

**Philharmonic Court**  
Catharine Street, Liverpool L8 7SD

**Heritage appraisal**

August 2012

Consultancy for the  
Historic Built Environment

**KMH**Heritage

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## 1 Summary

Philharmonic Court is located at the eastern end of the block bounded by Caledonia Street, Catharine Street, Falkner Street and Hope Street. It accommodates student housing, was designed by the firm of Saunders & Boston and begun in 1973. Many of the terraced houses in Catharine Street and Falkner Street were converted to student flats as part of the project.

The area was laid out by the City Corporation in the 1820s, with development extending southwards from Abercromby Square. To the north are the Philharmonic Hall (listed Grade II\*) and the former Sheltering Home for Destitute Children (listed Grade II).

The western side of Catharine Street, to the south of Caledonia Street, and most of the northern side of Falkner Street, are formed of terraces of houses from the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The houses on the southern side of Falkner Street are slightly earlier, possibly dating from the first laying out of the area, and are listed Grade II, as is the Belvedere public house on Sugnal Street.

On Hope Street, between Falkner Street and Caledonia Street, is Federation House, a 1965-6 building by Gilling Dod & Partners that replaced a large Unitarian Church facing Hope Street and a school and houses behind. The site and its surroundings are within the Canning Street Conservation Area.

The surroundings of Philharmonic Court have aesthetic, evidential, historical and communal value for reasons explained in the report. However, change and redevelopment during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly since the Second World War, have significantly diminished the historical and aesthetic integrity of the area. Philharmonic Court, while having some modest quality, is nonetheless a pedestrian development that ignores the street and has a poor relationship with adjacent buildings. Both Federation House (on Hope Street) and Philharmonic Court detract from the character and appearance of the Canning Street Conservation Area.

The existing Philharmonic Court buildings are now out of date and provide an inadequate standard of student housing. The application scheme proposes an increased density of accommodation on the site, in the form of two interlinking blocks, open above ground floor at the eastern and western end of the site, and forming a generous courtyard.

The proposed design is, for the reasons given in detail in the report, respectful and contextual, and the result of the proposal will be an unequivocal enhancement of the setting of the conservation area and the closest listed buildings. The overall scale of the building is broken down by the use of materials, by stepping in plan and section and by the use of varied fenestration patterns. Views along Caledonia Street and from Hope Street will be improved. The scheme increases the amount of accommodation provided on the site but, by its massing and design, respects the highly important heritage assets that it affects – the Canning Street Conservation Area as well as nearby listed buildings. It is a modern building that uses traditional materials for its expression, and which is carefully modelled to respond to neighbouring buildings and to enhance views. While there will undoubtedly be an effect on heritage assets, that effect will be positive.

For these reasons, set out in more, the proposed development complies with national and local policy and guidance regarding the historic built environment

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 This report has been prepared to support a planning application for the redevelopment of the site at Philharmonic Court, Catharine Street, Liverpool L8 7SD. The report has been prepared on behalf of Marcus Worthington Properties Ltd.

### **Purpose**

- 2.2 The purpose of the report is to assess the proposed development against national and local policies relating to the historic built environment.
- 2.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Leach Rhodes Walker Architects, and the Supporting Statement prepared by Drivers Jonas Deloitte.

### **Organisation**

- 2.4 This introduction is preceded by a summary and followed by a description and analysis of the site of Philharmonic Court and its context, and an assessment of its heritage significance. An outline is provided in Section 4 of the proposed scheme and its effects. Section 5 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. Section 6 assesses the proposed development against that policy and guidance. Appendices include a location plan and historical mapping.

### **Author**

- 2.5 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at

Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation. Kevin Murphy was included for a number of years on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Directory of Expert Advisers.

- 2.6 Historical research and assistance for this report was undertaken by Sarah Jackson BSc BArch, an architect and heritage professional with 20 years experience in architecture, research and design quality. Prior to being a consultant, she was head of design review at the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment, head of the research unit at John McAslan and Partners, taught history and theory at the Bartlett School of Architecture, and was an architect in private practice.
- 2.7 Additional assistance was provided by Dr Ann Robey FSA.

### **3 The site and its context**

3.1 This section of the report describes Philharmonic Court, and identifies and assesses the heritage assets in its context.

3.2 Historical mapping is contained in Appendix B.

#### **Philharmonic Court and its context**

3.3 Philharmonic Court is located at the eastern end of the block bounded by Caledonia Street, Catharine Street, Falkner Street and Hope Street. This area was laid out by the City Corporation in the 1820s to a John Foster Senior plan, with development extending southwards from Abercromby Square. From 1827 the area between Falkner Street and Upper Parliament Street was developed and the urban structure of this part of Liverpool was broadly in place by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

3.4 The first Philharmonic Hall at the junction of Myrtle Street and Hope Street was built to the designs of John Cunningham in the late 1840s. The present building was erected in 1936-39 by Herbert Rowse, following a fire that destroyed the first building in 1933. To its east, a Presbyterian church and hall was replaced by a garage in the 1950s, and that building was in turn replaced by an extension to the Philharmonic Hall in 1992.

3.5 Beyond Sugnall Street is the former Sheltering Home for Destitute Children of 1888-9, by C.O Ellison, also the architect of the former Eye & Ear Infirmary of 1878-80 opposite, on the northern side of Myrtle Street. It incorporates an 1840 house facing the rear of the Philharmonic Hall. Like the Philharmonic Hall, the site (now part of Liverpool John Moores University) extends southwards to Caledonia Street. Though walled, the open space at the junction of Myrtle Street, Catharine Street and Caledonia Street appears never to have been developed.

