

Combined Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) and Design Access Statement (DAS)

For proposed internal works at:
71 Acton Gate, Wrexham



1. Introduction and Objectives
2. Historic and Architectural Significance
3. Justification for Proposed Works
4. Impact of Proposed Works
5. Setting of the Listed Building
6. Legislation and Policy
7. Evaluation of the scheme in the context of the Conservation Principles
8. Assessing the changes to in the context of the Conservation Principles
9. Conclusion

Appendices

Appendix A - CADW Listing

Appendix B - Map from CADW website showing the listed properties on Acton Gate

Appendix C - Ordnance Survey Map - Denbighshire - Revised 1938

1. Introduction and Objectives

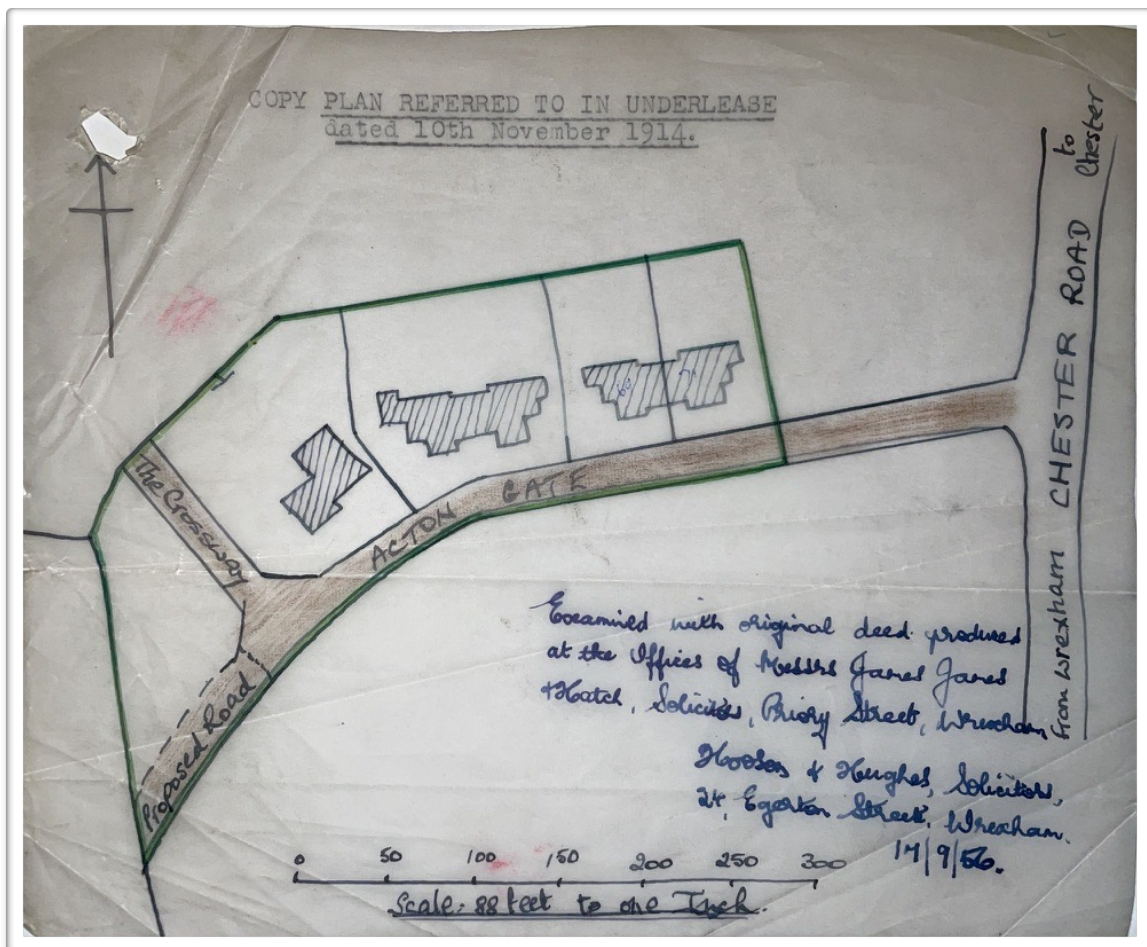
1.1. This heritage statement has been prepared to accompany the 'Application for listed building consent for alterations, extension or demolition of a listed building' for the proposed works at 71 Acton Gate, Garden Village, Wrexham, LL11 2PW, namely the removal of a single load bearing wall.

This report draws on the guidance on the statutory requirement to prepare a heritage impact statement in tandem with an application for listed building consent. The guidance is complementary to the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and is underpinned by the modern conservation philosophy of CADW's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales (2011).

