

DESIGN & ACCESS and HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE MANSION HOUSE HARVESTER, PROSPECT PARK,
LIEBENROOD RD, READING RG30 2ND

November 2018



Figure 1: The Mansion House

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Regulated by RICS

THE MANSION HOUSE HARVESTER

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INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access and Heritage Statement considers, and assesses, proposals to refurbish The Mansion House Harvester (figure 1), which is located within Prospect Park, Reading (Figure 2). The Mansion House is a Grade II listed building, whilst Prospect Park is a scheduled Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest. Both are designated heritage assets.

Mitchells and Butlers Retail Ltd holds the building on a long leasehold interest and operates it as part of its popular Harvester brand.

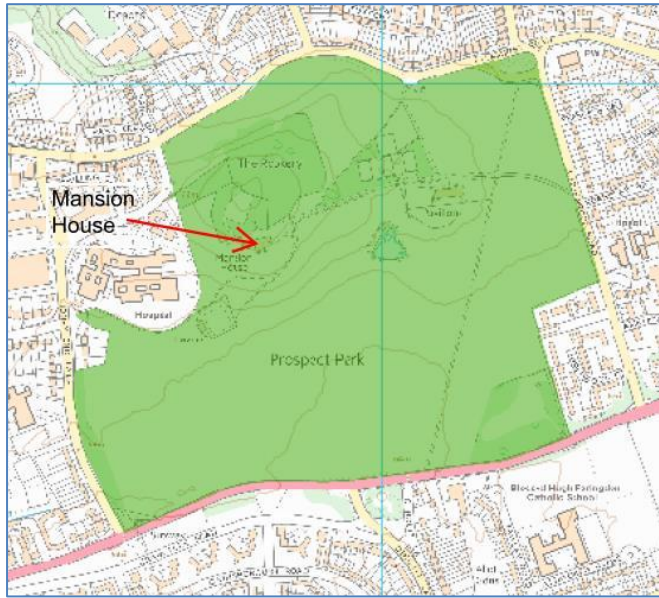


Figure 2: Prospect Park & The Mansion House

Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas) and other historical assets identified by a local planning authority, such as locally listed buildings.

The NPPF 2018 states that;

'Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.'

The Mansion House is a designated heritage asset by virtue of being listed Grade II in the statutory list of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

Prospect Park is included (Grade II) in the Register of Park and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. It is also, therefore, a designated heritage asset.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Where a proposal may affect designated, or undesignated, heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure that an application(s), for the necessary consent(s), is considered with due regard for potential impacts on the historic environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines a heritage asset as 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions'. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets (World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens,

GOOD PRACTICE

The NPPF 2018 sets out principles relevant to the consideration of development proposals and their potential impacts on heritage assets. Paragraph 189, 193, 194 and 195 read as follows;

189: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

193: 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.

194: 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. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) Grade II listed buildings, or grade II 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.*

195: Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'*

In addition to the guidance set out in the NPPF, regard has also been paid to English Heritage publications, 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning' Notes 2 and 3, as published in March 2015, and entitled: 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'. These documents are not mandatory policy but they do set out good practice advice.

The steps involved in undertaking this assessment of significance have been as follows:

1. Understanding significance: Undertake a proportionate amount of research, sufficient to understand the heritage interest of the assets and its setting.

2. Understanding impact: The Statement describes the proposals and provides sufficient explanation in order to identify, and assess, any potential impacts upon the significance of the assets.

The Statement appropriately describes the significance of the heritage assets and provides sufficient detail to understand the potential impact(s) of the proposal on that significance.

THE MANSION HOUSE & PROSPECT PARK

Photographs of the building are included as an appendix.

The Mansion House, which lies within Prospect Park, was constructed around 1760 and was remodelled, and enlarged, around 1800. The surrounding parkland was laid out in the mid-1800's. The building and park were acquired by Reading Corporation in 1902, with the park subsequently being developed as a public park, to include sports pitches and pavilions.

By the late 1980's, the Mansion House had lain vacant for a number of years and had been damaged by fire and vandalism. In late 1989, planning permission and listed building consent, were granted to extend and convert the building to public house / restaurant use. The site's subsequent planning history is set out in the table below.