- 3.6 The western side of Catharine Street, to the south of Caledonia Street, and most of the northern side of Falkner Street, are formed of terraces of houses from the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are generally of three storeys over a basement, with a bay at ground floor (and in two instances on Catharine Street at first floor). The houses on the southern side of Falkner Street are slightly earlier, possibly dating from the first laying out of the area, and are a mixture of individual houses (at the junction with Catharine Street) and terraces. The westernmost end of Falkner Street has a different character again. A lower terrace of shops extends to Hope Street on the north side, with overhanging eaves as opposed to the parapeted terrace to the east. On the southern side is Blackburne House, originating in a house of 1800, and becoming a girls' school in 1844 and extended in 1874-6 by W.I Mason.
- 3.7 On Hope Street, between Falkner Street and Caledonia Street, is Federation House, a 1965-6 building by Gilling Dod & Partners that replaced a large Unitarian Church facing Hope Street and a school and houses behind.
- 3.8 The urban block described above was originally crossed by Sugnall Street (running north to south) and Upper Hope Place (running east to west). Both these streets are now interrupted and form cul-de-sacs - Upper Hope Place extends a short distance eastwards from Hope Street and Sugnall Street southwards from Myrtle Street. The closure of these streets occurred with the development of Philharmonic Court, student housing designed by Saunders & Boston Architects and begun in 1973. Many of the terraced houses in Catharine Street and Falkner Street were converted to student flats as part of the project. The rear parts were particularly altered – historical mapping (Appendix B) shows how the rear return of houses on the northern side of Falkner Street were removed; the surviving two rear returns (to Nos. 61 and 63 Falkner Street) were replaced more recently than the



current OS map with a large extension spanning both houses.

- 3.9 The earliest housing occurred in precisely the location of Philharmonic Court – in the block created by Caledonia Street, Sugnall Street, Upper Hope Place and Catharine Street, with other houses built on the southern side of Upper Hope Place opposite and further west.
- 3.10 Philharmonic Court is formed of five blocks, each three storeys high, in brown brick with square windows and pitched roofs. The three northern most blocks (V, W and X) are L-shaped, with their longer arms at right angles to Caledonia Street with garden courts between. The two southern blocks are shorter and close the southern side of the garden courts, creating another garden court between them.

### **The heritage context of the site and its surroundings**

#### *Conservation area*

- 3.11 Philharmonic Court and the urban block described above are located in the Canning Street Conservation Area, designated in 1971 and extended in 1976 and 1996. The boundary of the conservation area runs along Myrtle Street; encompasses the eastern side of Grove Street, Falkner Square, and the southern side of Upper Parliament Street; and runs north along Hope Street, Mount Street and Pilgrim Street to Hardman Street.

#### *Listed buildings*

- 3.12 The following listed buildings are in the vicinity of Philharmonic Court:
- Philharmonic Hall (Grade II\*)
  - The former Sheltering Home for Destitute Children (Grade II)
  - Belvedere Public House (Grade II)
  - 28-38 Upper Hope Place (Grade II)

- 6-38 (even) Falkner Street (Grade II, various separate listings)
- Liverpool Institute High School For Girls (Blackburne House) (Grade II)

## Heritage significance

### *Heritage values*

- 3.13 The listed buildings and conservation area described above are ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The locally listed buildings and unlisted buildings within the conservation areas that contribute to their heritage significance are ‘undesigned heritage assets’.
- 3.14 ‘Significance’ is defined in the NPPF as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. The English Heritage ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ puts it slightly differently - as ‘the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest’.
- 3.15 ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of ‘heritage values’ that may be present in a ‘significant place’. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

### *Heritage significance in the context of Philharmonic Court*

- 3.16 The listed and unlisted buildings of any discernible quality in the vicinity of the site Philharmonic Court, their relationship to one another and to the conservation areas, illustrate the evolution of this part of Liverpool. The story of this part of the city tells a good deal about how Liverpool evolved during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and about the nature of the development in the metropolis during the Victorian period and afterwards. It informs us about the transformation of the older city by social and

economic change, and about the forces driving the style and nature of specific types of development.

- 3.17 Therefore, and in terms of English Heritage's 'Conservation Principles', the designated buildings and areas in the vicinity of Philharmonic Court provide us with 'evidence about past human activity' and by means of their fabric, design and appearance communicate information about the past. Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative; the various listed and other buildings described above are of value simply by showing in their design and appearance the nature of the history of the area, or by being associated with particular institutions, events or people.
- 3.18 The context of Philharmonic Court thus has evidential, historical and communal value. It is also clear that it has some 'architectural' and 'artistic interest' (NPPF) or 'aesthetic value' ('Conservation Principles'). In respect of design, 'Conservation Principles' says that 'design value... embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship'. These qualities are evident throughout Canning Street Conservation Area and in the listed and locally listed buildings in the vicinity of Philharmonic Court. Falkner Street, in particular, retains considerable distinction in architectural terms, and both here and in Catharine Street the typology that underpins the area as a whole - the terraced 19<sup>th</sup> century house – helps to provide clarity and definition in the streetscape.
- 3.19 However, change and redevelopment during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly since the Second World War, have significantly diminished the historical and aesthetic integrity of the area. Sugnall Street and Upper Hope Place were largely removed by the development of Philharmonic Court. Federation House is a bland and ugly building, and the large open expanse of car parking to its east is inappropriate and unsightly. Philharmonic Court itself, while having some modest quality and being

slightly more contextual than Federation House, is nonetheless a pedestrian development that ignores the street and has a poor relationship with adjacent buildings. Both Federation House and Philharmonic Court detract from the character and appearance of the Canning Street Conservation Area.

## **4 The proposed development and its effect**

- 4.1 This section of the report describes the proposed scheme and its effect on the heritage significance described in the previous section.
- 4.2 This proposed scheme is illustrated in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Leach Rhodes Walker Architects.

### **The need for the proposed development**

- 4.3 The existing Philharmonic Court buildings are now out of date and provide an inadequate standard of student housing. They represent a quality of accommodation that is increasingly unattractive to potential students and the buildings do not meet current building standards in respect of climate change mitigation, accessibility and building fabric performance.
- 4.4 The Design & Access Statement and Supporting Statement explain in more detail the nature of existing accommodation and the background to the proposed redevelopment.