1.2 71 Acton Gate is a Grade II listed property, designated as such on 31st January 1994. The listed building description as detailed on the CADW website is attached in **Appendix A**.

1.3 **Appendix B** shows the Ordnance Survey map detailing the location of the property, also from the CADW website.

1.4 The listing covers a number of houses designed by Architect G. L. Sutcliffe, the group of four semi-detached houses on Acton Gate along with one larger detached house, were among the first to be built within the ambitious Garden Village Development. Sutcliffe was also responsible for the layout of the estate and also designed many of the other buildings within the estate. A copy of the plan for the five houses, taken from the deeds is shown below.



1.5 71 Acton Gate is a roughcast render over brick, bay fronted semi detached house. Built around 1913 as part of the Wrexham Garden Village. Previous improvements include the addition of a front porch and the installation of uPVC windows. At some point prior to the listing of the building, the attached garage was demolished and a detached garage constructed further down the driveway.

1.6 The proposal comprises the creation of a modern kitchen / dining area which requires the removal of a single load bearing wall and the replacement of the existing kitchen cabinetry.

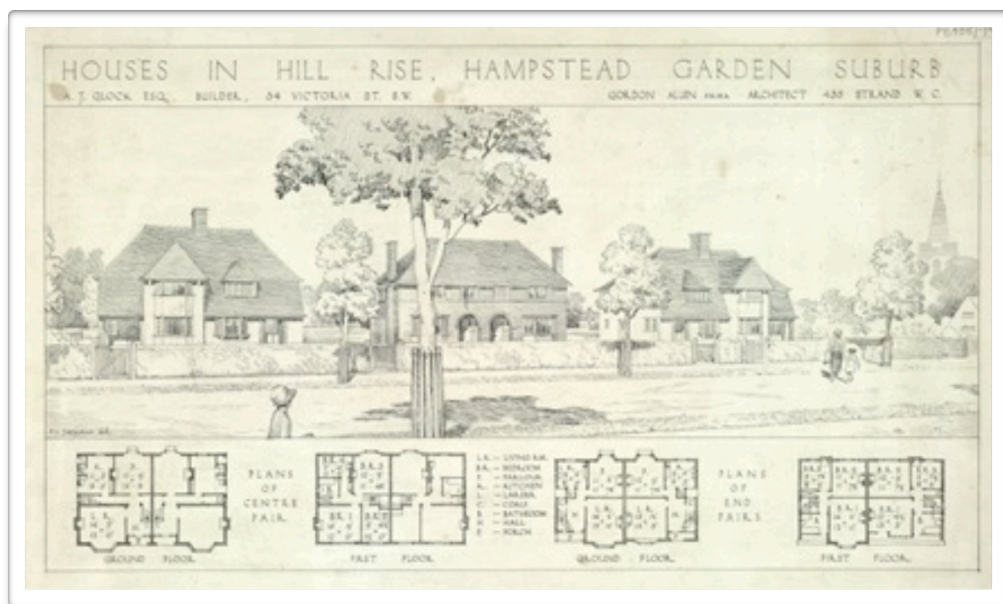
2. Historical and Architectural Significance

2.1 Historical Context. There is little recorded history about the house however there is some history in relation to the area that the house is located and the housing development that it formed part of.

Garden Village is a suburb of the town of Wrexham and an electoral division (ward) in the community of Rhosddu in Wrexham County Borough, North Wales. At the start of the 20th century, the housing supply in many areas of Wrexham was of poor quality and, with the increase in industry locally, in short supply. The development of Garden Village began with the purchase of some 200 acres (81 hectares) of land from Sir Foster Cunliffe near to the estate of Acton by the Welsh Town Planning and Housing Trust Limited.

The intention was to provide affordable housing to workers coming to Wrexham to work in the expanding industries of coal and iron. Gresford Colliery had recently been opened where it was expected that approximately 3,000 men would be employed in the next two years. A Co-partnership Housing Society was set up in 1913 called Wrexham Tenants Limited, with Lord Kenyon, Mr. David Davies, M.P., and others as Directors to build the houses, while the Trust would build the roads and supervise the development of the estate.

The Architect chosen for the project was G.L. Sutcliffe, who has become well known for his work on Brentham and Hampstead Garden Suburbs in London. Sutcliffe was keen to improve the living conditions of ordinary working people, and saw garden suburbs on the edge of existing cities as a more practical solution than free-standing Garden Cities on the Letchworth model. Sutcliffe had designed several large houses in the Surrey and Buckinghamshire commuter belt, in an attractive 'arts and crafts' style with gables and steeply-pitched tiled roofs. These features characterised the cottages and houses he designed within the various garden suburbs. Even when commissioned to plan a garden suburb for a northern city like Liverpool, he kept to the same style. An original artwork from the Hampstead Garden Suburb designed by the architect G.L. Sutcliffe is shown below.



