

**Proposed Extension & Alterations at 481-485
Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4AN**

**Design & Access Statement
Rev B**

1.0 Stage One - Process & Analysis

1.1 Assessment

The site is located on the high street along Wilmslow Road within the suburb of Withington. It comprises of 0.039 Ha of land and is currently occupied by a two-storey building with further cellar below. There is also a single storey front projection facing Wilmslow Road to back of pavement which have cellars below, these projections typical for such district centre high streets, are occupied by two commercial retail units. The retail uses extend partly within the main building but most of that is vacant. It appears that the building was historically a dwelling, but it is not known when this was last inhabited. The building is not listed but the site is within the Withington Conservation Area.

The site is in a district centre and overlooks Wilmslow Road which provides local facilities and amenities such as shops healthcare and leisure activities. Wilmslow Road is an extremely well served bus route with very regular services to a number of destinations including into central Manchester. Mauldeth Road train station is approx. 0.9 miles east of the site and there is a Metrolink tram stop approx. 0.8 miles south at West Didsbury (easily accessible by bus) so the site is very well serviced by public transport.

The 'garden / yard' area behind the dwelling is unused and enclosed by adjacent structures and a brick boundary wall with metal fence and gate. This space is accessed off a drive leading from Parsonage Road. To the south side of the rear there is a recent infill dwelling development that presents a two-storey blank rendered wall onto the garden. On the north side the original outrigger has been replaced with a widened and lengthened extension that presents a greater than two storey high brick wall with further greater than single storey projection beyond. This is faced in a rather unsympathetic and unattractive red engineering brick.

The surrounding streets to the rear of the site are almost all in predominately residential use, with a mix of large semi-detached, terraced properties and the odd detached villa (some converted). Most surrounding properties are two storeys with rooms in the roof spaces and cellars below. Some of these have been converted to apartments. There are also some properties that are truly greater than three storeys. Notable examples would be the new build retail and apartment development on opposite side of Wilmslow Road in the former Scala Cinema site, and the 'bookend' apartment development on corner of Wilmslow Road and Parsonage Road.

Presently access is mainly off Wilmslow Road into the retail units. 485 retail unit does not have access into most of the main mass behind but access from 481-483 unit is more interconnected. There is a rear door from the garden space providing direct access.

The existing building is in a poor condition, water ingress is a problem throughout but particularly in rear areas. Areas of timber have decayed and in places partially collapsed. Finishes are in poor condition with many having failed completely and delaminated / fallen away. The rear wall and outrigger have subsidence and this is ongoing. The main rear

elevation has major cracking separating it from the internal and party walls which is a significant issue and requires major investment to remedy and urgently to avoid structural failure and issues with the adjoining buildings. The roof finish will need to be lifted for a new membrane to be installed. The existing roof structure is deteriorating, with the addition of dormers, what is left of the roof structure is considered to be insufficient to be retained. Following surveys undertaken and that the main rear elevation is falling down, it is deemed that for structural and safety reasons, everything apart from the front elevation and two party walls will need to be demolished and rebuilt. Vacancy out of business hours in the property and its neighbours seems to be an issue with graffiti tagging clearly evident on the front walls above the retail units.



Fig 1 & 2: Front of existing property to Wilmslow Road showing graffiti and general decline



Fig 3 & 4: Rear of existing property off Parsonage Road

1.2 Involvement

This scheme has previously received full planning approval under application ref. 125673/FO/2019, however, due to the condition of the property it is necessary to undertake more demolition work which requires approval and was not explicitly covered in the original application. Following communication with the LPA it was recommended a new application be submitted to address and obtain approval for the additional demolition and new build works. The general design and appearance of the proposal is otherwise generally unaltered. The applicant wishes to retain the streetfront elevation and two party walls and demolish and rebuild everything else including the rear outrigger, rear wall, roof, all internal floors and all internal walls. The two retail units will be retained in the front projection with cellar spaces below. The demolition and rebuild will create four spacious 2 (double) bedroom

apartments. Pre-application discussion has been made with the LPA and broadly positive comment returned. Normal requirements would still need consideration including security.

