 continues by stating that *‘any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification’.*
- 2.1.6 Specific guidance on the treatment of non-designated heritage assets emphasises the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset in order to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 197). It advises 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 directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

2.2 Arun District Local Plan

- 2.2.1 The Arun District Local Plan (2011-2031) includes the following historic environment policies that are relevant to this application:
- Policy HERDM2 – Locally Listed Buildings or Structures of Character;
 - Policy HERDM3 – Conservation Areas;
 - Policy HERSP1 – The Historic Environment.

2.3 Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.3.1 The Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan includes the following policy which is relevant to this application:
- Policy 17: Buildings and Structures of Character

3.0 THE HERITAGE ASSET AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Understanding the form and history of the heritage asset

- 3.1.1 The port of Littlehampton developed from the late 18th century. Late 18th century houses in Surrey Street and warehouses along River Road provide evidence for the emerging port. The Littlehampton tithe map (c. 1840) shows 57 River Road with enclosed yards on its south-eastern and north-western sides (the current yard is numbered 283). Warehouses to the south-east east follow a similar pattern with yards and wharves. Further to the south-east along River Road a yard with a wet dock is shown.

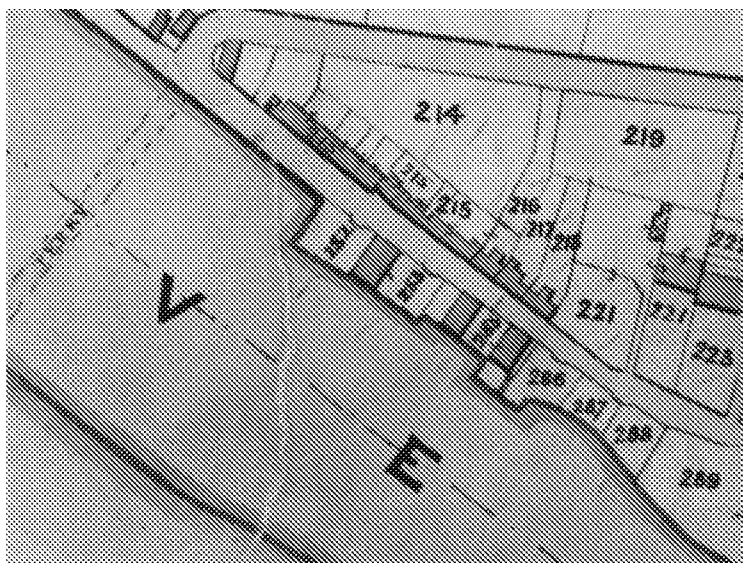


Figure 3: Extract from the Littlehampton tithe map (c. 1840)

- 3.1.2 A date stone on the front elevation of 57 River Road records the name T Isemonger. The date is a little less clear, possibly 1830. Isemongers of Littlehampton appear to have been specialists in the coal trade between Sunderland and Littlehampton. Four collier brigs are known to be associated with the Isemongers. The Isemongers also appear to have been involved in shipbuilding and Thomas Isemonger opened a shipyard shortly after Jeffrey Carver and John Corney established a shipyard in 1804. The sloop HMS *Cormorant* was built at Isemonger's yard and launched on 10th January 1807. The chain ferry was built by Thomas Isemonger in 1825.
- 3.1.3 The 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1876) shows that the area to the north-west had been developed and a new section of wharf built near to the ferry crossing. The area between 57 River Road and the wet dock to the south-east had also been developed. This included a narrow structure on the eastern side of the yard adjacent to 57 River Road. A large shipbuilding yard with a dock had been established on the opposite side of the river to 57 River Road.

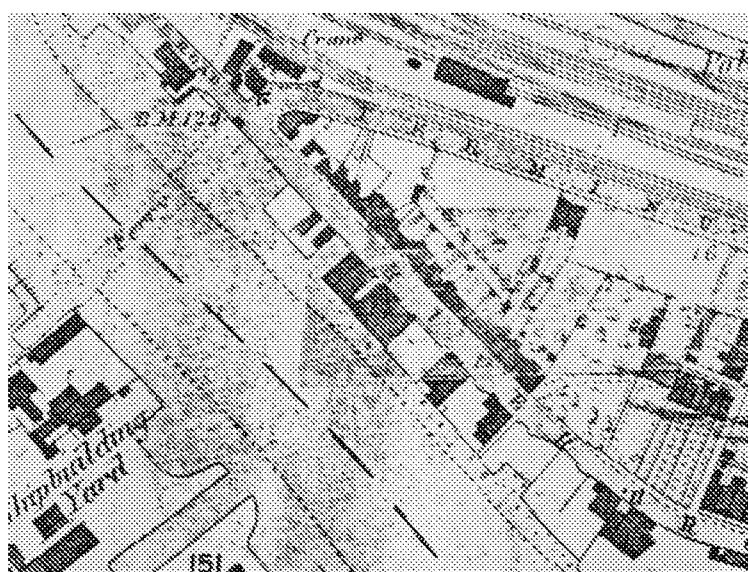


Figure 4: Extract from the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1876)

- 3.1.4 Some further development along the north-western part of River Road took place in the later 19th century. The 3rd edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1911) shows new buildings to the north-west of the 57 River Road group of warehouses and to the south-east. It appears that steps may have been added to the front elevation of 57 River Road.