Sutcliffe's original plan for Garden Village in Wrexham was to provide a village institute, two places of worship, a school and plenty of open spaces and recreation grounds. The design was inspired by the Garden City Movement and was planned as a 'Garden Suburb'.

In the first year, 44 properties were completed; numbers 63-71 Acton Gate, numbers 149-167, Chester Road (originally called Bryn Acton) and Cunliffe Walk. These first house were designed by Sutcliffe and the remaining 205 by Thomas Alwyn Lloyd, architect to the trust. One of the

and Evelyn Bowman.

Over the following 65 years, the property only changed hands on a further 7 occasions, most recently in January 2020 when it was purchased by the current occupiers, this is shown in the table below.

2.2 Aesthetic Context. 71 Acton Gate is a well-preserved example of a neo-vernacular style house, constructed with roughcast render over brick with grey slate roofs and brick axial and end wall stacks. Set over 2 storeys the house is a symmetrically planned 4-window range with advanced outer gables. The property's doorways are recessed in porches with round-arched entrances and the roof above swept down from the hipped gable. Gabled ranges have canted bay windows with slate roofs to the lower storey, and 3-light casement windows (renewed in original openings) above.



The Central range between the gables has roof swept down and carried on chamfered and braced timber posts over a verandah, with French doors in return of gabled cross wing, and casement windows in main range. There is also a long dormer window of 4-lights in the roof above. Linked to the entrance blocks at either side, are hipped roofed garage extensions, which may be adapted from original outbuildings, and are similar in detail to the main building. The image above shows the current view of the property from the South East.

2.3 Communal Value. 71 Acton Gate does not hold any significant local status.

2.4 Evidential Context. The structural history of the house is reasonably straightforward, and its major phases may be outlined as follows:-

- Phase 1. circa 1916, construction of the house
- Phase 2. circa 1970, removal of original garage and construction of detached garage, brick walled with pitched slate roof

- Phase 3. circa 1980, addition of glazed doors to front veranda
- Phase 4. circa 1980, addition of uPVC doors and windows to improve thermal efficiency
- (Listing of 71 Acton Gate - 31/01/1994)

History of Conveyancing - 71 Acton Gate

Date	Seller	Buyer	Sale Value
January 2020	Mr Booth	Mr & Mrs Roberts	£250000
September 1986	Mr & Mrs Mort	Mr & Mrs Booth	£65000
December 1979	Mr & Mrs Evans	Mr & Mrs Mort	£33000
August 1977	Mr Davies	Mr & Mrs Evans	£18500
August 1969	Mr & Mrs Williams	Mr Davies	£7350
July 1968	Mrs Bowman	Mr & Mrs Williams	£5800
September 1956	Wrexham Tennants Ltd	Mr & Mrs Bowman	£1325

- Phase 5, circa 2010, installation of combination style gas boiler as an upgrade to the existing heating and hot water system

2.5. Plan-form/Interior Fixtures. The current small kitchen is located at the rear of the property and is accessed via the breakfast room.

The rear porch, accessed via the kitchen is a small rear porch (see right) with a downstairs WC and store room off. This area was originally a link to the adjoining garage.

The existing kitchen (below) is extremely small and also serves as a corridor linking the rear porch to the breakfast room and the rest of the house, further restricting and limiting the use of this space.

The decor dates from around the 1970s and consists of a medley of dated kitchen units, along with an integrated fridge and freezer with a freestanding oven and dishwasher.

The walls are finished in plaster and tiling and the floor has vinyl over tiles.



The proposed works include removal of the load bearing wall between the kitchen and the breakfast room making a more 'open plan. style kitchen-diner.

The wall is shown from both aspects in the images below.