Table 1: Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision
120144	Cosmetic refurbishment works including decorations, floor finishes, new screens and furniture uplift	Application Permitted	05 April 2012
070860	Installation of 1 post sign at park entrance, 1 post sign at Mansion House and installation of individual letters on Mansion House.	Application Permitted	18 Sep 2007
070861	Installation of signs	Application Permitted	18 Sep 2007
070534	Internal alterations to include removal of partitions and screens, the insertion of new screens and new floor coverings and alterations to the existing servery and kitchen wall	Application Permitted	18 June 2007
070545	Installation of 1 no. single post sign to be externally illuminated with floodlights, 1 no. set of individual letters to front entrance area and another set of individual letters to the side of the building to be lit by a trough light. Replacement of panels to existing post signs with new.	Application Permitted	12 June 2007
070546	Installation of 1 no. single post sign to be externally illuminated with floodlights, 1 no. set of individual letters to front entrance area and another set of individual letters to the side of the building to be lit by a trough light. Replacement of panels to existing post signs with new.	Application Permitted	12 June 2007
060478	Promotional Display Unit	Application Permitted	17 May 2006
020273	Replacement signs.	Application Permitted	04 Dec 2002

021064	External signage	Application Permitted	31 Oct 2002
010365	Internal alterations to ground floor only		05 Sept 2001
901040	Erection of free standing signs	Application Permitted	14 Nov 1990
890457	Restaurant, bar, tea room with conference, training facilities, ancillary managers accommodation and car parking.	Application Permitted	17 Nov 1989
890458	Internal demolition and demolition of side extn. Erection of single storey rear extension. Refurbishment of interior and renovation of exterior with new roof and entrance portico.	Application Permitted	17 Nov 1989

HERITAGE INTEREST

The property is listed Grade II, with the list description reading as follows:-

BATH ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side) Prospect House, Prospect Park SU 67 SE 16/21 22.3.57. II 2. Late C18. To south: Large formal composition with greatly projecting centre which has flanking side wings terminating in semi-domed segmental bays. 2 storeys. Stucco. Stucco string at 1st floor level. Moulded stone cornice and blocking course. Hipped slate roof. Centre block has a hexastyle Ionic portico across it of Portland stone on raised stone base; balustrade mentioned in previous list removed. Glazing bar sash windows, 5 on 1st floor and 4 on ground floor with balustraded panels below in recessed openings under portico. Central door with radiating wreathed fanlight and strip pilaster frame, acanthus leaf capitals and cornice. Returns of centre break have full height canted bays plus 3 ranges of windows. West bay window has verandah balcony on 1st floor. Side wings have short 2 storey link of 1 window (3 light in recessed segmental arch on ground floor) and end pavilion with large segmental bay of 3 windows. All ground floor windows have recessed panels under eills. West end of rear block has end piars with blind oculi on 1st floor and niches on ground floor. To north: Servants mquarters. 3 storeys (note change of floor levels). Symmetrical wings each of 4 windows. Colourwashed brick. Central recess with a large arched stair window and single storey outer hall between wings with later Porte Cochere (fluted Greek Doric portico) and plain arched doorway. Contemporary decoration to hall. Good contemporary iron balustrade to stair; colonnaded landing 1st floor. Interior plan with apsed ends to hall and drawing room meeting at right angles results in unusual features. Good decoration.

By the late 1980s, the building was in such poor structural condition that there were concerns that it could not be saved. Structural reports, submitted with the applications made in 1989, to convert the building to public house/restaurant use, reported that the internal walls, floors and roof all had to be rebuilt / replaced.

The conversion works, as granted permission by the Borough Council, provided for a single storey rear extension (to house kitchens and cellars) (photo 1), and for the extensive remodelling of the interior of the building. As such, many of the elements referred to in the list schedule (which dates from 1957) have been removed. These include the central hall, the iron balustrade to staircase and the colonnaded first floor landing.

Figure 3 shows the ground floor layout just prior to conversion to public house / restaurant use. The recessed entrance on the northern side of the building (Figure 4) can be seen, together with the central hall and stairs. The original layout of the ground floor rooms can also be discerned – albeit given that the northern range had been much altered through the insertion of partitions.