### **The design and how it responds to its surroundings**

- 4.5 The scheme proposes an increased density of accommodation on the site, in the form of two interlinking blocks, open above ground floor at the eastern and western end of the site, and forming a generous courtyard. The overall height of the scheme is six storeys, but the main body of the development is four and five storeys, with height stepping up towards the north and west. Facing the terraces on Catharine Street and Falkner Street, the scheme is four storeys with a set-back fifth floor, and matches the scale of the terraced housing. The fifth floor is set back along the southern edge of the courtyard. The sixth floor level is confined to a small area in the north-western corner of the

development, opposite Sugnall Street and the Philharmonic Hall.

- 4.6 The proposed scheme will reinstate the plots of the terraces on Catharine Street and Falkner Street, recovering a component of the urban grain that was lost when the present Philharmonic Court development occurred. The scheme will also reinstate a street edge along Caledonia Street and provide an edge to the open space behind Federation House.
- 4.7 The proposed development is in a crisp modern style that sensibly maximises the potential of the site while being massed so as to defer to and respect its surroundings. The principal material is brick - the scheme uses two types of brick in a series of highly articulated elevations. The overall scale of the building is broken down by the use of materials, by stepping in plan and section and by the used of varied fenestration patterns. Two notable features of the elevational design are, firstly, the use of grids in a darker brick set against and separated by the lighter coloured brick, and secondly, the use of the darker brick to control the perceived vertical scale of the development – the darker brick forms a ‘datum’ at four storeys.
- 4.8 The effect of the scheme in visual terms is therefore moderated by its design, which in turn responds to its context. The development certainly seeks to optimise the amount of accommodation that the site can hold and provide more than exists at present. However, it carefully places height away from the older 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing and towards the later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings of larger scale on Caledonia Street and Myrtle Street. It breaks down the length of its frontages to Caledonia Street and to the open space behind Federation House by means of the articulation described above. It creates a regular southern elevation at the same scale as and of a similar repetitive quality to the terraced houses on Falkner, and which is also designed to avoid overlooking.

### **Effect on the significance of heritage assets**

- 4.9 The overall effect of the scheme will be highly beneficial, and Section 6 will demonstrate how the proposed scheme complies with national and local policies concerning change to heritage assets. The proposed scheme will replace the present situation whereby the existing Philharmonic Court buildings do not relate in a positive and direct way to their surroundings, with a scheme that acknowledges the urban grain of the conservation area. The proposed scheme will help ensure that the site provides high quality and attractive student residential accommodation, and is thus consistent with the local planning authority's aspirations for land use in this part of the City. In doing this, the proposed scheme respects the character and appearance of the Canning Street Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.
- 4.10 The Canning Street Conservation Area is large, and the character and appearance of the majority of the area will be unaffected by the proposed scheme. Views in the conservation area, whether along Caledonia Street or glimpsed from Falkner Street, Myrtle Street or Hope Street, will be improved over that which exists at present. The site is located behind the principal street frontages of the larger urban block formed by the main thoroughfares of Myrtle Street, Catharine Street, Falkner Street and Hope Street. It sits away from the key views along these streets and thus its impact on the overall character and appearance of the conservation area is limited. The effect of the scheme will be on a relatively small sub-area of the conservation area - the immediate vicinity of Philharmonic Court – and will be positive.
- 4.11 The background setting of Philharmonic Hall (Grade II\*), the former Sheltering Home for Destitute Children (Grade II), the Belvedere Public House (Grade II) and 28-38 Upper Hope Place (Grade II) will be enhanced by a building design that is considerably better related to its surroundings than the existing buildings. There will be no

meaningful visual effect from the scheme on the listed buildings on the southern side of Falkner Street.

- 4.12 The enhancement provided by the proposed scheme derives firstly by the quality of the design as discussed above – its site layout, scale, massing, elevational design and use of materials - and secondly by the regenerative effect that the new development can have. The scheme will bring more life and vitality to this part of the conservation area, and this will be beneficial in a wide variety of ways. In addition, the scheme will re-establish the distinction between the Philharmonic Court development and the older houses on Catharine Street and Falkner Street.
- 4.13 The drawings that accompany the application show clearly how well the proposed building will blend into the historic streetscape and reinstate an architectural presence and visual amenity that is lacking at present. Nothing that is central to the significance of either the Canning Street Conservation Area or the nearby listed buildings is harmed or lost in the proposed scheme - quite the opposite. The conservation area, the listed buildings, and other undesignated heritage assets will be positively enhanced by what is proposed. The application contains a level of detail that makes clear that the quality of the replacement scheme can be assured at the level of specific architectural features as well as in overall terms, and the proposed scheme is, in summary, a positive measure.

### **Summary**

- 4.14 The proposed development provides new student accommodation to a high standard. The proposed design is, for the reasons given earlier, respectful and contextual, and the result of the proposal will be an unequivocal enhancement of the setting of the conservation area and the closest listed buildings. Views along Caledonia Street and from Hope Street will be improved.
- 4.15 The scheme has evolved to respond to pre-application comments from the City Council. It is a scheme that



‘knows its place’ – it places a needed new facility on a site where existing premises have reached the end of their useful life. It increases the amount of accommodation provided on the site but, by its massing and design, respects the highly important heritage assets that it affects – the Canning Street Conservation Area as well as the listed buildings described above. It is a refined modern building that uses traditional materials for its expression, and which is carefully modelled to respond to neighbouring buildings and to enhance views. While there will undoubtedly be an effect on heritage assets, that effect will be positive.

## 5 The policy context

- 5.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance concerning change in the historic built environment that is relevant to the proposed scheme.

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On Tuesday 27 March 2012, the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: 'Planning for the Historic Environment' (PPS5) with immediate effect.
- 5.3 The NPPF says at Paragraph 128 that:
- 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.*
- 5.4 A detailed description and analysis of the heritage significance of the context of Philharmonic Court is provided earlier in this report.
- 5.5 At Paragraph 131, the NPPF says that:
- In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
- *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.*

5.6 Paragraph 132 advises local planning authorities 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting’.

5.7 The NPPF says at Paragraph 133:

*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 loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

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

5.8 Paragraph 134 says that ‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

5.9 The NPPF incorporates many of the essential concepts in the former Planning Policy Statement 5 ‘Planning for the

Historic Environment'. PPS5 was accompanied by a 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide', published by English Heritage 'to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it'. The 'Guide' gives, at Paragraph 79, a number of 'potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme' in addition to guidance on 'weighing-up' proposals in Paragraphs 76 to 78. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;
- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;
- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

5.10 Paragraph 111 of the Guide sets out the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities when making decisions must 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' and 'pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a conservation area.