View from existing Breakfast room



View from existing kitchen



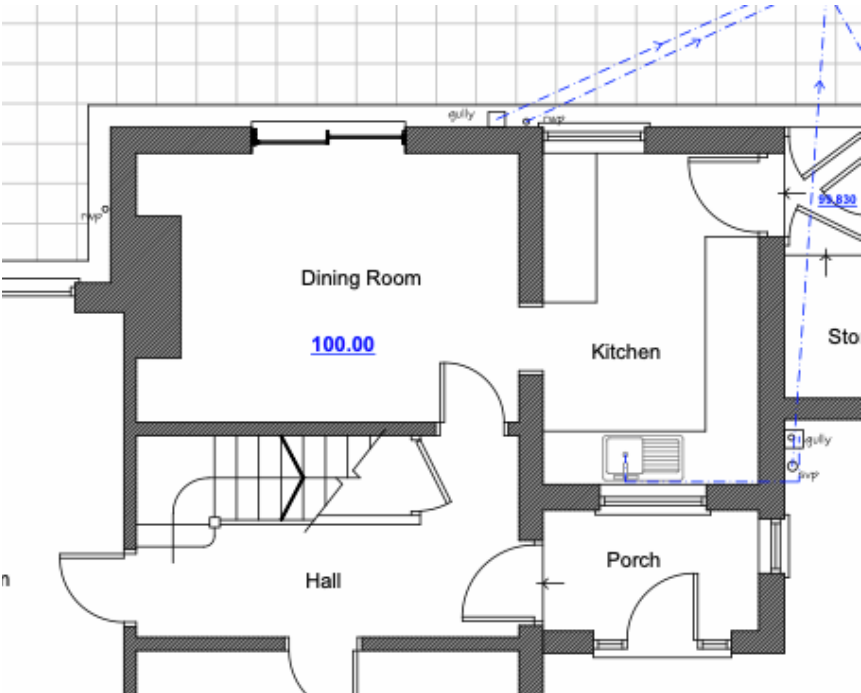
The proposal is for an RSJ to be installed as per the structural engineers report and drawings.

The intention is to leave the RSJ exposed and proud of the ceiling so that it acts as a clear indicator that the previous layout included a load bearing wall. The walls will be flush.

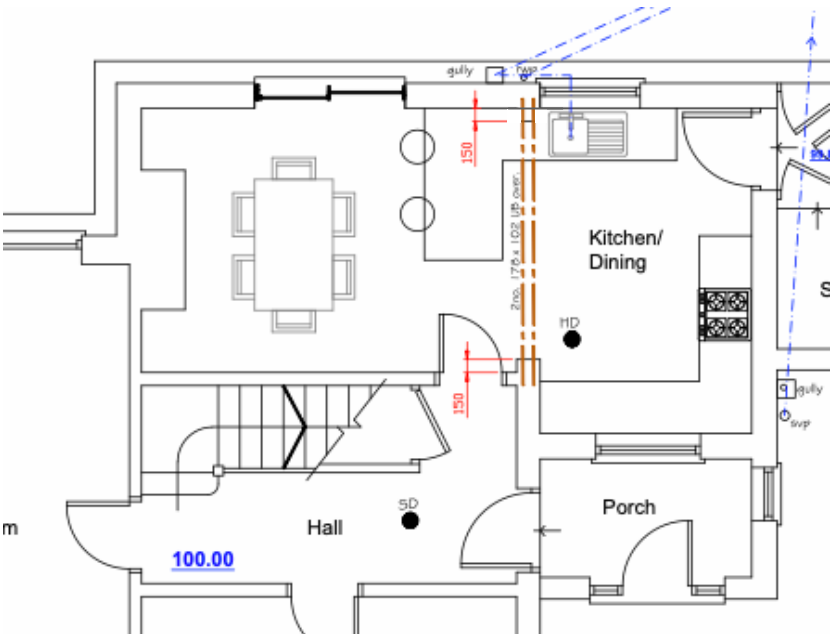
2.6 Previous planning permission was obtained (2021) which included building an extension and moving the kitchen into the lounge. We believe these revised plans allow us to retain more of the special features of the property and also allow us to protect the original designation of the rooms. External roof lines will be maintained as will the original floor plan.

2.7 Plan view of existing and proposed area of alterations

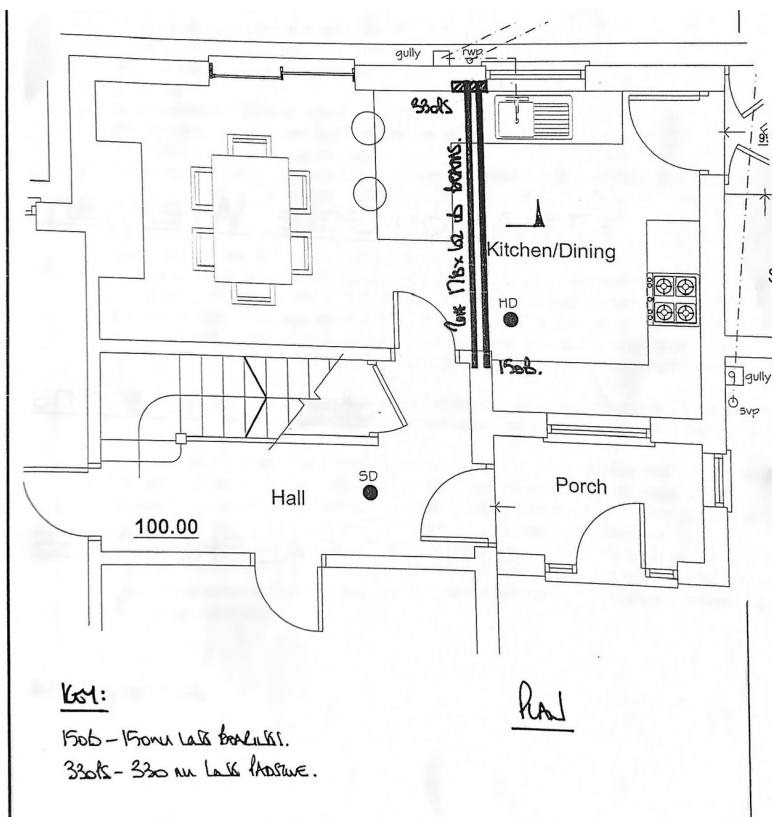
Existing plan view showing separate kitchen and dining room