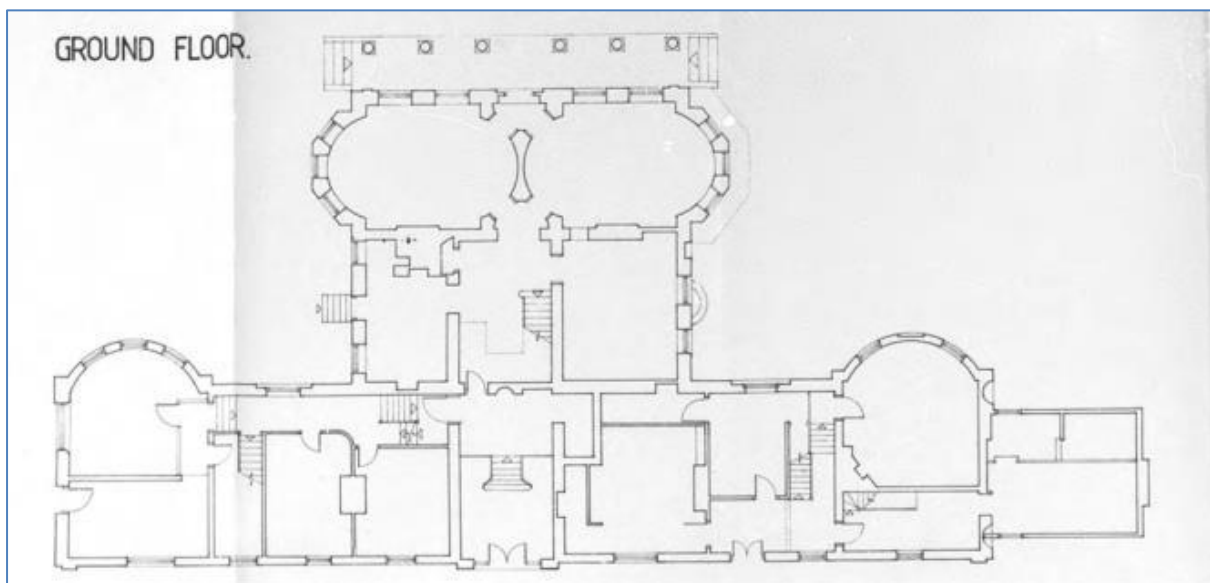


Figure 3: Layout prior to Conversion to Public House / Restaurant Use

Figure 5 shows the current ground floor layout. The north elevation, including the former main entrance, has been covered by a single storey, flat roof, extension (photos 1 & 2), with the central hall, staircase and landing all being removed. Many internal walls (both original and later insertions) have been removed, in order to create an open customer trading area, with only the southern, oval, rooms retaining their original form (photos 13 & 14). Few internal features, of any significance, survive, with skirting, coving, ceiling roses, door frames and doors all being modern.



Figure 4: North Elevation Prior to Conversion

Prospect Park was first included in the Register in September 1987. The list entry reads as follows: -

A C19 landscape park surrounding a late C18 country house, developed from 1902 onwards as a public park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Prospect House, or Prospecthill Park as it was then known, was built in the late C18, set on the south side of a hill formerly covered in woodland (Rocque, 1761; Pride, 1790) and encircled by roads. The House was remodelled and enlarged c 1800 by James Wright Sanderson for J E Liebenrood. The park was laid out in the early to mid

