

Planning, Design & Access Statement

in support of the planning application for

Erection of two semi-detached dwellings at Darnell House, Kenworth Lane, Northenden, Manchester M22 4EJ



Image courtesy of Google Earth

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3rd May 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement provides the comprehensive planning, design and access assessment in support of the application for a pair of semi-detached houses on the site of Darnell House, a detached 2-storey office building accessed between 12 and 14 Kenworthy Lane, Northenden.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. The application has been formulated through an assessment of the relevant policies, in the context of a previous planning appeal decision and recent pre-application discussion with the Council.
- 2.2. The houses have been designed to enhance the area, by creating characterful buildings which pay due regard to the amenity of surrounding residents.
- 2.3. The new houses will provide four-bedroom accommodation, within a three-storey building, the upper floor of which is contained discretely within the roof space. The design makes the best use of this sustainably located brownfield site and provides an appropriate balance between site coverage, scale, parking and garden space while protecting the amenity of neighbours.

3. Site and Surroundings

- 3.1. The application site includes a vacant office/light industrial building and its associated yard which is no longer required for this purpose. It also includes a portion of the unused rear garden to 12 Kenworthy Lane. The vehicular access is solely restricted to the application site and 12 Kenworthy Lane.
- 3.2. The site is in a predominantly residential area, approximately 100m from the B5167 Palatine Road and Northenden village, which has a wide range of shopping and social facilities, as well as excellent public transport links.
- 3.3. The site is shown on the following images.



Existing building to be demolished



Access on to Kenworthy Lane



View from the site to Kenworthy Lane



Existing building viewed from rear garden on Kenworthy Lane

4. Relevant Planning History

- 4.1. The site has a long history of commercial use as a glazing company, but is now vacant.
- 4.2. An appeal decision dated 10th April 2017 turned down a proposal for the demolition of the office and provision of two dwellings (ref: APP/B4215/W/16/3162029). The decision notice is attached to the application.
- 4.3. The Inspector dismissed the appeal solely for the reason that the layout, siting, orientation and scale of the proposal would result in a harmful loss of privacy in the rear gardens of 14-16 Kenworthy Lane and 11-13 Heyridge Drive to the detriment of the existing occupant's living conditions.

5. Community Engagement

- 5.1. The applicant undertook a pre-application discussion with the Council in 2021 to explain the intention to incorporate additional land beyond that included in the previous appeal application and provided a sketch layout to show how the concerns raised by the Inspector could be addressed.
 - The response from the Council suggested that an application should provide:
 - a detailed planting scheme (species, types and age) to demonstrate how the issues of overlooking have been resolved
 - A layout drawing annotated with measurements showing distances from proposed elevations to neighbouring properties
 - the location and manufacturer's details of the type of vehicle charging points
 - a section of the design and access document should include an energy statement detailing the technologies to be included in the scheme.
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 - It was also suggested that the parking spaces associated with no. 12 would be better located at the end of their site rather than separating the amenity space from the dwelling in the manner shown.
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 - The plans were revised to take account of these comments and a draft revision was referred to neighbours for comment. Comments were received from three separate addresses, one of no objection, one with a request for a substantial boundary fence/wall to the garden and one of significant concern over the potential loss of privacy from the dormer window, the loss of view of trees and the visual impact of the building. Concern over parking problems from the development was also raised.

- In recognition of these concerns the dormer windows have been modified to avoid any undue overlooking and the other aspects raised are addressed and explained within the final revised plans and this statement.

6. Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

- 6.1. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It sets out the requirements for the planning system and explains that the purpose of the system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three mutually dependent dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.2. The NPPF also provides guidance on building a strong competitive economy, delivering a sufficient supply of homes, making effective use of land, achieving good design and adapting to climate change, all of which are relevant considerations which have been taken into account in formulating the application.
- 6.3. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Manchester Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises of the Core Strategy which was adopted in 2012 and the retained policies of the Unitary Development Plan, dating from 1995.
- 6.4. The proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF as follows:
- 6.5. Economic role – the proposal will provide an economic benefit by sustaining local employment in construction and providing a more efficient use of urban land without having to provide new infrastructure. The resulting residential accommodation will help sustain the local housing market and provide on-going benefit to the local economy.
- 6.6. Social role – the dwelling will meet the housing needs of two families in a highly accessible location close to a wide range of facilities and employment opportunities.
- 6.7. Environmental role – The proposal will redevelop and regenerate a disused brownfield site, which is in a highly sustainable location. It will remove a potentially non-conforming use and create a high quality, sustainable addition to the local environment. Substantial new planting will be undertaken to enhance the development and ensure it respects the outlook and privacy of neighbours.