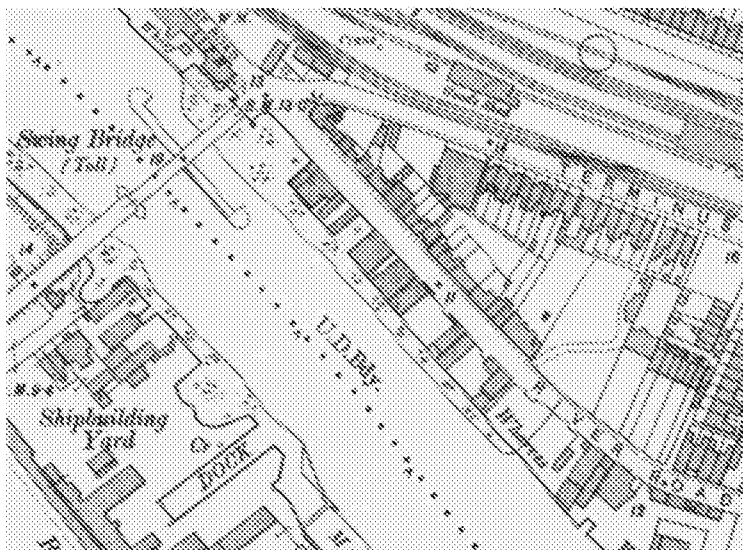


Figure 5: Extract from the 3rd edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1911)

- 3.1.5 A photograph showing the launch of the barge *Wessex* from Harvey's Yard in c. 1915 shows the river frontage elevation of the group of warehouses associated with 57 River Road. This provides details of the original south-west elevation with its large loading bay doors on the first floor and a smaller door in the roof space.



Figure 6: Photograph dating from c. 1915 showing the riverside elevation of 57 River Road

- 3.1.6 The 1934 edition of the Ordnance Survey map shows substantial expansion of the shipbuilding facility on the south-west side of the river and new buildings associated with wharves to the south-east along River Road.

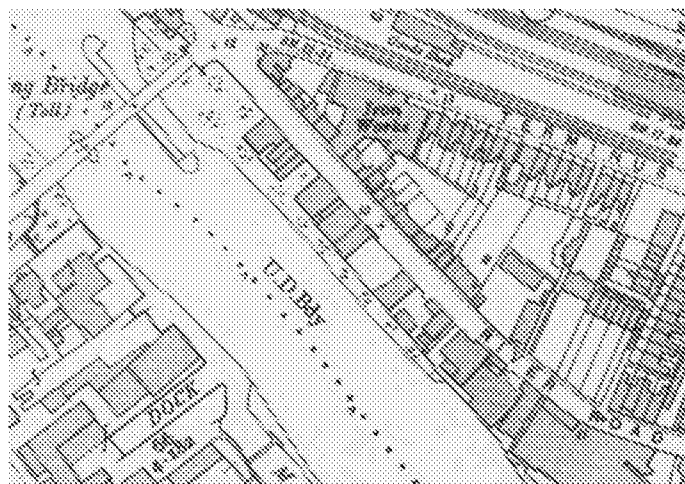


Figure 7: Extract from the 1934 edition of the Ordnance Survey map

- 3.1.7 The 1958 edition of the Ordnance Survey map (1:1,250) shows the 57 River Road group of warehouses as 'Works' with a wharf on the south-east side. A small structure is shown on the eastern side of the wharf. By 1970 57 River Road had been partly demolished along the river frontage and was in use as a 'Plastics Works'. The north-western part of the group of warehouses was a 'Garage'. The small structure on the eastern side of the yard adjacent to 57 River Road had been demolished by this time.
- 3.1.8 In the later 20th century and early part of the 21st century the group of warehouses associated with 57 River Road were all in use as a garage: Riverside Autos. Only 57 River Road continues to function as a garage.