C19, probably around the time that the lodge was built (1813-¿28), and the public roads diverted. The site was acquired by Reading Corporation in 1902 and subsequently developed as a public park, with the insertion of sports pitches and associated buildings, and the loss of the walled garden and eastern section of the park to development. Prospect House is now (1998) a restaurant and conference centre.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Prospect Park lies in the western suburbs of Reading, 2km from the town centre. The 46ha park is bounded largely by roads, with the A4 London to Bath road forming the south boundary, and the site of the former Park Hospital at the north-west corner covering what was once the walled garden. The ground slopes up from the largely level south and east areas of the park to Prospect Hill in the northwest corner of the site, on which the House stands. The setting is now urban, with C20 development having encircled what was, in the C19, a country estate, and covered the former east section of the park beyond Liebenrood Road, which was sold for development 1900¿10 (OS 1914). Panoramic views extend south from the south front of the House across the park to urban Reading and distant hills beyond.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters from Liebenrood Road, 500m east of the House, along the east drive, truncated by the loss of the east section of the park early in the C20. Formerly the drive entered 400m south-east of the present main entrance, marked by a single-storey, rendered gothic lodge (1813¿28, listed grade II) standing adjacent to the Bath Road, now completely isolated from the park. The original southern portion of the drive is now (1998) lost beneath housing. From Liebenrood Road the drive curves west through the park, lined by the remains of an avenue of trees, past sports pitches to the south, with associated pavilions, and a playground to the north. A spur from the north o Tilehurst Road joins the east drive, entering the park 300m north-east of the House, the entrance formerly marked by a lodge (now gone). The east drive continues west, rising up the gentle slope of Prospect Hill¿s east side, with long views south across the park and beyond to distant hills, arriving at the north front of the House. The drive continues west and north up to the summit of the hill, to the site of the former stable block, now a car park, set within The Rookery wood. At one time a service drive, also now gone, gave access west down the hill to the kitchen garden and adjacent lane.

Another former drive entered 300m west of the House o Honey End Lane, running east up the hill past the south side of the kitchen garden to the north front. This was lost when the hospital was constructed, land to the south of the buildings being taken as hospital grounds, but the former entrance is still discernible.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Prospect House (late C18, remodelled c 1800, listed grade II) stands towards the north-west corner of the site, remodelled in Regency style by James Wright Sanderson for J E Liebenrood. It is of two storeys, of stucco, with a greatly projecting centre on the south front supporting an Ionic portico on a raised plinth, flanked by side wings terminated by semi-domed bays. The House, sited towards the top of Prospect Hill, enjoys panoramic and extensive views from the south-west to the south-east. The former stables, sited 50m north of the House, were demolished in the late C20.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The House is surrounded by a semicircle of informal lawn to the west, south and east, planted with mature and semi-mature trees, and reached from the centre of the south front via a small flight of stone steps down from the portico giving access from the garden door. Further steps at either end of the portico give access to the lawn to west and east. The open area of lawn immediately south of the portico, flanked by mature trees including cedars, allows views south down

the hillside across the park to the distant hills beyond suburban Reading. It is not fenced from the park beyond, but seems to have been so in the C19 (OS).

North of the House lies The Rookery, an oak woodland on the site of earlier woodland (Rocque, 1761), which occupies the hilltop plateau and contains a network of informal C19 paths, and formerly (OS 1877, 1911) a small pond in the south-east corner (parts may still remain in undergrowth). The woodland stands above the House, separated from it by an earth bank leading down to the drive on the north front. The paths may have been designed to provide views out from the hilltop over what was then countryside.

PARK The park encircles the House to the north, east and south, being largely laid to mown grass with some grass sports pitches, and many mature park trees planted in singles and clumps, with the fragmentary remains of a C19 avenue running south from the House, and another c 350m east of the House running north-north-west/south-south-east across the park. A line of trees runs intermittently along the south boundary, with a thicker belt along the west boundary with Honey End Lane. The narrow area north of The Rookery was incorporated into the park in the early C20 (OS), having previously been divided into two fields. The hillside areas immediately east and south of the House enjoy views beyond the park towards central and western Reading and to the hills beyond to the south. A diagonal path runs from the north-east corner of the park to the south boundary, and the area east of this path was used as allotments during the Second World War until 1949.

KITCHEN GARDEN The former kitchen garden lay 200m west of the House, towards the bottom of the hill, apparently demolished during the construction of the Park Hospital (now gone) 1900-10 (OS 1911). It appears to have been of unusual concentric design, with an almost circular outer wall enclosing a further walled hexagonal enclosure (cf Buscot Park, Oxfordshire qv, for a similar design).

The Park remains much as it was when it was listed in 1987.