### **Local Policy: Liverpool's Local Development Framework**

5.11 Liverpool City Council's UDP remains the adopted development plan for the City, pending adoption of the emerging Core Strategy. The UDP deals with the historic built environment in Chapter 7. As most local plans do, it follows national policy closely in terms of policies regarding listed building and conservation areas.

5.12 Policy HD 5 deals with development affecting the setting of a listed building. It states:

*Planning permission will only be granted for development affecting the setting of a listed building, which preserves the setting and important views of the building. This will include, where appropriate:*

- i. control over the design and siting of new development;*
- ii. control over the use of adjacent land; and*
- iii. the preservation of trees and landscape features.*

5.13 Policy HD8 deals with conservation areas, and states:

*The City Council will take positive action to secure the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas and will:*

- i. seek support and funding from all available sources for the repair of buildings and environmental improvements;*
- ii. prepare action plans for priority areas;*
- iii. use its available powers to secure the removal of features which significantly detract from the character of the area; and*
- iv. provide planning guidance and advice to owners and developers.*

5.14 Policy HD9 deals specifically with the demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas, and essentially repeats the relevant part of the former Planning Policy Guidance 15, the national planning policy guidance for the historic built environment current at the time of the adoption of the UDP.

- 5.15 The policy says that ‘There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of any building, part of a building or structure in a conservation area which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area’.
- 5.16 Policy HD11 deals with new development in conservation areas. It says:
- 1. Planning permission will not be granted for:*
    - i. development in a conservation area which fails to preserve or enhance its character; and*
    - ii. applications which are not accompanied by the full information necessary to assess the impact of the proposals on the area, including all details of design, materials and landscaping.*
  - 2. Proposals for new development will be permitted having regard to the following criteria:*
    - i. the development is of a high standard of design and materials, appropriate to their setting and context, which respect the character and appearance of the conservation area;*
    - ii. the development pays special attention to conserving the essential elements which combine to give the area its special character and does not introduce changes which would detract from the character or appearance of the area;*
    - iii. the proposal protects important views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area;*
    - iv. the proposal does not lead to the loss of open space or landscape features (trees and hedges) important to the character or appearance of the area;*
    - v. the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, noise or environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character or appearance of the area;*
    - and*

*vi. the proposal has a satisfactory means of access and provides for car parking in a way which is sympathetic to the appearance of the conservation area.*

- 5.17 The Core Strategy Submission Draft includes the ‘Core Strategy Vision’, which says, among other things, that ‘there will be a strong relationship between the City’s built environment (including its cultural and architectural heritage), its green infrastructure and economic renewal and the development of vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities’. The Core Strategy also contains a series of Strategic Objectives. Philharmonic Court is located in the City Centre Strategic Sub-area, and the Strategic Objective Two seeks to ‘focus on the provision of higher density residential development’. Strategic Objective Four seeks to:

*‘Protect and enhance the City’s unique historic and architectural environment, including the World Heritage Site, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Ancient Scheduled Monuments and heritage assets of local significance. Ensure all new development achieves high quality and inclusive design to ensure an attractive, distinctive, healthy and sustainable City for those who live in, work in and visit Liverpool; avoids adverse environmental impacts; and is adaptive and resilient to climate change’.*

- 5.18 This latter objective is supported by strategic policies. Strategic Policy 23 sets out a number of ‘Key Place-Making and Design Principles’. Strategic Policy 24 deals with the historic environment, and says:

*‘Designated and non-designated heritage assets will be protected from inappropriate development by requiring development proposals within or adjacent to them to demonstrate that it will preserve and enhance them and the special features for which they are designated. These features include both the buildings and landscaping that are integral to their character, important views within and to them, and their settings’.*

### **Guidance on urban design and the historic built environment**

- 5.19 Section 7.4 of BS 7913:1998 'Guide to the principles of the conservation of historic buildings' says 'it is [also] frequently necessary for new buildings to be erected within historic settlements or conservation areas. In some circumstances, for example when there is an obvious or identifiable gap in a larger formal or informal composition, such new work may be positively desirable on broad architectural grounds; in other circumstances it is less desirable, but necessary'.
- 5.20 Paragraph 7.4.6 deals with 'criteria for new buildings in historic settings', and includes:
- Such buildings should be designed for a long life and soundly constructed of durable materials chosen to suit their context. They should be so planned that they are capable of alteration and adaptation in response to changing needs in the future.
  - New buildings should be designed with due regard to their site and surroundings using materials that will weather and age well and settle into their place in the townscape.
- 5.21 The BS concludes this advice by saying: There can be no simple prescription for good architecture beyond the Vitruvian precepts of 'commodity, firmness and delight'. Good new buildings in historic settings should not merely be fashionable or photogenic, but should stand the test of time. Mere conformity to restrictive formulae or the dressing of modern structures in traditional guises may fail to produce architecture of good repute'.
- 5.22 'By Design: Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice', produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the former DETR, provides guidance and recommendations regarding urban design.



5.23 The document deals in detail with how urban design can contribute to successful place-making, and the reinforcement of local character. It suffices here to list the 'Objectives of Urban Design' that it sets out:

- To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.
- To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
- To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.
- To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.
- To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.
- To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.
- To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

5.24 The English Heritage/CABE guidance 'Building in Context' gives further guidance on the design of new development which affects the historic environment. It sets out good practice guidance on the design of new development in historic areas. The guidance explains the importance of basing designs on thorough analysis of the context, and warns against the application of simple formulae such as

'fitting in' or 'contrasting the new with the old'. It advises that successful projects will:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it;
- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings; and
- Create new views and juxtapositions that add to the variety and texture of the setting.

