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246, Palatine Road, Didsbury

Design and access statement



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Introduction

This design and access statement has been prepared in support of the planning application to be submitted to Manchester City Council for the demolition of the existing dormer bungalow and substantial out buildings at 246 Palatine Road, Didsbury and for its replacement with a new dormer bungalow.

Site description

The site at 246 Palatine Road sits at the southern edge of West Didsbury in the Green Belt between the villages of Didsbury and Northenden. The site is well screened by dense and mature vegetation to the rear and to both sides which would be retained as part of any development together with a high brick boundary wall and gates to the road frontage. Therefore there are not any long range views of the house as existing from any of the surrounding area. The site has a short frontage onto the main road and an existing direct vehicular access out onto Palatine Road.



Looking towards the site from the west



Looking at the site from the north



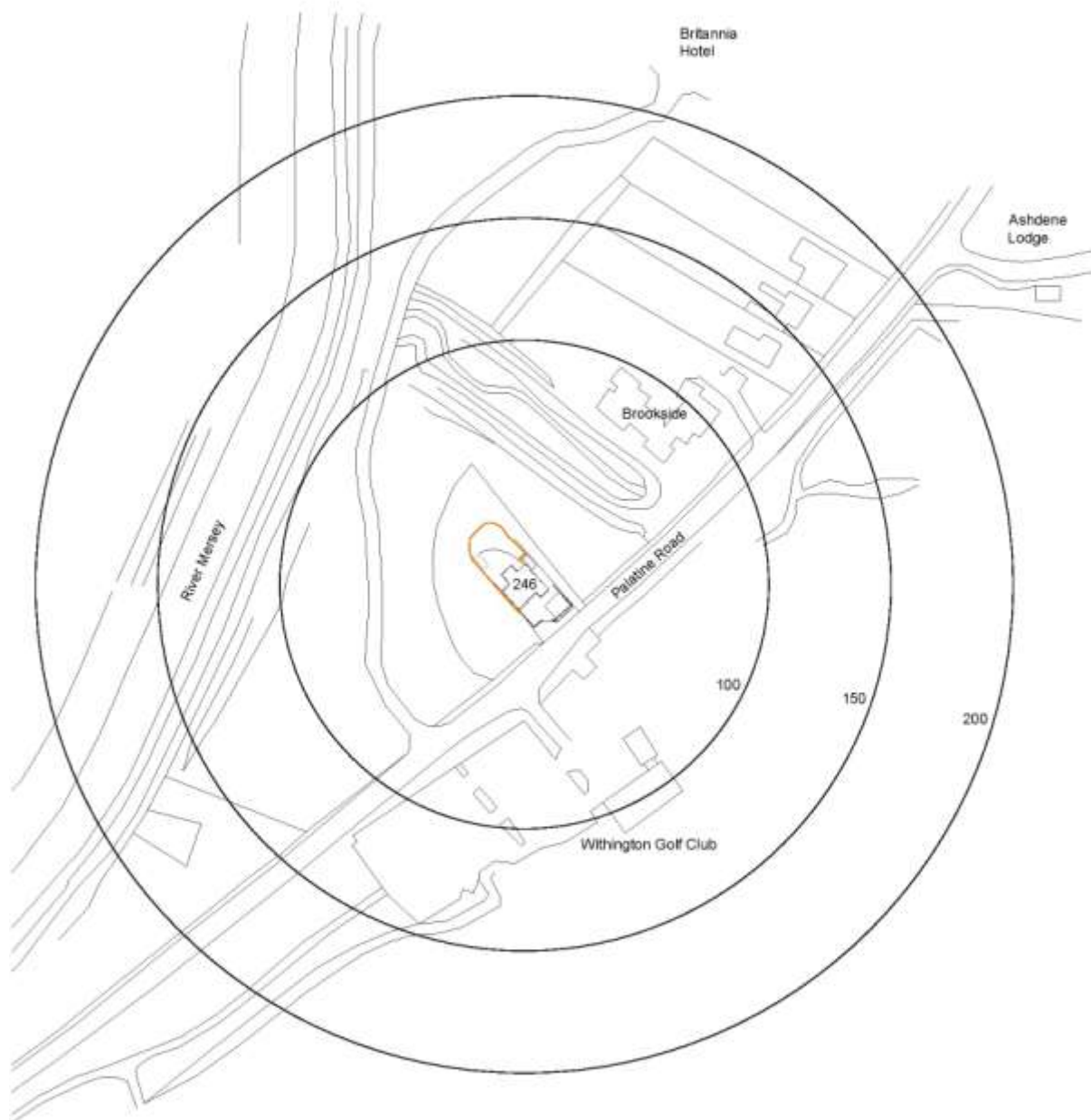
Looking at the site from the south



Looking at the site from Palatine Road

The existing dormer bungalow that currently occupies the site is in a detached villa style in facing brickwork with a concrete tiled pitched roof. The building has been previously adapted and extended over a protracted period of time. There is a large external pitched roof car port to the front of the building and a mixture of other ancillary buildings around the property.

The site is within a designated Flood Risk area but benefits from the extensive flood mitigation measures instigated by the Environment Agency in the immediate vicinity of the site. These measures include potential sacrificial flooding of the adjacent Golf Course when necessary. A detailed flood risk assessment has been undertaken by a specialist consultant STM Environmental and is included as part of this application. The recommendations of this report have informed the basis for the scheme design.



History

The current owners and applicants have lived in the house for over 40 years. Although the house has been altered and updated in that time the building is now in need of substantial improvement to meet their needs and the environmental standards expected of a sustainable 21st Century home. After some careful consideration it has been concluded that this can be best and most efficiently achieved by a new replacement dwelling.

A planning application was submitted in 2019 for an unashamedly contemporary flat roofed two story replacement dwelling house, ref 123909/FO/2019. This application was finally refused in May 2021.

The reason cited was ‘ the proposed development is located within the green belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development and where in the case of replacement buildings will only be allowed if they are in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. The proposal fails to meet the criteria for such development and would be harmful to the open character of the green belt and the Mersey Valley and is contrary to paragraph 145 and policies SP1 DM1 EN1 EN13 of the Core Strategy and saved UDP policies CB43 and CB44’

Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) provides strategic guidance on planning matters and forms a framework against which development plan policies and planning decisions can be made. It is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development, which has three overarching objectives: and economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. A presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.

In relation to the Green Belt, Paragraph 137 of NPPF states that the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 138 confirms the five purposes of the Green Belt are:

- (a) – To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
- (b) – To prevent neighbouring towns merging together
- (c) – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- (d) – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- (e) – To assist urban regeneration, but encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Paragraph 149 states that ‘a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt’. Exceptions to this exist however, including :

- (d) ‘...the replacement of a building providing that the building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

In terms of design NPPF places great importance on good design, which it states is ‘a key aspect of sustainable development’. Paragraph 130 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- (a)- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development
- (b) -Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- (c)- Are sympathetic to the local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, whilst not discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)
- (d)- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces and building types and materials to create attractive and welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.

(f)- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

(g)- Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Paragraph 134 states that 'in determining applications great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative design which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standards of design more generally in an area so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.

Manchester Core Strategy

The Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027 was adopted in July 2012 and forms part of the development plan for the city. Policy EN13 concerns the Green Belt and states that 'the extent of the Green Belt in Manchester will be amended in the vicinity of Manchester Airport...otherwise there will be no amendments to the Green Belt boundary to be effected through the Core Strategy'. There are no further Development Plan documents relating to the Green Belt policy.

The site falls within the defined South Manchester Area. Policy H6 relates to housing in South Manchester and states that 'outside the district centres priorities will be for housing which meets identified shortfalls, including family housing and the need that meets the need of elderly people, with scheme adding to the stock of affordable housing'.

Elsewhere within the Core Strategy, Policy EN1 Design Principles and Character Area states that 'all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above and have regard to the strategic character of the area in which the development is located.