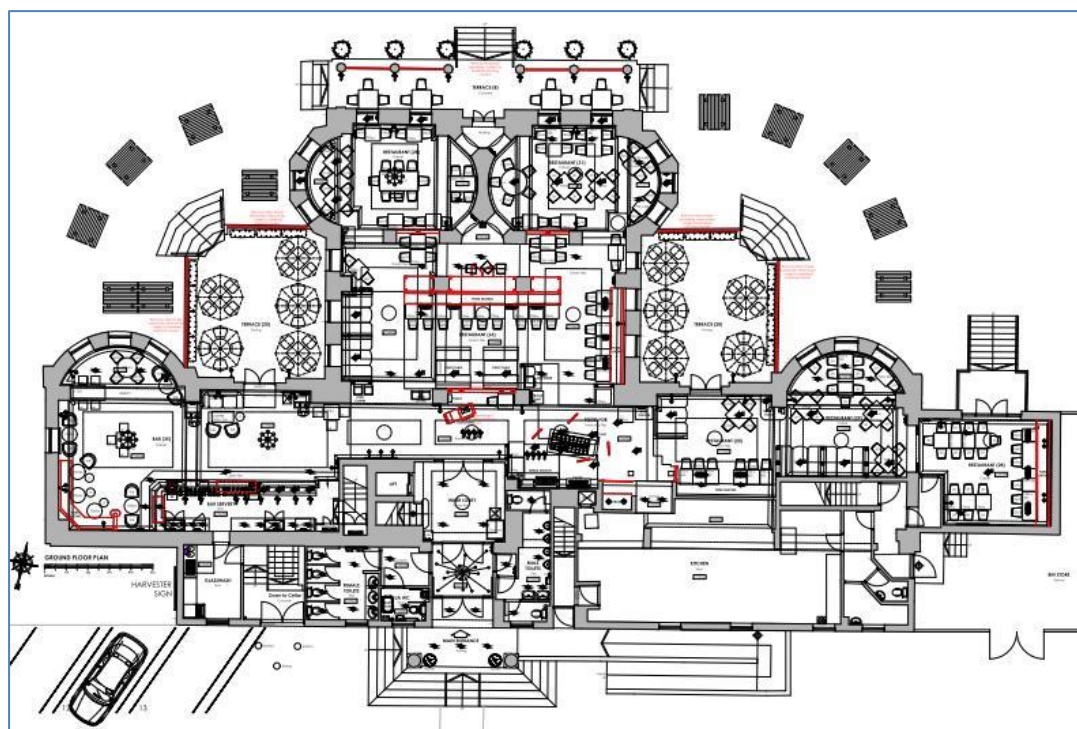


Figure 5: Current Ground Floor

Summary

The main heritage interest in the Mansion House is derived from the external volume and appearance of the building and its historic relationship with Prospect Park (and, in particular, views, to the south, over the parkland).

THE PROPOSAL

Mitchells & Butlers Retail Ltd proposes to make a significant investment in the business and refurbish the building. No structural alterations, or extensions, are proposed, with the works largely involving the redecoration of the customer trade area and the adaption of modern fixtures and fittings (which, almost exclusively, date from the original late 1980's conversion to public house / restaurant use or subsequent refurbishments).

Interior Works

The Company proposes a limited refurbishment of the ground floor customer trade space, with the majority of the works involving redecoration, new carpets and the provision of new furniture.

Items which need listed building consent are: -

1. The removal of modern partitions which sub-divide the former ground floor hall.
2. The adaptation, and installation, of new screens.
3. New internal lobby doors to front entrance (on northern elevation).
4. New screen and doors to create private dining area at east end of building.

External Works

The following external works are proposed.

5. Replacement of existing, modern, entrance doors to north elevation.
6. Replacement of two sets of modern doors on south elevation to each of the rear terraces.
7. Refurbishment of each of the rear terraces, which were created as part of the 1980s conversion.
8. Redecoration of exterior of the building (colours to match existing).

Signage

9. Replacement of existing signage on building, within the immediate vicinity of the public house and at the entrance to Prospect Park from Liebenrood Road.

DESIGN AND ACCESS ISSUES

Use: No change of use is involved.

Amount: No new floorspace is created.

Layout: No changes are proposed to the layout of the site or the building.

Scale: No changes are proposed to the scale of the building.