1.3 Evaluation

The site is highly sustainable, and the uses sought are not expected to be contentious being existing or historic. The intensification in use is also modest and proportionate. Several precedents for such development have been established nearby, in particularly 489 Wilmslow Road and 16 Copson Street and 4 Parsonage Road. Principle issues likely to be involved are level of intensification, privacy and amenity as well as respecting the conservation area.

1.4 Design

As previously mentioned, the design is as previously approved under planning application ref. 125673/FO/2019.

Generally, walls are of red brick with brick arch lintels and stone sills. The main roof is pitched with slate finish and the retail unit projection is flat roofed with presumably asphalt finish (first floor windows are boarded up). Despite the deterioration and unsympathetic retail adornment the properties do retain some period features. To the front the retail units are framed by stone pilasters which are most evident in immediate vicinity to 481-485 being less hidden by retail signage here. The main building has a bracketed timber box gutter to the front elevation wrapping around south end. Chimneys are mostly retained although several have had their pots removed and been reduced in scale such that their attractiveness is diminished. Further comment on these matters is contained in the conservation statement.

2.0 Stage Two: Proposals

2.1 Use

The proposed use classes are to be; retention of existing retail (class A1 shops) to front projection with residential use to all remainder (class C3).

2.2 Amount

The proposal is for a development of 4no. new self-contained apartments. 3 of the apartments are largely identical and the 4th being similar but slightly varied due to being within roofspace.

Each apartment is provided with private amenity space in form of a sunken garden or balcony. All the dwellings have access to a small communal garden space at rear, 1 no secure cycle parking space each (4no. total). 3no. off-street shared car parking spaces are provided, 2 of which have a side passage aiding disabled users, and 1no. shared motorbike parking space.

The density equates to approx. 102 dwellings/Ha. which is an increase but is reasonable intensification and maintains generous sized apartments. The density is not unreasonably high in this urban context area and is considerably lower in comparison to the new apartment developments at Scala and at 489 Wilmslow Road.

2.3 Layout

It makes sense from various perspectives to make a clear split between the two uses and the areas they occupy. The retail use is therefore confined to the front projection and the residential use to the space behind.

The front retail unit projection causes a problem in that it 'landlocks' the front part of the main building from any window potential. Considerable thought has been given to how to respond to this and a number of schemes were investigated. After this consideration the preferred solution was to introduce a lightwell within the front part of the main mass to allow daylight to penetrate down to the upper and lower ground floor levels. This will also allow ventilation to be provided by an assisted system. The living space is provided with normal windows in all cases as is the first bedroom in all cases. Only the second bedrooms to the lower two apartments rely upon the lightwell. This is a compromise of course but with good design and execution has been shown to work in other precedents. Although the degradation to the property occurred under previous ownership it is apparent that the status quo is not viable to allow sufficient economic investment to maintain the building. This solution allows bringing the building back into full, viable and sustainable use. All apartments are accessed from a shared stairwell located broadly in place of the existing outrigger.

2.4 Scale

Floor levels are altered within the mass to allow for good floor to ceiling heights at all floors including lower ground and roof space. The proposal works within the existing mass and does not make any significant increases in volume. Minor additions are provided to allow for reasonable accommodation in the roof space. The design largely keeps to the existing building footprint replacing the existing outrigger with a new stairwell in the same location. The position of this feature was considered carefully to retain the footprint. An increase in height was needed to allow headroom on stair to access the roof space apartment but the height is still well below the main roof ridge. Given the proportions of the adjacent extension on 479 which has an altered roof pitch to original there has already been a loss of the original rhythm of the rear outriggers that would once have been present so this change is not felt to be of significant impact.

The layout has been designed in accordance with and exceeds Nationally Space Standards. The apartments are very spacious by comparison to many modern developments particularly in this locality and include good provision for storage space, something that is often neglected with newer developments.