Policy EN4 seeks to reduce carbon emissions by ensuring that new development follows the principals of the energy hierarchy, reducing the need for energy through design and energy efficient features. Policy EN6 provides a target framework for CO2 reductions.

Policy EN8 requires new developments to be adaptable to climate change in terms of design, layout and siting. This includes minimising flood risk by appropriate siting, drainage and treatment of surface water. Policy EN14 notes the requirements for a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This is detail further in the Flood risk assessment prepared by STM environmental included as supporting the application.

Manchester UDP

The Core Strategy replaced much of the Manchester UDP, although a few extant policies were 'saved' in July 2012 and remain extant. The site lies within the River Valleys Area, subject to Policy E3.4 of the UDP. The policy states that the Council 'will create a network of safe and attractive major linear recreational open spaces by linking and making better use of river valley canals and disused railways and other appropriate areas of open space. Within these areas measures will be taken to:

- (a)- Achieve widespread environmental improvements
- (b)- Protect the natural environment
- (c)- Improve water quality
- (d)- Improve access for pedestrians, disabled people, cyclists, and where appropriate horse riders.
- (e)- Protect and enhance wild life corridors

The Council will ensure that, in developing these recreational routes adequate measures are taken to safeguard the privacy of nearby residential properties.

Design Strategy

The argument for a replacement dwelling in practical terms is compelling but it is felt that we need to address the reasons for the refusal of the previous application. By way of its massing, composition and style the scheme was considered too strident for the location. The brief for this proposal was to create a design that was more sympathetic to the setting of the site and the existing form of the original building.

The proposal therefore is to replace the existing building with a new dormer bungalow with a more traditional treatment of the elevations. The ground floor is raised from the original as required by the recommendations of the Flood Risk Assessment and the first floor is hidden within the roof space and expressed through gables and dormers to the front and rear elevations.



Flood Risk

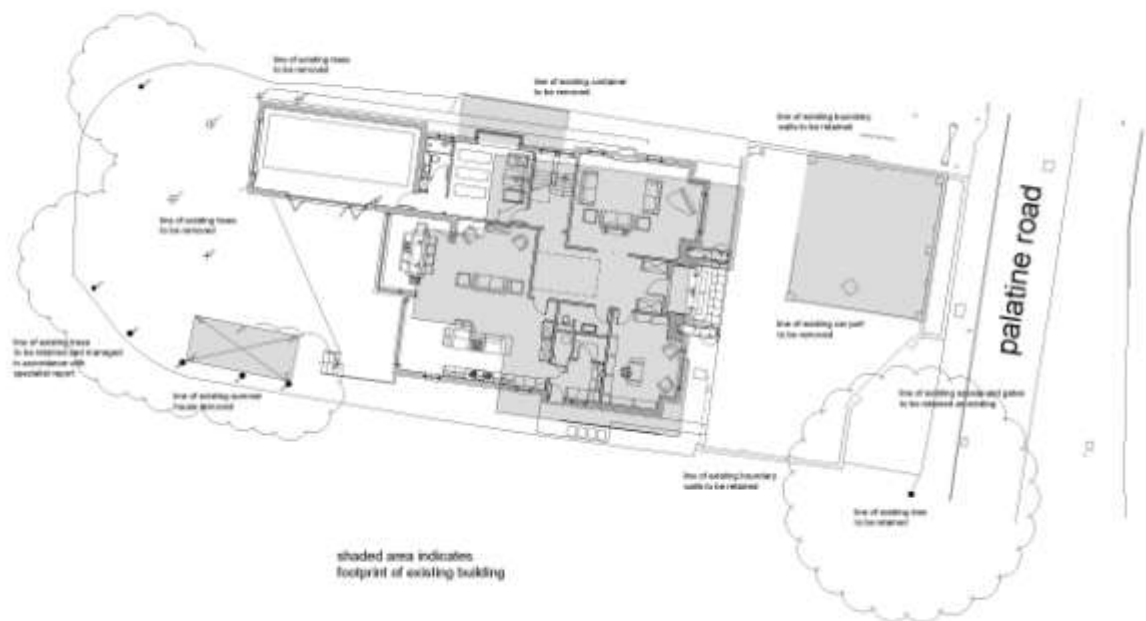
The site falls within Flood Risk Zone 3a and is considered 'vulnerable'. As such a detailed Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by STM Environmental and included as part of the supporting documentation included with this application.