5.25 The guidance contains a number of case studies and draw a number of specific conclusions from them:

- The best buildings result from a creative dialogue between the architect, client, local planning authority and others; pre-application discussions are essential;
- The local planning authority and other consultees can insist on good architecture and help to achieve it;
- Difficult sites should generate good architecture, and are not an excuse for not achieving it;
- With skill and care, it is possible to accommodate large modern uses within the grain of historic settings;
- High environmental standards can help generate good architecture;

- Sensitivity to context and the use of traditional materials are not incompatible with contemporary architecture;
- Good design does not stop at the front door, but extends into public areas beyond the building;
- High-density housing does not necessarily involve building high or disrupting the urban grain and it can be commercially highly successful;
- Successful architecture can be produced either by following historic precedents closely, by adapting them or by contrasting with them;
- In a diverse context a contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than one making a failed attempt to follow historic precedents.

## **6 Compliance with policy and guidance**

- 6.1 This section of the report expands on Section 4. That section set out why the development is appropriate for its site and the setting of the heritage assets around it, and this section places that justification in the context of the policy described in section 5.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 6.2 The proposed scheme clearly coincides with the National Planning Policy Framework's definition of sustainable development-it would evidently be positive in economic, social and environmental terms, and accords with the local development plan. It clearly 'conserve[s] heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance'.
- 6.3 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of the development site and its heritage context, as required by Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.4 In respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the revised scheme can certainly be described as 'sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets' by enhancing their settings, and the overall scheme contributes to sustainable communities by reinvigorating a moribund site, and thus enhancing the economic vitality of the conservation areas.
- 6.5 The scheme very definitely strikes the balance suggested by Paragraph 132 of the NPPF – as shown earlier, it responds to the site and its context in a manner commensurate to the overall significance of that context. In overall terms, the impact of the scheme on heritage significance, when weighed against the heritage significance that is preserved and the benefits of the scheme in economic and social terms to the conservation area, is modest but positive.
- 6.6 The proposed development complies with Paragraph 133 of the NPPF. It does not lead to 'substantial harm to or

total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset'. It also complies with Paragraph 134 for the reasons given in detail earlier – it cannot be considered as causing 'less than substantial harm'. The proposed scheme is a design that has been carefully considered with the character and appearance of the Canning Street Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings in mind. However, any 'less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset' - i.e. the conservation areas or listed buildings - that can be ascribed to the scheme is greatly outweighed by the benefits generated by the scheme, as described earlier and in the Design & Access and planning statements.

- 6.7 The scheme also does the relevant things that the 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' urges in its Paragraph 79. For the reasons explained earlier, the proposed development 'makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities', and 'is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment'.

#### **Local Policy: Liverpool's Local Development Framework**

- 6.8 For the same reasons as exists in respect of the NPPF, the proposed scheme would be consistent with the City Council's Local Development Framework.
- 6.9 As explained in this report and in the Design & Access Statement, the proposed scheme will 'preserve the setting and important views' of the listed buildings in its vicinity, as required by Policy HD 5 regarding the setting of listed buildings. The existing Philharmonic Court buildings detract from the character and appearance of the Canning Street Conservation Area, and for this reason and by virtue of the quality of the proposed design, the proposed development is consistent with Policies HD 8 and HD 9. Similarly, the quality of the proposed scheme, assessed

earlier in this report, causes it to comply fully with Policy HD 11. It 'is of a high standard of design and materials, appropriate to their setting and context, [and] respect[s] the character and appearance of the conservation area'. It certainly preserves its character, as required by Section 1(i) of the Policy. Earlier in the report, we show how the scheme responds to another key aspect of this policy – it 'pays special attention to conserving the essential elements which combine to give the area its special character and does not introduce changes which would detract from the character or appearance of the area'. The scheme 'does not lead to the loss of open space or landscape features', and, for the reasons given earlier, 'protects important views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area'.

- 6.10 The scheme balances two key Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy Submission Draft. It provides 'higher density residential development' as sought by Strategic Objective Two for the City Centre Strategic Sub-area, and the requirement of Strategic Objective Four to 'protect and enhance the City's unique historic and architectural environment' with 'new development [that] achieves high quality and inclusive design'. For the same reasons that are given above in respect of UDP policies, the proposed scheme is consistent with Strategic Policy 24 and its requirement to both 'preserve and enhance' the heritage assets that it affects.

### **Guidance**

- 6.11 The scheme is consistent with BS 7913:1998 'Guide to the principles of the conservation of historic buildings', in that it will be 'designed with due regard to [its] site and surroundings using materials that will weather and age well and settle into [its] place in the townscape'. It avoids the formulaic approach that the BS correctly advises against, and the scheme is a highly specific and considered response to its site.

- 6.12 The proposed development certainly achieves the urban design objectives of 'By Design'. It helps 're-edge' the urban block in which the site of Philharmonic Court is located, recreating a street frontage and re-establishing legibility and coherence. It greatly enhances the immediate setting of a number of listed buildings as a place, and will introduce life and vitality at street level where it is presently lacking.
- 6.13 Similarly, the proposed scheme reflects the guidance of 'Building in Context' concerning important views, the pattern of existing development, the scale of neighbouring buildings, high quality materials, the urban grain and using traditional material in a contemporary fashion.

## Appendix A: Location



Current Ordnance Survey (not to scale)