2.5 Landscaping

The sunken garden to lower ground floor apartment would be hard paved. Simple galvanised steel railings would be provided to the edge of retaining wall. The communal garden space would be paved with low maintenance planting in pots / planters. The parking area would be finished in asphalt with stone sett edging. Paths from parking to entrance would be paved.

2.6 Appearance

The front of the main building is to be restored to remove graffiti and the roof will be replaced and utilise reclaimed tiles. The front appearance generally is to be traditional, the addition of new rooflights will be minimal as it is intended to use Conservation Rooflights from the Rooflight Company. The incongruous windows to the rear would be replaced with

more sympathetic configured windows although for maintenance reasons they would be preferred to be metal frames in anthracite grey finish. The rear outrigger, rear wall, roof, all internal floors and all internal walls will be demolished and rebuilt. The replacement outrigger will have a form that mirrors the historic, but the appearance will be contemporary to reflect it having been rebuilt. A small dormer is added to the loft bedroom and bathroom but in traditional proportions and clad with zinc.

In order to permit good levels of daylight to enter the living spaces a new feature is added to that area with small balconies projecting out. This feature is linked into a more modern larger dormer for the loft living space, this would still not be dominant in scale against the roof it sits within. The roof dormer is small relative to the roof, which is more sympathetic and akin to traditional designs without being pastiche. New rooflights and a lightwell will also provide further amounts of natural light to proposed spaces, similar to buildings surrounding this site.

All materials are to be in keeping with the locality and detailed in a contemporary manner. The rear elevation and outrigger will be rebuilt in 'like for like' construction reclaiming as many bricks as possible for the external material. Any roof slates that can be reclaimed will be and used on the front elevation with new slates installed to the rear where insufficient numbers can be salvaged. The balcony structure would be galvanised steel with obscure glazed side panels to protect privacy.

2.7 Access

Access to the retail units remains from Wilmslow Road. Access to the apartments would not be practicable from that side though so it would be via the drive off Parsonage Road. The existing gate would be removed. Lighting would be added to the external area in form of low-level decorative lamps and high level motion sensitive lights for security. The presence of the apartment windows will add visual surveillance which will also aid security.

The apartments share three car parking spaces and one motorbike space, and each has one covered secure cycle parking space adjacent to the building entrance in accordance with policy guidance. The cycle lockers are fully enclosed metal box storage types which would be bolted down securely to concrete base such as the following example:
<https://www.thebikestoragecompany.co.uk/product/the-horizontal-2-bike-locker/>

They are located in close proximity to building entrance and habitable windows so are well covered by natural surveillance

The site would also be covered by CCTV and motion sensitive dusk til dawn security lights (mounted at high level), all as recommended in Secure By Design guidance.

Waste and recycling bin storage for all apartments would also be provided at the rates required by the LPA. Refer to appended waste calculations docs.

Apartment communal entrance door would be self locking on exit. Mailboxes for apartments are positioned adjacent the entrance door with collection from within the entrance foyer. An intercom system with integrated CCTV is to be positioned by door and linked to each flat.

2.8 Sustainability

The site is located in a highly sustainable location in an established settlement. The development of additional living accommodation on a previously developed plot is in

accordance with planning policy guidance and the proposals would make a positive contribution to the LA housing provision targets. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is still a key policy planning policy and is applicable in this case. The building fabric will be improved as part of the work to give better insulation and air tightness and associated improved comfort / living conditions. Space is limited but outdoor space is provided for users to enjoy and use for drying clothes.

2.9 Equality

Level access can be provided to the entrance but the nature of the existing building levels are such that stairs are unavoidable. A lift would be preferable to allow those with mobility issues full access but at this scale it is not economically viable. A ramp up to the upper ground floor level would allow at least one accessible apartment but would need to be of such length it would necessitate removal of the parking provision or the garden and bike / bin areas. The new stair would be to ambulant disabled standard which is a considerable improvement upon the existing stairs being replaced. Space within the apartments is generous so with good internal space planning mobility within flats ought to be good. Normal provisions within building regulations would be met to provide for visual distinction of doors, stair treads and such.