The report reviews the most recent updated data on potential flood levels and recommends a proposed finished ground floor level of 30.35 which is some 1150mm above the surrounding existing ground level. The report notes that the existing Ground floor level is some 545mm below the projected level of a 1% flood event and would therefore be inundated. The report further mentions that this is made more critical because there are bedrooms at ground floor level.

The report sees a new build replacement as an opportunity to build a more resilient dwelling ensuring that the structural integrity is maintained after a flood event and that the drying out and cleaning required following inundation and before reoccupation is minimal.

This report demonstrates that the proposed development will be safe without increasing the flood risk elsewhere

Amount



Site plan as proposed

One of the exemptions to the presumption against building in the Green Belt outlined above is 'the replacement of a building providing that the building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.'

The proposal is for a replacement dwelling and therefore would be of the same use. The table below illustrates a comparison of the existing situation with the proposed both in terms the site coverage of the footprint of the existing and proposed structures as well as the usable floor areas.

By both interpretations the proposal is not materially larger than the existing accommodation and certainly within 130% of the existing.

246 Palatine Road Didsbury			
site area	680m2	680m2	
foot print comparison			
existing house foot print	194m2		
car port	66m2		
garden room	16m2		
container room	15m2		
existing house foot print - total		291m2	
proposed house foot print		287m2	
floor area comparison			
existing house			
ground floor	175m2		
first floor	44m2		
basement	144m2		
car port	66m2		
garden room	16m2		
container	15m2	416m2	
proposed house floor areas			
ground floor	254m2		
first floor	182m2	436m2	

Materials

The proposed palette of materials was chosen to be commensurate with the proposed style and form of the building and reflect the materials prevalent in Didsbury. The walls are suggested to be in a red/brown brick with the roof in natural grey slate tile.

Landscaping

The removal of the existing car port and the setting back of the building offers the opportunity to include some soft landscaping to the forecourt and replace the existing impermeable surfacing with a new permeable alternative. The existing boundary wall to the frontage is to be retained as it affords privacy to the dwelling from the busy Palatine Road.

The existing rear garden is overgrown and needs to be cleared to give more light to the rear of the house. All the trees to the boundaries are to be retained but some smaller species in the middle of the rear garden are to be removed. The trees to be removed are noted on the site plan.

A detailed soft landscaping scheme will be prepared by a specialist landscape architect prior to commencement of any works on site.

Sustainability

The existing house was of its time and constructed in the techniques and methods of the time. A replacement building offers the opportunity to substantially improve all measurable aspects of the sustainability of the building.

The new building by passive means can severely restrict the heat loss from the dwelling and limit the energy load required by the new house as a whole.

In addition, by careful selection of building materials and methods the new building can minimise the on and offsite environmental impact of the new development.

The reduced heating load offers the possibility of the inclusion of a low impact method of generation of heating and the environmental control of the proposed building and services. In addition the internal flat roof area offers an elevated area screened from outside the site for the location of an array of solar panels than can be easily accessed for cleaning and maintenance.

The proposal also includes two vehicle charging stations and the existing impermeable surfacing to the front of the building would be replaced with a permeable alternative.

Conclusion

The proposal as submitted presents a sympathetic replacement of the existing house that would sit further back from the road in the trees. The design fits comfortably with the character of the road, the surroundings and the Green Belt.

The benefits of the replacement of an existing building that is vulnerable to flooding and is environmentally inefficient with a new house that accommodates all the 21st century environmental virtues necessary to meet the Councils Core Strategy aspirations and is resilient to the inherent flood risks of the site are compelling.