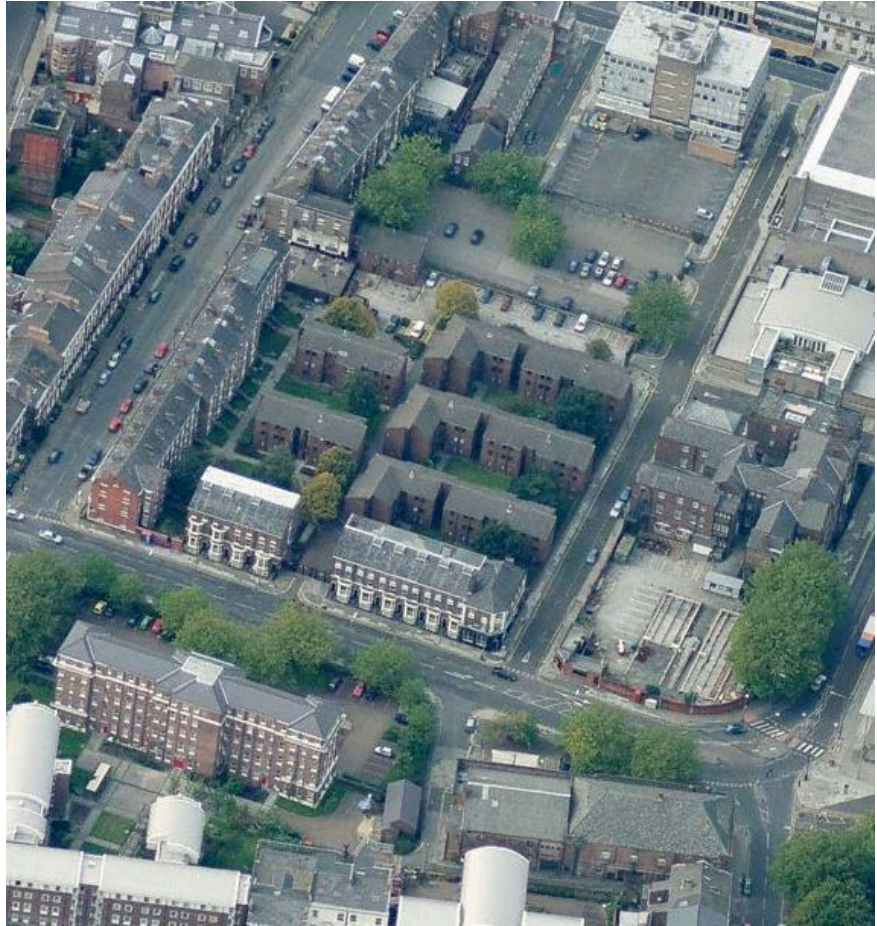


Current aerial photography (not to scale)