3.2 Description of 57 River Road and adjacent yard

Exterior

- 3.2.1 57 River Road is of coursed flint cobble construction with brick dressings. The gabled roof is finished with asbestos tiles. The front elevation includes a pair of 20th century doors below a timber lintel on the ground floor. There is a door opening with a segmental arched brick head to the left. On the first floor there is a smaller loading bay opening with double doors below a timber lintel. This appears to be of similar size to the loading bay opening on the original south-west elevation. There is a date stone with the name T Isemonger to the left of this opening. There is a single loading bay door to the roof space.



Figure 8: Front elevation of 57 River Road

- 3.2.2 The south-east elevation includes a large central window opening on the first floor. This is flanked by a truncated window opening on the LHS and a door opening to the right. The door opening to the right may be a later insertion associated with the construction of steps. Historic mapping suggests that this was a late 19th century change. There is a 20th century door opening with an I-beam lintel on the LHS of the ground floor.



Figure 9: South-east elevation of 57 River Road



Figure 10: Truncated first floor window

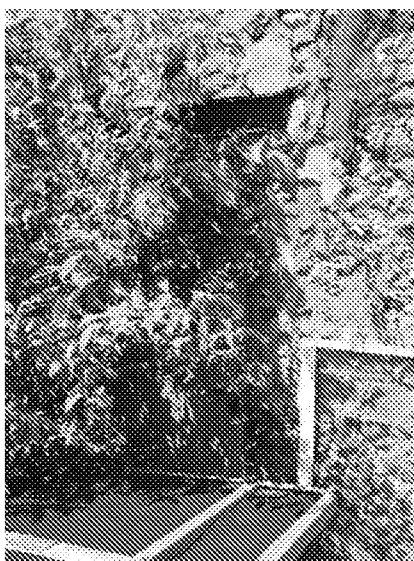


Figure 11: Door opening with I-beam lintel

- 3.2.3 The south-west end bay of 57 River Road was demolished in the c. mid-20th century. The south-west elevation is clad with corrugated metal sheets. There is a central door opening on the first floor with a plank and batten door. The exposed edges of the demolished section of wall on the RHS have been capped with cement. Part of the flint cobble plinth survives and demonstrates the extent of the original building. The area of the demolished bay is occupied by makeshift wooden structures containing equipment for painting cars and a car port.



Figure 12: South-west elevation of 57 River Road



Figure 13: Section of flint plinth showing south-western extent of the original building

Interior – Ground floor

- 3.2.4 The ground floor is currently used as a workshop with an enclosed area for spray painting to the rear. The floor is concrete. The first floor structure includes transverse beams with joists which rest on top of the beams. The joists are hand sawn. There is a modern ladder stair in the eastern corner. There is a section of chain suspended on hooks on the western side of the ground floor.

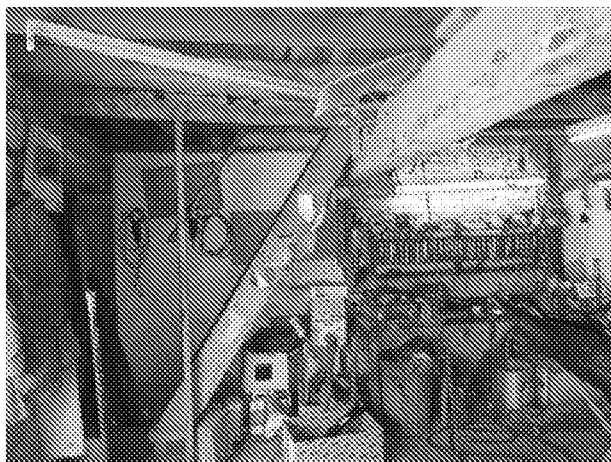


Figure 14: Front bays on the ground floor



Figure 15: Covered area to the rear (within the footprint of the demolished bay)

Interior – First floor

- 3.2.5 The first floor is open and includes five beams which define the surviving six bays. The floor beams are dropped tie beams which rest on brick lined recesses in the longitudinal walls. Some of these beams include evidence for shipping marks. The joists rest on battens nailed to the sides of the beams. These joists are hand sawn rather than machined.
- 3.2.6 The loading bay doors on the front elevation include wide boards, trapezoidal battens and round end strap hinges. These details suggest a late 19th century to early 20th century date. The ledged and braced door on the south-west side of the first floor is of 20th century date. The windows on the south-east side of the first floor are 20th century replacements. The soffit of the lintels include round holes which suggest that these openings may originally have had bars. The central window opening includes a waney lintel. The door in the eastern corner of the first floor includes a door frame of machine sawn timbers. The character of the brick dressings are also different in character to the rest of the building. This corresponds with the map evidence for the addition of external steps in this location in the late 19th century.