Proposed plan showing wall removed and open plan kitchen-diner



2.8 Proposed sketch from structural engineer showing position of RSJ



3. Justification for the Proposed Works

3.1 In common with many houses of the scale of 71 Acton Gate, living arrangements are rather out-dated. The kitchen especially is not large enough and there is no clear opportunity for open plan living, suited for personal comfort, improved family interaction and working at home.

Many listed properties of a similar size and age have generally adapted to modern life - typically conjoining small service rooms and kitchens to create larger, more usable open-plan areas. This approach allows for the more 'formal' areas to remain unaltered.

3.2 Similar works have been completed in a comparable property within the last 2 years, 67 Acton Gate, obtained comparable planning permission (P/2022/0230) to create a kitchen diner.

3.3 The proposal offers the opportunity to fully restore and celebrate the history of 71 Acton Gate. The current scheme will have no impact on the external character of the front and side elevation of the building.

4. Impact of the Proposed Works

4.1 By conjoining two existing rooms, there is minimal impact on the historic plan form, with no additions or extensions to the floor plan in the form of extensions. In addition to this, there is no change to the use of the rooms.

4.2 This revised approach allows for the existing formal lounge and sitting room to remain unaffected.

4.3 The proposed changes allow for the vast majority of the property to be preserved or restored to its original format, with only sympathetic restoration and improvements carried out.

4.6 The proposed scheme has the following merits:

- The property will remain in its primary use
- The internal alterations are reversible
- The plan-form is retained
- No extensions are constructed
- No rooms are given a change of use
- The exterior of the property will remain unchanged from all aspects
- The environmental impact of running and maintaining the property is significantly reduced

5. Setting of the Listed Building

5.1 The setting of a listed building is the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Views to, from and across a historic asset are an obvious form of evaluation, but other sensory elements may be relevant too, including topography, layout, use, noise, and light pollution, as well as historic, artistic, literary, cultural or scenic associations, tranquillity and remoteness. When assessing proposals, local planning authorities are required to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any other features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This is set out in section 66 of the 1990 Act Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act.

5.2 In terms of its historic setting, 71 Acton Gate is a semi-detached property within the small village of Garden Village. The proposal will have no appreciable impact on this, the proposed extension tucked away to the rear of the property, is both modest in scale and design, while the minimal changes within the property will have no impact on the setting.

6. Legislation and Policy

6.1 Legislation and Policy - The legislative and policy context includes the following:-

- 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, section 66
- 2016 Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Technical Advice Note 24 (The Historic Environment) 2017 including annex 1 (Historic Impact Assessment in Wales), 2 (Managing Change to Listed Buildings in Wales) and 6 (Setting of Historic Assets in Wales)
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (November 2016), Section 6
- Pembrokeshire County Council Local Development Plan (2013), Policy GN.38
- Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales', Cadw, 2010.

6.2 Evaluation of the proposed scheme in the context of national policy

6.21 The main material policy document is Technical Advice Note 24 (The Historic Environment) 2017. Paragraph 5.13 requires consideration of a number of issues when determining a listed building consent application.

These include:-

- The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest.
- The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance, (for example its form and layout, materials, construction and detail) including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list.
- The contribution of curtilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene
- The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building.
- The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits for example, by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of its local environment.

The first four points comprise the crux of listed building legislation and it is considered that this statement addresses the relevant issues. In terms of the fifth point, it is certain that the proposal will enhance the local environment and highly likely that the renovated building will contribute to the area's economy through the ability to be used as comfortable work-from-home premises

6.22 Paragraph 5.14 states that 'Many listed buildings can sustain a degree of sensitive alteration and extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Past changes that reflect the history of use and ownership may themselves be aspects of the special interest of the listed building'. It advises that 'when applicants and the local planning authority assess the heritage values and significance of a listed building, which is the subject of a consent application, they must consider the sensitivity of that building to the proposed changes. Sustaining the special interest and significance of a listed building through the process of alteration, extension or re-use is exacting, and should always be based on specialist knowledge and skill in order to realise the benefits that well-designed interventions can bring'.