Oblique aerial view from the south



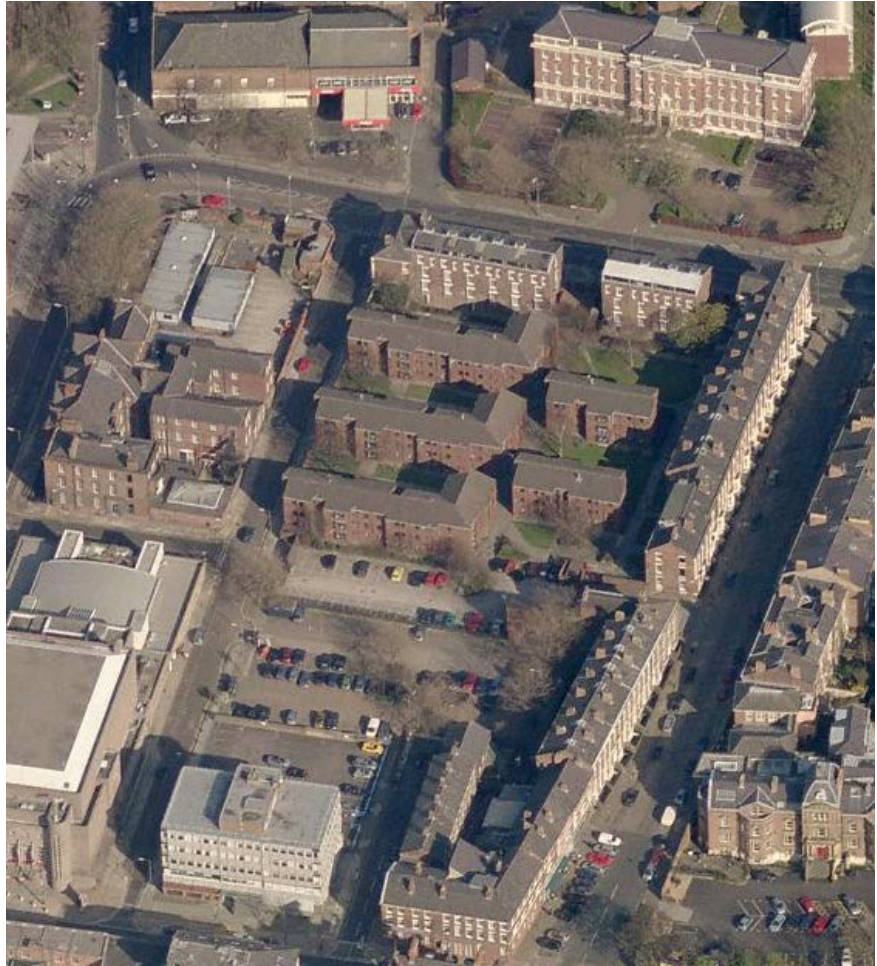


Oblique aerial view from the east



Oblique aerial view from the north

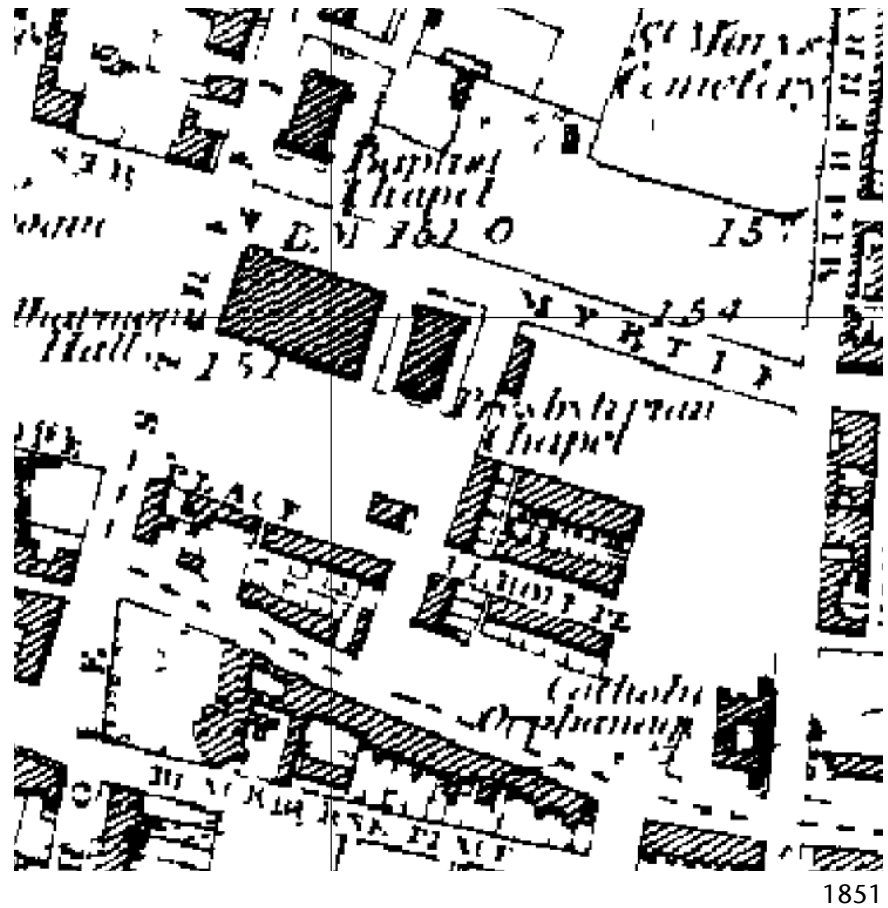


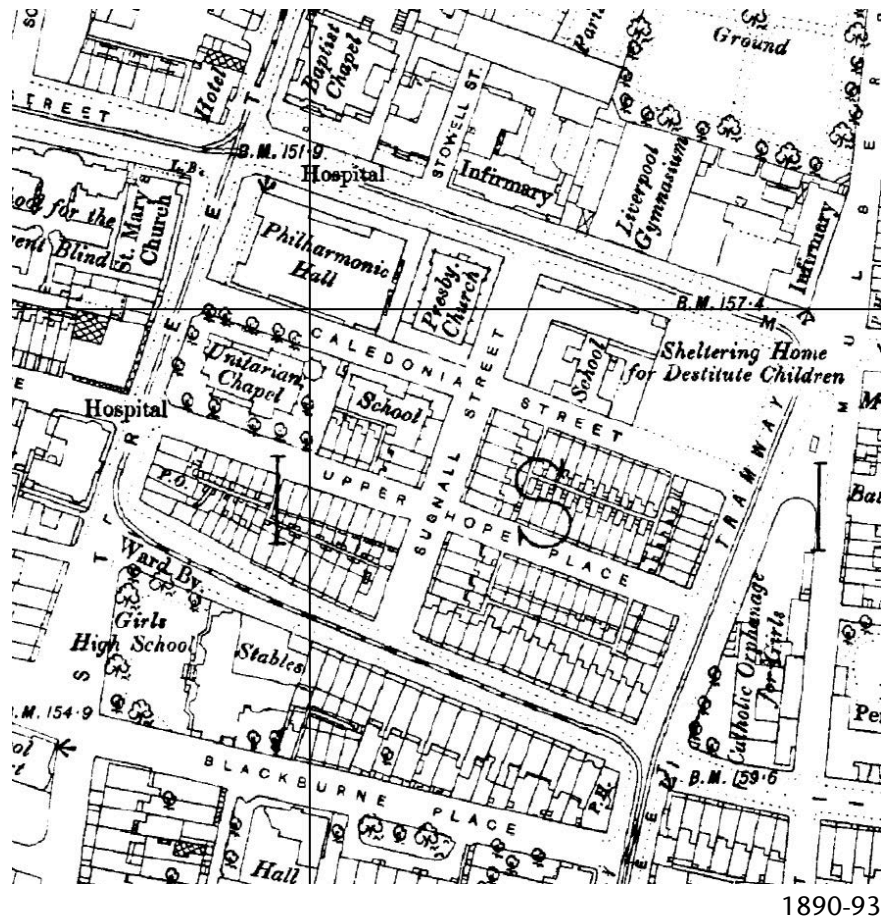


Oblique aerial view from the west