Figure 16: First floor looking towards the front of the building



Figure 17: Shipping marks on one of the central transverse beams

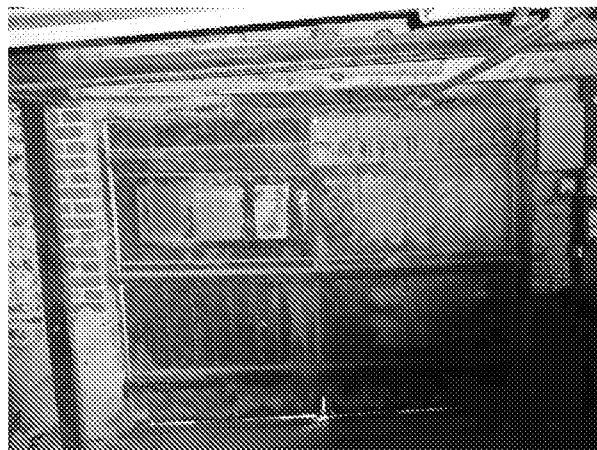


Figure 18: Loading bay doors on the front elevation



Figure 19: Dowels along the soffit of the lintel on the southern side of the first floor

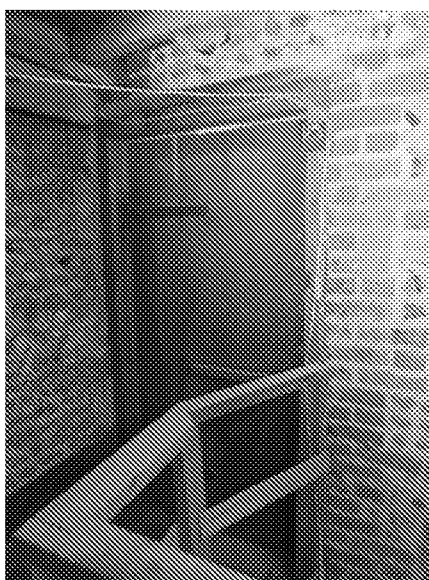


Figure 20: Later 19th century door opening on the eastern side of the first floor

Interior – Second floor

- 3.2.7 Access to the second floor is by timber steps in the south-east bay and through a hatch in the upper floor. The roof structure includes collars which are jointed to the principal rafters with halved lap joints fixed with iron nails. These collars clasp side purlins with splayed scarfs, also fixed with nails, located at the collar positions. The apex of the roof includes a ridge plank. The principal elements of the roof include mill sawn timbers. The softwood rafters are regularly sawn and are probably machine sawn. There are diagonal set rafters in the two end bays to brace the roof longitudinally. It is possible that these were added following the demolition of the south-west bay. The plank and batten door on the south-east elevation includes trapezoidal battens and round end strap hinges and is probably of late 19th to early 20th century date. There are chalk marks referring to foresails and topsails on the inside leaf of the door.



Figure 21: Steps from the first to second floors



Figure 22: Collared truss roof structure

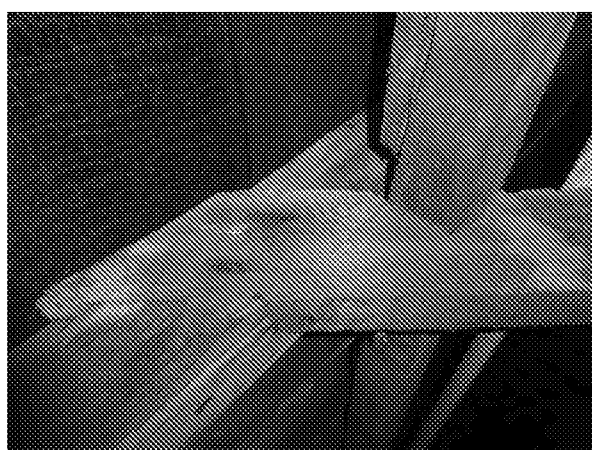


Figure 23: Nailed joint between a collar and a principal rafter

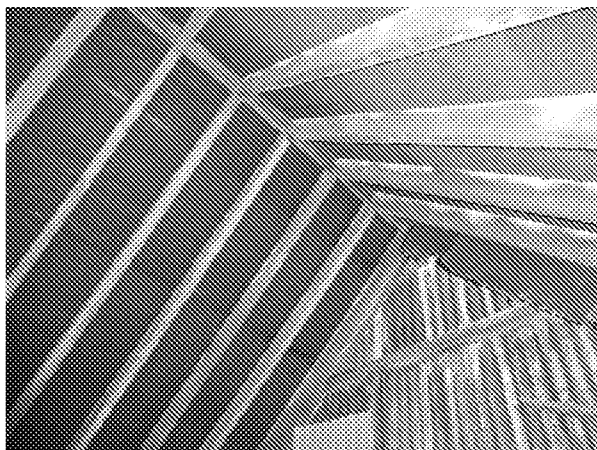


Figure 24: Ridge plank at the apex of the roof



Figure 25: Loading bay door on the north-east side of the second floor (diagonally set rafter to the right of the photo)