It is considered that 71 Acton Gate is capable of sustaining the degree of alteration proposed to sustain its ongoing use as a family home with modern-day requirements and that a careful balance has been made against the heritage values of the building.

6.23 From the Welsh Assembly Government publication; 'Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales', it is considered that the work being proposed for 71 Acton Gate do meet the criteria for justification of new work or alternations which are listed below:

- a. the need for the work is fully justified; and
- b. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the asset; and
- c. the proposal would not materially harm the values of that asset, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed; and
- d. the quality of design and execution must add value to the existing asset; and
- e. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be

7. Evaluation of the proposed scheme in the context of the Conservation Principles

Principle 1 – Historic Assets will be managed to sustain their values

Changes in the historic environment are inevitable and conservation of historic buildings is about the careful management of change, having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The proposed works at 71 Acton Gate are perceived as conserving the special character of the house whilst upgrading its facilities for modern-day residential use. The works of alteration mainly centres on a small rear extension and improvements to the internal efficiencies of the house. The character of 71 Acton Gate, as an example of an early house built in Garden Village and designed by G. L. Sutcliffe remains unaltered.

Principle 2 – Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital

In evidential terms, the structural history of 71 Acton Gate is very straightforward, as examined above.

In terms of communal value, to the historian, 71 Acton Gate is a well-preserved semi-detached house,, the proposed scheme has no impact on any of this.

Principle 3 – The historic environment is a shared resource

Although 71 Acton Gate is a private house, ialong with the other listed properties on the road, it has formed an important part of Garden Village. In terms of public interest, the legal procedures needed to obtain listed building consent provide the mechanisms for arbitrating between private and public interests.

Principle 4 – Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment

It is hoped that this document will assist ensuring that decisions about 71 Acton Gate are taken in an open and transparent manner, as well as sharing what is known about the house to date, raising people's awareness and understanding of their heritage.

Principle 5 – Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent

It is hoped that this document will underpin this principle and provide a clear justification for proposed changes to the building.

Principle 6 – Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

The information and documentation gathered as a result of the proposed scheme will be retained by the owners, with a copy provided to the Wrexham Borough Councils public archive.

8. Assessing the changes to 71 Acton Gate in the context of the Conservation Principles

8.1 Changes to the building covered in this application may be categorised as new work or alteration, including:

8.11 Existing kitchen area and breakfast room to have a single load bearing wall removed to become a kitchen diner.

8.12 Modernisation of the kitchen units and improvements to the layout of the kitchen.

9. Conclusion

9.1 This Heritage Impact Statement has been completed in line with current CADW guidance (CADW 2017a).

9.2 Completion of the works will allow the property to become a fully functioning family home once again whilst preserving the original floor plan.

9.3 There will be no alteration to the exterior appearance of the building.

9.4 The proposal has been carefully planned to preserve and restore as much of the original house as possible.

9.5 The property will receive significant investment to sympathetically modernise to today's living standards whilst maintaining and restoring many original features, protecting the property for many generations to come.

9.6 Taken as a whole, it is concluded that the proposed development would at least 'preserve' the character and appearance of 71 Acton Gate. This is determined on the basis that all of those elements of the property which make a positive contribution to the listing are maintained.

9.7 It is hoped that this report adequately addresses the impact of the proposal on the character and setting of the 71 Acton Gate, balancing the statutory requirement to preserve the listed building with government and local policy to retain it in suitable use and condition.

Appendix A - CADW - Full Report for Listed Building

Full Report for Listed Buildings



Summary Description of a Listed Buildings

Reference Number	Building Number	Grade	Status	Date of Designation	Date of Amendment
16513	71	II	Designated	31/01/1994	31/01/1994

Name of Property	Address
NO 71 ACTON GATE (N SIDE), GARDEN VILLAGE,,,,,CLWYD,	71 Acton Gate

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Town	Locality	Easting	Northing
Wrexham	Rhosddu		Garden village	333673	351971

Street Side	Location
	Pair of houses towards the junction of Chester Road and Acton Gate, set back from the road in small gardens.

Description

Broad Class	Period
Domestic	

History

Built as part of Wrexham Garden Village, an ambitious housing scheme initiated by Wrexham Tenants Limited in 1913 under the aegis of Co-Partnership Tenants, but adopted as one of its first five schemes by the Welsh Town Planning and Housing Trust. G. L. Sutcliffe was the architect to Co-Partnership Tenants, and was responsible for the layout of the estate, as well as for many of the building designs. This pair of houses, designed by Sutcliffe, were among the earliest houses to be built in the village.