Manchester Core Strategy

- 6.8. The Core Strategy Policy SO3 supports the principle of high quality housing at the site, as it is located in a highly sustainable location and helps meet housing need and supports economic growth.
- 6.9. Policy S06 seeks to protect and enhance both the natural and built environment of the City and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change with which the application accords.
- 6.10. Policy H6 proposes that South Manchester, which includes Northenden, will accommodate around 5% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy, as the built up nature of the area constrains the availability of housing land.
- 6.11. Policy EN 1 provides Design Principles and expects development to follow the seven principles of urban design:

Character: a place with its own identity

Continuity and enclosure: a place where public and private places are clearly distinguished

Quality of the public realm: a place with attractive, and successful outdoor areas

Ease of movement: a place that is easy to get to and move through

Legibility: a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

Adaptability: a place that can change easily

Diversity: a place with variety and choice

Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives.

Policy EN 4 seeks to reduce CO2 emissions by enabling low and zero carbon development.

Policy EN 8 expects all new development to be adaptable to climate change in terms of the design, layout, siting and function of both buildings and associated external spaces.

Policy DM 1 provides Development Management requirements which should be considered, including the following:

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development.
- Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.
- Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.
- Community safety and crime prevention.
- Design for health.
- Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.
- Refuse storage and collection.
- Vehicular access and car parking.
- Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.
- Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.
- The use of alternatives to peat-based products in landscaping/gardens within development schemes.
- Flood risk and drainage.

Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

6.12. Of the retained UDP policies, Citywide Development Control Policy 6 deals with “Housing on Backland Sites” as follows:

DC6.1 The Council will not normally grant consent for residential development on "backland" sites, that is, sites with limited access to a road because they are surrounded by housing or other uses.

DC6.2 Development will not be permitted unless:

- a. there is no loss of privacy to adjoining dwellings and associated rear gardens;*
- b. access and parking arrangements do not significantly increase noise and disturbance for occupiers of existing adjoining dwellings;*
- c. the scale and design of the development is compatible with the character of buildings in the surrounding area;*
- d. there is sufficient space between the proposed and existing dwellings to avoid problems of significant overshadowing or of over-dominant appearance affecting either the existing or the proposed dwellings;*
- e. the proposal does not involve the loss of important trees or other natural features of high amenity value or the loss of locally important wildlife habitats;*
- f. the proposed and existing dwellings retain adequate levels of private amenity space; and*

g. in the case of development within a Conservation Area, in particular, the built form and the surrounding spaces maintain or enhance the character of the area.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance

- 6.13. This guidance document was adopted in April 2007 and provides more detailed advice on the form of development expected by the Council.
- 6.14. All of the above policy and guidance has been carefully considered in the formulation of the application, which is considered to be in conformity with the Development Framework.

7. Planning, Access and Design Considerations

Principle of Development

- 7.1. Lying within a residential area close to Northenden village centre, the principle of the development of this site for residential purposes is given general support from the development framework. The addition of two family houses at a time of acute housing shortage is a positive attribute of significant weight.
- 7.2. The previous application for the site and subsequent appeal raised no objection to the principle of development, but found the specific proposals to be unacceptable. This application has carefully considered the design of the development and its impact on neighbours and has incorporated additional surplus land to the rear of 12 Kenworthy Lane, which allows for significant changes to the development giving greater distances from neighbouring property.

Quantum

- 7.3. The size of the plot and its spatial relationship to adjacent property permits the siting of two moderately size dwellings. The planning framework encourages the efficient use of land and the provision of two houses represents a complementary scale of development to those in the area and the optimum layout whilst protecting the privacy and outlook of neighbours and providing adequate gardens and parking.

Scale and Massing

- 7.4 The houses reflect the scale of those nearby and include a modest dormer feature which permits the use of the roof space. This enhances the accommodation while retaining the domestic scale and appearance.

Siting

- 7.5 The siting follows the logic of the irregular shaped plot, with the principle elevations facing the access road and for reasons of privacy, the main habitable room windows facing the side gardens, which can be achieved due to the addition of the surplus land to the rear of 12 Kenworthy Lane. Each property has a parking space, with cycle and bin storage. The parking is arranged off the access road, along with the relocated spaces serving 12 Kenworthy Lane.

Appearance

- 7.6 The buildings will use traditional materials with brick walls, stone cills and slate roofs, which will complement the varied character of the surrounding area. Fenestration will be in dark grey upvc.

Access and Accessibility

- 7.7 Vehicular and pedestrian access is taken from the private access road. A parking space is provided for each house in addition to the relocated parking for 12 Kenworthy Lane. The layout provides for the ability to turn and return to the highway in forward gear.
- 7.8 The level of parking reflects the highly sustainable location and along with provision of secure cycle storage will serve to meet the needs of the development without promoting unnecessary use of the private car.
- 7.9 The intention is to create houses that are fully accessible and future-proofed. The following specific points will be incorporated:
- All access footpaths and circulation will have a firm and smooth surface and will be either level or lightly ramped, so as to not exceed 1:20 gradient with 1200mm width
 - The access drive and parking areas will have a consolidated permeable surface
 - All entrances will have a level threshold with a minimum opening of 850mm.