Yard

- 3.2.8 The yard on the south-east side of 57 River Road is accessed through a boundary wall of coursed flint cobble construction. This wall is keyed into the brick quoins of 57 River Road to the right and is ramped on the left hand side of the entrance. The wall then returns along the south-east side of the yard and includes a mix of coursed flint cobbles and areas of brickwork. The north-western side of the yard is defined by 57 River Road. The riverside includes a recently constructed section of concrete wall for flood defences. The gate piers are of brick. The brick pier on the RHS appears to be of 20th century date. The yard has an informal surface and is used for car parking.



Figure 26: Front boundary wall and entrance to the yard



Figure 27: The yard viewed from the riverside wall



Figure 28: South-east wall of the yard

3.3 Assessment of the significance of the heritage asset

- 3.3.1 57 River Road is included in Arun District Council's List of Buildings or Structures of Local Character as it was considered to match the criteria set out in paragraph 1.3.1 above. This report includes an assessment of the significance of 57 River Road with reference to Historic England Advice Note 7 - Local Heritage List which was published in 2016 (see table below).

- 3.3.2 This shows that 57 River Road meets a number of the recommended criteria for a building to be worthy of being regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. Its strongest qualification for non-designated heritage asset status relates to its age and rarity as an early survival of a 19th century warehouse along River Road, group value and historical associations. To a lesser degree 57 River Road is significant for its aesthetic interest and archival interest. The assessment of heritage value and criterion for assessing local interest concludes that 57 River Road is of moderate historical significance but of low to moderate architectural significance.

Criterion	Comment
Age	57 River Road has its origins in the early 19 th century and includes later 19 th and mid-20 th century alterations. DCMS guidance on listing states that <i>'from 1750 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary'</i> . There have been changes to the original building, most notably the demolition of the south-western bay which has resulted in the loss of the original riverside elevation (now clad with corrugated metal sheets). The roof covering has been replaced with asbestos tiles, the windows are all 20 th century along with some of the doors. The original building has therefore been substantially altered. However, the original form and much of the original structure, including flint cobble walls with brick dressings, probably imported softwood floors and roof structure and some late 19 th to early 20 th century doors. 57 River Road is therefore considered to meet this criterion to a degree. Historic England's guidance on <i>Local Heritage Listing</i> states that the age range can be adjusted to take into account local characteristics or building traditions. The coursed flint cobble wall fabric is a characteristic of historic buildings in Littlehampton while the small warehouse form is characteristic of commercial riverside buildings in this part of the Conservation Area. It is considered that 57 River Road meets this criterion.
Rarity	The Littlehampton Historic Character Assessment Report (2009) states that 57 River Road is a rare survival of the east bank wharves and quays. This does appear to be the case and 57 River Road is therefore considered to meet this criterion.
Aesthetic Interest	Aesthetic interest has been diluted by 20 th century alterations, including the demolition of the south-west bay, corrugated metal cladding, replacement of the roof covering with modern tiles, replacement windows, doors and inappropriate repairs. These changes have to a certain extent blurred the original design of the building. However, the original form remains legible and reads as a small warehouse. This along with vernacular materials contribute to aesthetic interest and 57 River Road therefore meets this criterion to a degree.
Group Value	57 River Road forms part of a group of c. mid-19 th century warehouses of which the front and side elevations form part of a contemporary residential development. The enclosed yard to the south-east and the adjacent flint cobble and brick building form part of the 19 th century layout along River Road. 57 River Road does therefore meet this criterion.
Archaeological Interest	57 River Road was constructed in the 19 th century. No earlier fabric can be observed. 57 River Road is not considered to be of archaeological interest.

Archival Interest	There are no known documents which specifically record the origins and development of 57 River Road. 19 th and 20 th century maps and an early 20 th century photograph provide some details of the historic development of the site. Based on current information, 57 River Road meets this criterion to a minor degree.
Historical Associations	Based on the evidence gathered for this assessment the site has historic associations with T. Isemonger, a local shipbuilder and possibly a coal merchant. 57 River Road therefore meet this criterion.
Designed Landscape Interest	57 River Road does not form part of a locally important historic designed landscape, park or garden. 57 River Road does not therefore meet this criterion.
Landmark Status	57 River Road does have historical associations with Thomas Isemonger, a local shipbuilder and does provide legible evidence for commercial activity along east bank of the river Arun in the 19 th century. However, 57 River Road is not considered to have especially striking aesthetic value or strong communal associations. On balance, 57 River Road is not considered to meet this criterion.
Social and Communal Value	No apparent social or communal values have been identified. 57 River Road does not therefore meet this criterion.