Exterior

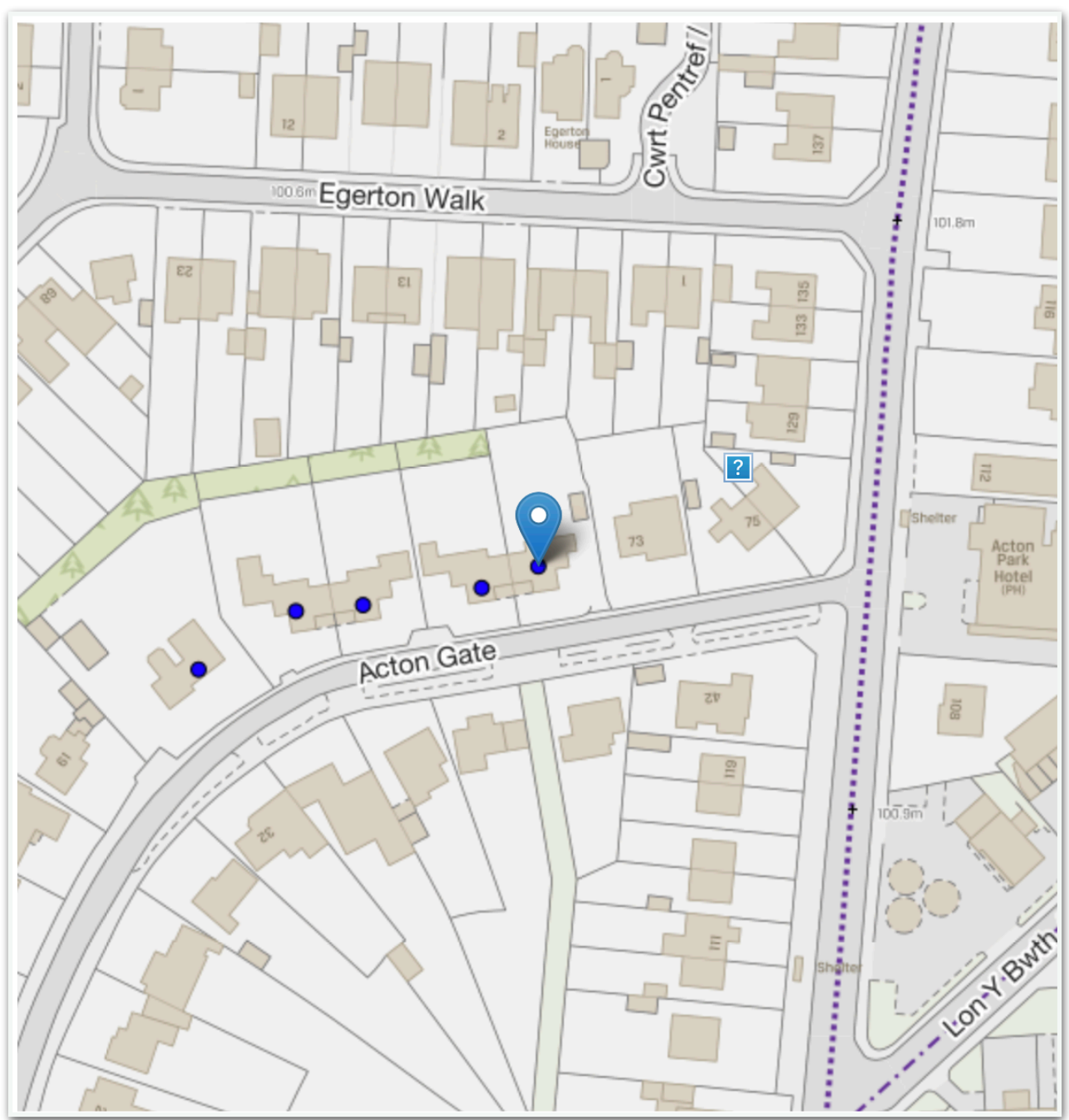
Roughcast render over brick, with grey slate roofs, and brick axial and end wall stacks. Neo-vernacular style. 2 storeys, a symmetrically planned 4-window range, with advanced outer gables. Entrances in short hipped roofed wings set back to either side. Doorways recessed in porches with round-arched entrances, the roof above swept down from the hipped gable. Gabled ranges have canted bay windows with slate roofs to lower storey, and 3-light casement windows (renewed in original openings) above. Central range between the gables has roof swept down and carried on chamfered and braced timber posts over verandah, with French doors in return of gabled cross wing, and casement windows in main range. Long dormer windows of 4-lights in the roof above. Linked to the entrance blocks at either side, are hipped roofed garage extensions, which may be adapted from original outbuildings, and are similar in detail to the main building.