Appearance: No changes are proposed to the external appearance of the building. Minor changes are proposed to two terraces.

Landscaping: The proposal has no landscape implications.

Access: No changes have been made to the means by which staff, and customers, access, or move around, the site or the building.

HERITAGE IMPACTS

The internal works are limited and comprise redecoration, new furniture and carpets, the alteration / adaptation of modern public house inserts and the addition of new screens.

The interior of the building was significantly altered under the late 1980s conversion, with virtually all the original fixtures and fittings (that survived to that date) being removed. This included the loss of the fine central hall, staircase and landing, which are referred to in the list description.

All existing fixtures and fittings, including doors, skirting boards, cornices and ceiling roses, date from the conversion work (or later refurbishments). The proposed internal alterations will replace one public house interior, with another, which is more sympathetic to the building. As with the current insertions, it will be obvious what is old and what is new.

The interior works will have a minor positive impact upon the heritage significance of the building in that: -

- The current public house layout and decor is an amalgamation of later modifications to the original 1980s conversion. The proposed works are coordinated, so the public house insertions will be of the same character.
- The removal of the existing large screen and partitions in the former central hallway will allow better the appreciation of the original space.
- The installation of a screen, with doors, at the east end of the building is on an original wall line and so will better help define the original rooms to either side.

Externally, the works comprise redecorating the building (in like for like colours) and three sets of new entrance doors (all replacing 1980's inserts).

The Company needs to reorganise the way that customers enter the building so that the front set of doors can be kept shut, and the inner doors open. Under the existing arrangement, the front doors are kept open and the inner doors shut (in order to reduce drafts).

The customer toilets are at the front of the building (just inside the entrance) and are used by teams playing on the sports fields as changing rooms. They are often left in a mess, particularly in winter when the playing fields are muddy.

It is very difficult for Harvester staff to police this use as they cannot see who is entering the building and going into and out of the toilets. Accordingly, it is proposed to change the position, and design, of the inner and outer doors (Items 3 & 5 respectively) so that the outer doors can be kept shut. In order to still create a welcoming environment, as customers approach the entrance, the new doors will be glazed. Whilst modern in appearance, the whole entrance, including the surround to the door, lies within the 1980's rear extension.

The Company also proposes to change two sets of modern doors, that lead out onto the corner patios, on the southern elevation of the building. These were installed as part of the 1980's refurbishment and replaced window openings. The new doors are constructed of oak, with small pane glazed panels.

Finally, the Company also proposes to refurbish the two, modern, corner terraces, with new hand rails and galvanised steel posts (to mark their extent) with discreet lighting between.

The new balustrades are required for health and safety reasons (as people walk down the steps between the terraces and the park), whilst the steel posts are discreet structures, with the new lighting enhancing the character of the recesses of the building.

The Company also proposes to replace existing signage on a like-for-like basis. As with the existing scheme, items on the building are limited to a single oval, facing the entrance drive, on the west elevation of the building, together with a sign in the gable over the modern entrance portico.

Off building signage (both around the foot of the building and around the entrance to Prospect Park) is again replaced like-for-like. The changes will have a neutral impact upon the setting of the character and setting of the building and the historic park.

SUMMARY

Mitchells and Butlers Retail Ltd proposes to refurbish The Mansion House in order to maintain its relevance to its customer base and ensure that it continues to be used as a public house in the medium to long term.

The interior of the building has been much altered and little remains that is of heritage significance. No structural alterations are proposed, with all the interior works impacting upon modern, public house, fixtures and fittings.

The heritage significance of the building is derived from its exterior form, structure and elevations and its relationship with the surrounding parkland. Its significance will not be adversely impacted by the proposed works.