4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Proposals

- 4.1.1 The proposal is for the demolition of all but the front elevation of 57 River Road and the insertion of a 3.5-storey structure behind the historic road frontage. The proposed development also includes the development of the adjacent yard with a 4-storey building.

4.2 Partial demolition of 57 River Road

- 4.2.1 57 River Road has been historically altered with the demolition of a bay on the River Arun side of the building. The original roof covering has been replaced with modern tiles. None of the original doors or windows survive, although the openings with brick dressings partly survive. The south-west elevation with corrugated metal cladding does not contribute to the character of the building or to views towards the Conservation Area from the opposing bank of the River Arun. The south-east elevation has obviously been truncated, along with one first floor window, and a door with an unsympathetic steel I-beam lintel inserted on the LHS of the ground floor. A modern concrete block structure is located at the centre of the elevation. The front elevation includes 20th century double doors, possibly to an enlarged opening and a large mortar repair to the top RHS. The exterior has been much changed, although its original form and function can still be appreciated.
- 4.2.2 The ground floor has been altered to accommodate a car repairs workshop and painting facilities. The upper floors remain as open spaces. The floor and roof structures remain intact.
- 4.2.3 The proposed partial demolition would result in the loss of historic fabric which is considered to be of low to moderate significance. The proposals would not, however, result in the total loss of historic fabric. The loss of historic fabric could be mitigated through preservation by record. This should be to Historic England Level 3 or 4, which is an analytical record.

- 4.2.4 57 River Road makes a positive contribution to the architectural and historical interest of the Conservation Area. Its form and use of materials contribute to the street scene. Retaining the front gable end elevation will preserve the streetscape and will be in keeping with the adjacent development. The loading bay doors at first and second floor level would be replaced with windows serving the apartments. Despite this small change, the function of the building, i.e. openings on each floor, and the date stone with the name T. Isemonger will remain legible. The partially demolished building will therefore continue to serve as legible evidence of past commercial activities along this part of River Road.



Figure 29: Date stone on the front elevation of 57 River Road

- 4.2.5 Further mitigation that would link to the historic retained façade of 57 River Road could include an information board that provides an understanding of the history of the site and its riverside context. This would raise an awareness of the history of this part of the Conservation Area and would represent a public benefit. This could take the form of a nearby information board about 'Bridging the River Arun'. In addition, materials will be recycled where practicable as part of the proposed scheme.

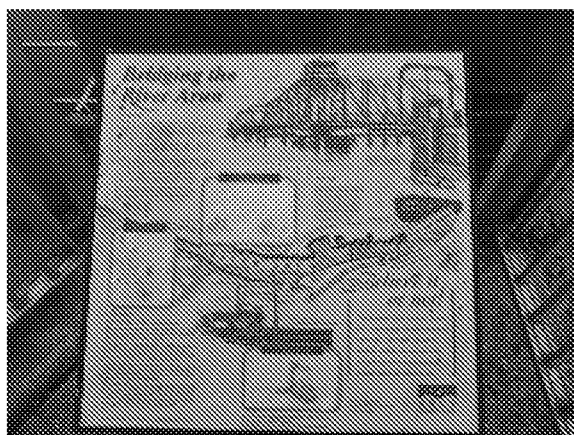


Figure 30: Information board near the current footbridge across the River Arun

- 4.2.6 The previously approved scheme on the north-western side of 57 River Road involved alterations to Buildings or Structures of Local Character (ref. LU/44/11/). This development involved the demolition of the existing structures whilst retaining the front and side walls. The inserted building is 4-storeys and a northern light style roof. The vertical emphasis, rhythm and palette of materials were all considered to be acceptable in principle. The proposal to retain the River Road façade of the existing buildings was welcomed in the Delegated Report, which stated that:

The resultant development would be appropriate to its setting within the Conservation Area and would replace a dilapidated structure improving the visual amenities of the locality and positively contributing to the character of the area.