Sustainability

- 7.10 The dwellings will be designed to exceed the requirements of the Building Regulations Approved Document L1A Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings through a fabric first approach.
- 7.11 Both houses will incorporate solar panels on the south facing roof slope and air source heat pumps to provide sustainable energy sources and reduce carbon emissions.
- 7.12 The houses will be provided with electric vehicle charging points and cycle storage facilities.
- 7.13 The redevelopment of a brownfield site within the urban area, close to a wide range of facilities and excellent public transport links makes this a highly sustainable development.

Security

- 7.14 The layout of the site and buildings maximises enclosure and security, with passive surveillance of the private access road as well as minimising areas where individuals can hide. All windows and doors will comply with standards required by GMP's Secured by Design initiative as set out in their "Homes 2016" guidance document.

Landscaping

- 7.15 The application is supported by a comprehensive landscaping plan, which addresses the shortfalls identified by the previous unsuccessful appeal proposal.
- 7.16 The scheme includes substantial tree and shrub planting around the borders of the site, which will provide an attractive setting for the development and enhance the appearance of the site from the surrounding property.
- 7.17 In addition, the scheme incorporates two lengths of pleached tree planting along the Heybridge Drive boundary to create an attractive privacy feature.
- 7.18 The relocation of the parking and landscaped outdoor space for 12 Kenworthy Lane provides a more practical and usable amenity for this property.

Design, Daylighting, Privacy and Outlook

- 7.19 The houses are of bespoke design to address the previous concerns over privacy of neighbouring property. The house layouts are orientated to gain their main outlook to the side where the main gardens are located.
- 7.20 The proposed houses will have excellent daylight levels due to the distance from nearby buildings. The ground floor habitable rooms will have a private outlook, protected by boundary walling and fencing and supplemented by a strong landscape framework. As such the scheme will create a strong sense of privacy for the dwellings and prevent overlooking of neighbouring property.
- 7.21 The two main bedrooms on the first floor are similarly orientated with an outlook over the side gardens, preventing any direct conflict with neighbouring windows or private gardens. The small first floor bedroom is set off the rear boundary at a point where existing trees in the neighbouring garden provide significant screening. Should this be considered an issue, the windows could be obscure glazed.
- 7.22 The second floor bedrooms have a front facing dormer window, but the outlook is moderated by the use of obscure glazing to the lower section to avoid loss of privacy to adjoining houses and gardens.
- 7.23 The nature of the private access road will limit public access, making a relatively secluded and private development.
- 7.24 The configuration of the development addresses the potential issues expressed in the Council's Development Management Policy and Policy for dealing with housing on backland sites.

Flood Risk

- 7.25 The proposal is not within a flood risk area and is not therefore likely to be at risk of flooding.

Drainage

- 7.26 The site has access to the existing mains drainage system for foul sewerage.
- 7.27 The Phase 1 Site Investigation and Preliminary Risk Assessment suggests that due to the nature of the site, it is unlikely that it will be suitable for a soakaway system of surface water drainage, but that soakaway testing is required to determine its suitability.
- 7.28 It is proposed that in accordance with National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Planning Guidance, a surface water drainage strategy will be designed according to current practices for Sustainable

Drainage Systems (SuDS) with construction of separate drainage systems for foul and surface water. This can be controlled through a planning condition.

Contamination

- 7.29 The attached Phase 1 Site Investigation and Preliminary Risk Assessment estimates that various risks are generally low and there is no indication that the site cannot be safely developed with appropriate precautions.

Wildlife

- 7.30 A preliminary bat survey of the existing building has been undertaken and concludes that no bat roosts or evidence of bats were identified during the assessment. The overall assessment categorises the building 'Low' potential for roosting bats.
- 7.31 A further survey is recommended in accordance with current guidelines in the form of a single emergence or return survey between May and August inclusive to determine presence/likely absence which will inform appropriate mitigation. This can be controlled by condition.

8 Other Material Considerations

- 8.1 The existing vacant building has a lawful business use (class E) which renders it capable of conversion to a dwelling (subject to a prior approval process) under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021, Class MA – commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses.
- 8.2 The building is structurally sound and of sufficient size and configuration to be converted, without external alteration, to a single dwelling. As such this represents a realistic fall-back alternative option, which is a material consideration against which the application should be considered.
- 8.3 By comparison, the proposed houses represent a far superior quality of development which responds positively to the site constraints and optimises the efficient use of this sustainable location.

9 Overall Planning Assessment and Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposal accords with the spatial strategy and represents a sustainable development. It will provide a quality addition to the family housing stock in a highly accessible location, at time of acute shortage.
- 9.2 The proposals have been substantially revised to address the concerns raised at the previous appeal and the informal comments of the Council. The development will transform the site and create a high quality attractive development which will protect the amenity of adjacent neighbours.
- 9.3 The proposed development would replace the existing non-conforming use, the uncontrolled continuation of which could otherwise occur. The proposed development also represents a far superior alternative to the fall-back conversion of the existing building to a dwelling.
- 9.4 By comparison to these alternatives, the proposed development along with the substantial landscaping, will enhance the character and appearance of the area and provide two much needed family homes suitable for the 21st century.
- 9.5 The development therefore meets the requirements of the Development Framework and should be approved.