APPENDIX 1

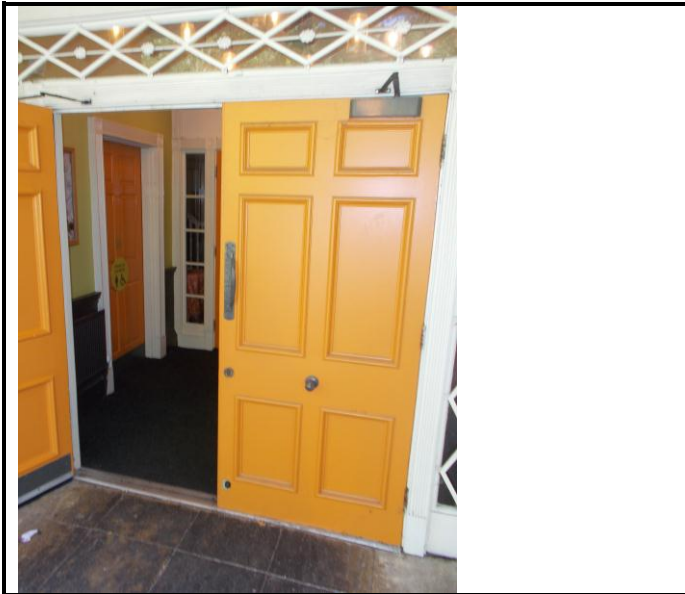
Photographic Schedule



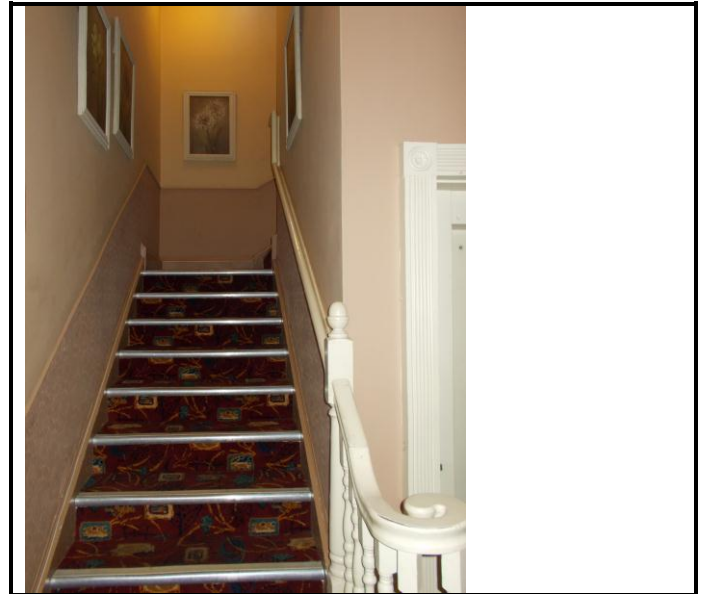
Photograph 1



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6



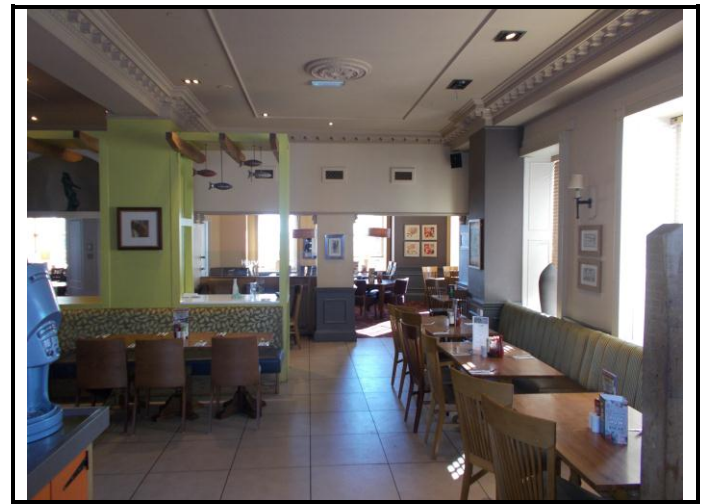
Photograph 7



Photograph 8



Photograph 9



Photograph 10



Photograph 11



Photograph 12



Photograph 13



Photograph 14



Photograph 15



Photograph 16



Photograph 17



Photograph 18



Photograph 19



Photograph 20



Photograph 21



Photograph 22



Photograph 23

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Photograph 13

RA Photograph 11

Photograph 9

Photograph 18

Photograph 8

Photograph 10

Photograph 17

Photograph 16

Photograph 5

Photograph 4

Photograph 15

Photograph 3

Blockwork
Paving

Consider pedestrians crossing sign - subject to approvals

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