Figure 30: Adjacent development along River Road

- 4.2.7 The proposed scheme seeks to replicate the approach taken for the above scheme.
- 4.2.8 Of some relevance to the proposed scheme is *Dorothy Bohm v SSCLG* (2017) EWHC 3217 (Admin), which relates to a challenge to an Inspector's decision to grant planning permission for the demolition and rebuilding of a dwelling house in the Hampstead Conservation Area in London.
- 4.2.9 Although not a listed building, the existing dwelling (which would be lost in its entirety) made a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and was identified to be a NDHA in its own right (being of local architectural interest). The question arose as to how s. 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and paragraphs 194-197 of the NPPF applied to the application.
- 4.2.10 So far as the impact on the Conservation Area was concerned, the Court held that even though the existing building made a positive contribution to it and would be completely lost, this did not mean that the Conservation Area would inevitably be harmed, as suggested by the Claimant. The Inspector was required to make a judgment based on the entire proposal before her, not just the loss of the existing building. As the replacement dwelling would, in the Inspector's judgment, be of an acceptable design which would preserve the character of the Conservation Area, no harm to the Conservation Area would arise (and thus the strong statutory presumption against development causing harm to a Conservation Area was of no consequence for the application).
- 4.2.11 As for the fact that the existing building was itself a NDHA, the Inspector was obliged to apply the policy test in paragraph 197 of the NPPF. Unlike paragraphs 194-196 in relation to designated heritage assets, which are concerned solely with the effect of the application on the asset itself, paragraph 197 calls for the weighing of the application as a whole (including what would replace the NDHA). Further, unlike paragraphs 194-196, which impose a presumption against the grant of permission which would cause harm to a heritage asset, paragraph 197 merely requires a balanced judgement to be made by the decision maker. Unlike paragraphs 194-196, paragraph 197 does not seek to prescribe how that balance

should be undertaken, or what weight should be given to any particular matter. The Court held that the Inspector had not fallen into error in her approach to paragraph 197.

4.3 Proposed development of 57 River Road

- 4.3.1 The proposed development behind the retained front elevation of 57 River Road would be a 3.5-storey building which would be attached to the adjacent property. The elevations would have a more traditional form than the adjacent development in its use of pitched roofs with gables. The ridge height to the M-profile roof would be lower than the adjacent development and would not therefore appear prominent in the street scene and in relation to the retained gable of the existing structure. Elevations would be a flint grey stock brick to blend with the flint cobble materials of the existing building and the adjacent facade. Openings would reflect the existing central position and rhythms of loading bay doors.

4.4 Proposed development of the yard

- 4.4.1 The proposed development of the yard would retain the front boundary wall and include the insertion of a new gate. The flint cobble and brick wall makes a positive contribution to the street scene in terms of its form and materials. Retaining this wall will preserve the physical and visual relationship of the yard and its boundary to the warehouse and continue to be a positive historic feature within the street scene.
- 4.4.2 Development of the yard would involve the loss of an open space associated with wharves along the east bank of the river Arun. A recent flood defence wall (LU/291/17/PL) has limited the visual association of this space with the river and its historical use as a wharf. The timber revetment along the river was replaced as part of these works. The openness of the yard does provide views onto the side elevation of 57 River Road. Otherwise the yard is not a particularly attractive space which is used for car parking. The Conservation Officer's pre-application comments recognised the potential of the proposed scheme to enhance this part of the Conservation Area: *'It is considered that the redevelopment of this site offers the opportunity to improve this part of the conservation area, which is positive'*.
- 4.4.3 The yard is identifiable on the Littlehampton tithe map, is therefore an early 19th century wharf and has retained its openness and plan form to the present day. However, historic map regression shows that the infilling of these spaces, particularly during the course of the 20th century, has formed part of the historic pattern of development of the wharves. A comparison of the 1876 edition of the Ordnance Survey map with the 1832 edition demonstrates how the yards along east bank of the river Arun were gradually infilled to meet the growing demands for commercial/shipping facilities along the river. The riverside is now strongly characterised by a strong sense of enclosure which characterises River Road and is an aspect of views from the opposing side of the Arun.
- 4.4.4 The revised design for the proposed building in the yard has responded to officer comments and to the pre-application response. The overall scale of the proposed building has been reduced by removing one the gables adjacent to 49 River Road so that the south-eastern part of the proposed building is 3-storeys rather than 3.5-storeys. This provides a better transition from the taller elevations of the recent and proposed development of the riverside buildings to the more modest height of 49 River Road. The flat roofed element is more contemporary in style but this reflects the design of the adjacent section of development of the historic riverside buildings. The Conservation Officer's pre-application comments regarded this as a positive change to the previous scheme.

- 4.4.5 The position of the proposed building within the yard has also been moved back from 49 River Road to a greater degree than the previous scheme. This allows for a greater level of physical and visual separation and, together with the glazed link containing staircases between the north-west and south-east components of the proposed development, would break up the overall sense of scale and massing. The enlarged gap between the proposed building and 49 River Road and the glazed linking structure (which is recessed from the front of the building) will maintain a degree of openness that will maintain some definition of the yard and afford glimpsed views between the buildings. The proposals would also follow the same principals as the proposed building at No. 57 in terms of form. Materials would also contrast through the use of metal cladding and composite timber. This would reflect some of the metal clad buildings associated with ship building, particularly those on the opposite side of the river, as well as the materials used for the existing development of the riverside buildings.