Interior

Reason for designation

A good example of one of the original designs for the Garden Village, forming a varied group of house designs, Nos 63 and 69-71 Acton Gate.

Appendix B - Map from CADW website showing the listed properties on Acton Gate



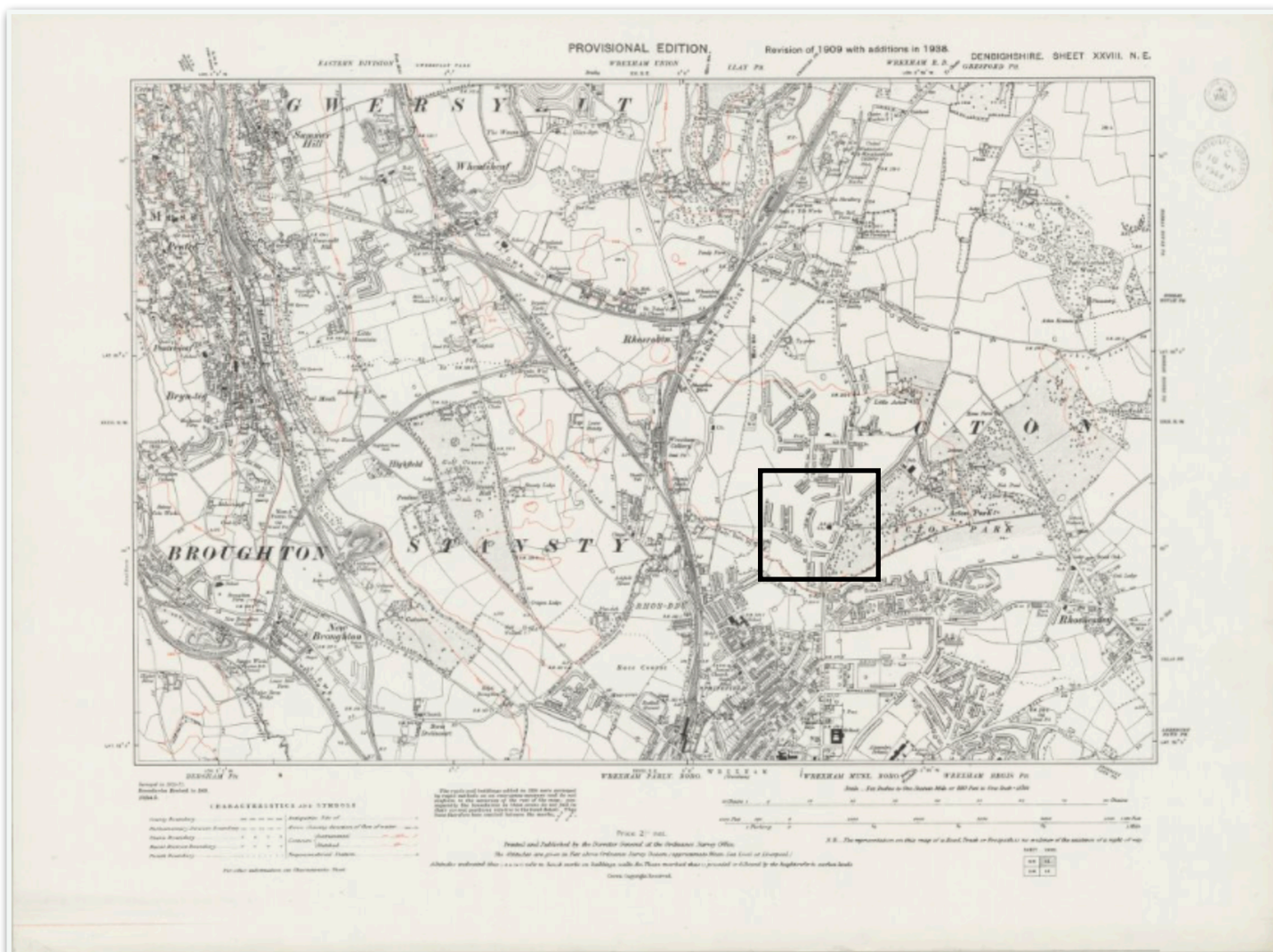
Appendix C - Ordnance Survey Map

Denbighshire XXVII.NE.

Series: Ordnance Survey. Six-inch to the mile

Revised: 1938

Published: ca. 1944



Enlarged area from 1938 map showing Acton Gate Houses