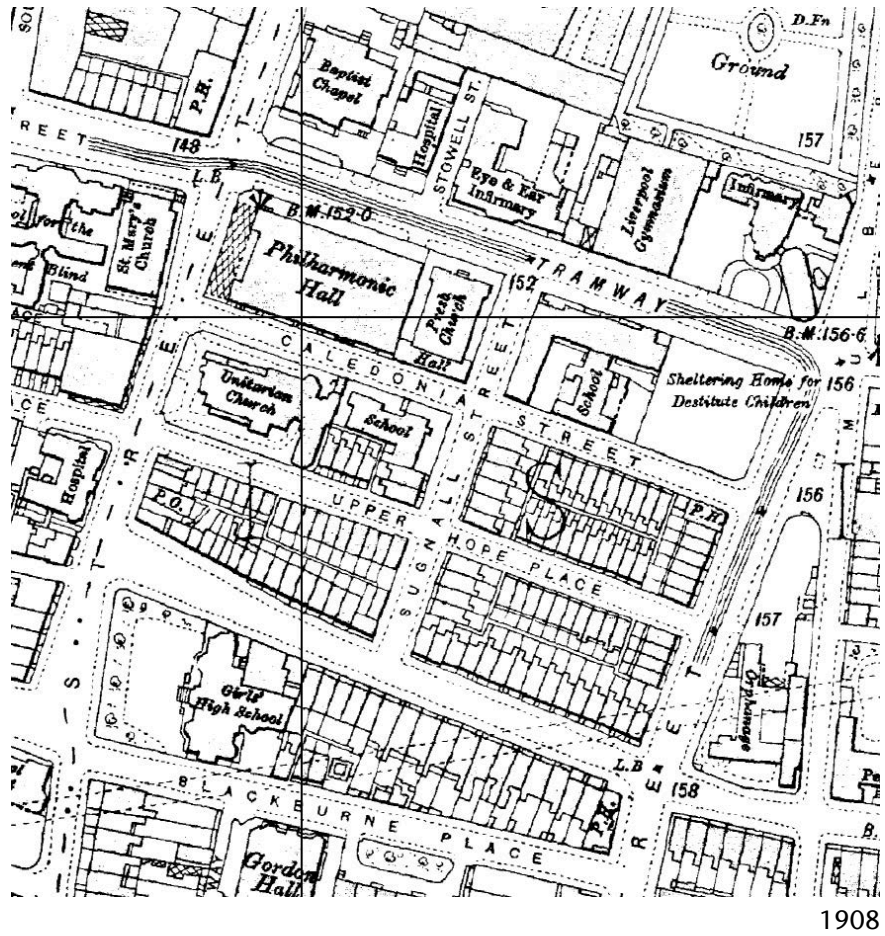
## Appendix B: Historical maps

Not to scale

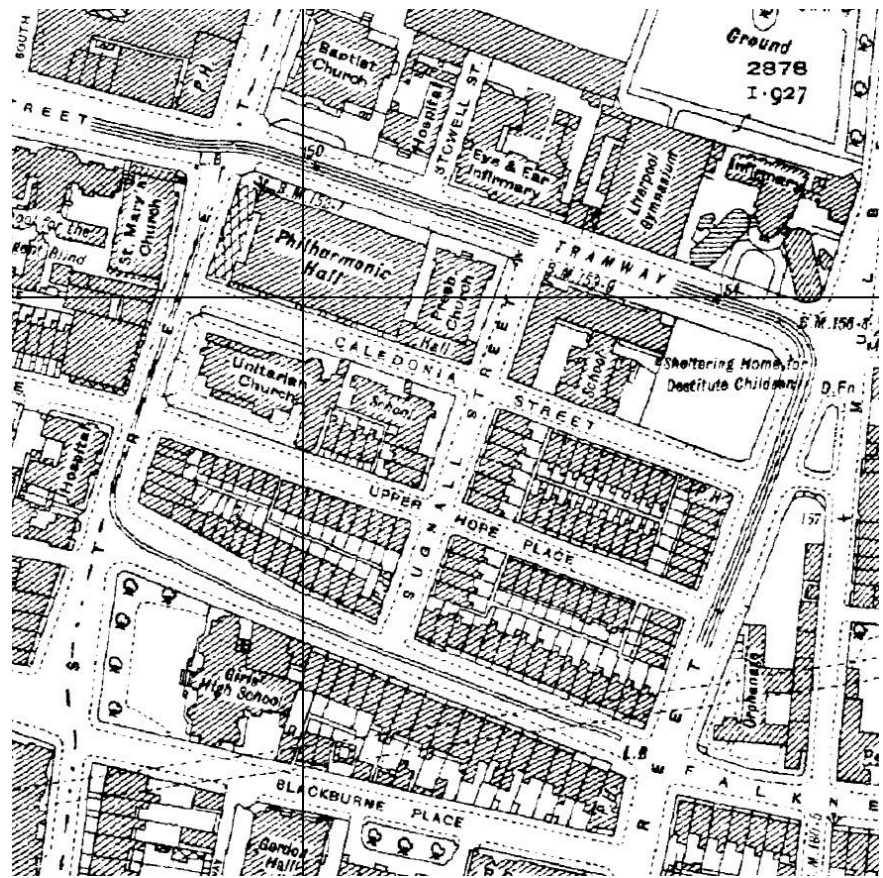




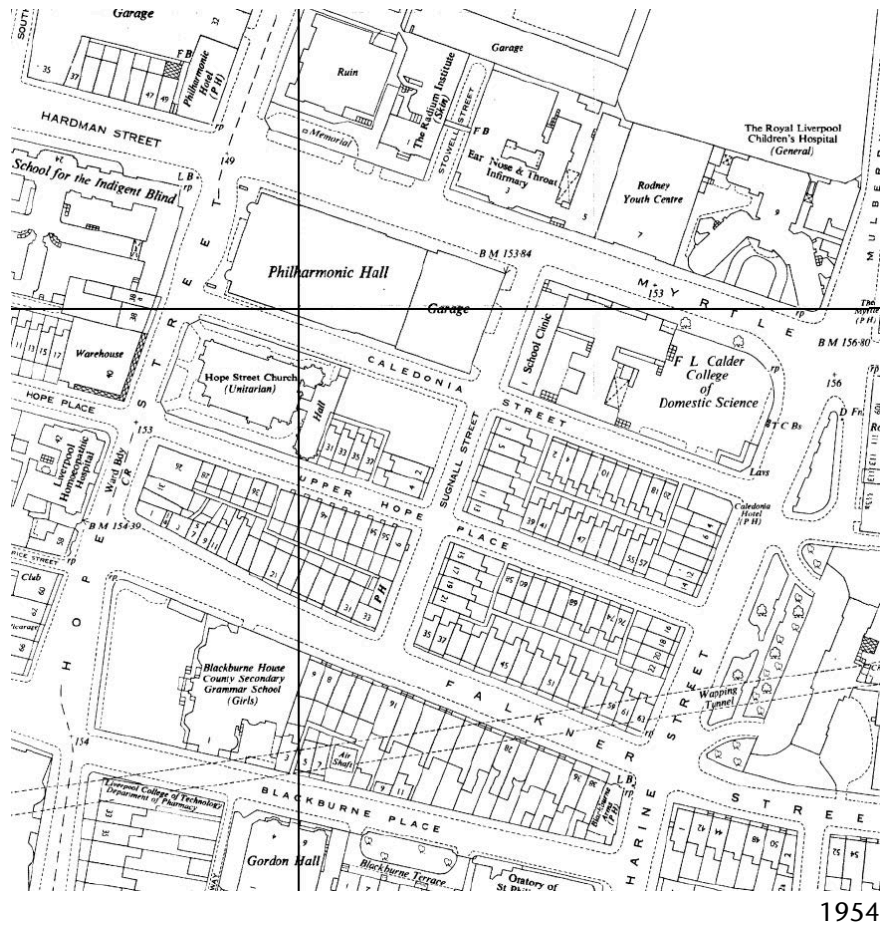
1890-93







1927



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