4.5 Pre-application recommendations

- 4.5.1 The pre-application response from ADC concluded by setting out five tests to be met that would likely secure planning permission. The relevant heritage tests are as follows:

(a) Justify the demolition of the heritage asset, rather than its conversion as required by paragraph 193 of the NPPF. Clear and convincing justification is need for the loss or resulting harm as required by paragraph 194 of the NPPF.

(c) Satisfactory description of the significance of the heritage asset, including contributions made by setting and assessment of harm against public benefits as required by NPPF.

- 4.5.2 With regards to test **(a)**, the Revised Report on Condition produced by Marshall Clark concludes that property is in a poor state of repair. Estimated costings are provided for repairs required to continue the existing workshop use and for a quality commercial use. A Marketing Report, also produced by Marshall Clark, explores a number of option in relation to the potential uses for the building and costs in relation to potential rental returns.
- 4.5.3 Option A is essentially a 'do nothing' option. Due to the current condition of the building it is considered that the only viable use would be to mothball the existing building and rent out the yard as open storage. The predicted return on this type of use would generate in the region of £6,500-£7,500 a year. The redundant building would inevitably suffer further decay as a result of this option. The report considers that an annual rental return would be in the region of £16,500.
- 4.5.4 Option B explores the potential of the current use as light industrial/workshop/storage. The necessary repairs would cost around £148,000 + VAT and with a rental return of around £6-7,000 per year. The Marketing Report states that the constraints of the existing building (e.g. ceiling heights) make it difficult to see an operator working from the premises when there are established estates that have much more usable facilities. The report also states that it is difficult to see any potential investor spending £148,000 with such a low annual rental return.
- 4.5.5 Option C considers conversion of the building to an office use. The estimated cost to refurbish the building for this type of use is £245,000. The report concludes that it is difficult to see an investor carrying out this type of refurbishment because the building is not in an office location, the office market is not well placed at the moment and an outlay of £245,000 would only provide a £10,000 per annum rental return above Option A. Given these issues the report considers that this approach is unlikely to happen.

- 4.5.6 The Marketing Report concludes that it is difficult to see an economic use for the building. The amount of cost that is need to put it into a usable condition is not reflected by any form of realistic return that you could get on that investment. The Report on Condition and Marketing Report demonstrate that the poor condition, constraints of the building and the costs of repair and refurbishment renders the building beyond economic repair.
- 4.5.7 With regards to test **(c)**, a description of the significance of the heritage asset is provide at section 3.3 of this report. Section 4.0 of this report includes a mitigation strategy, i.e. building recording, information board, and describes how the front elevation and boundary wall to the yard will be retained. As a result the history of the place will be preserved by record and presented to the public. In addition the design of the proposals, that retains the historic gable elevation and boundary wall, will preserve the character of the street scene. These aspects of the scheme are considered to represent a public benefit. In addition, the proposed scheme provides 6 high quality residential apartments which is also considered to represent a public benefit.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 This assessment describes the historic development and significance of 57 River Road, the adjacent yard and assesses the heritage impacts of the proposed development on the heritage values of the place. As such, it is considered that this Heritage Statement meets the requirements set out in paragraph 189 of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information regarding the historic environment.
- 5.1.2 The conclusions of this assessment are that 57 River Road and the adjacent yard form part of the early 19th century development of River Road as wharves. As a local heritage asset, 57 River Road is considered to be of low to moderate significance. The proposed demolition would, therefore, have a direct physical impact on the heritage asset and would result in its partial loss.
- 5.1.3 In accordance with paragraph 197 of NPPF, the impact should be weighed against significance of the heritage asset as well as the impact of the replacement and new buildings. It is considered that the harm arising from partial demolition could be mitigated through a programme of historic building recording to an appropriate level and the provision of an information board on the site which will best reveal the history of the Conservation Area. Retaining the front elevation will preserve the historic integrity of the street scene. Providing information on the history of the place and preserving the character of the street scene, along with the provision of 6 high quality residential properties are considered to represent public benefits that would outweigh the harm identified above. The Report on Condition and Marketing Reports submitted with this application demonstrate that the existing building is beyond economical repair.
- 5.1.4 The revised proposals have responded positively to officer comments on the previous scheme and the pre-application response from ADC was positive. The proposed scheme, as discussed above, is considered to be of an appropriate design, scale, form and use of materials that will complement the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is, therefore, considered to further mitigate the potential harm to the heritage values of this part of River Road.

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