



HERITAGE STATEMENT

**SILVERWOOD HOUSE
129 BARLOW MOOR ROAD
DIDSBURY
MANCHESTER**

**KATH LOWE
LUDLAM ASSOCIATES
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INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for full planning permission for residential development comprising a total of 17 dwelling units at Silverwood House, 129 Barlow Moor Road, West Didsbury, on behalf of the applicant Clearscript Limited.

The Heritage Statement is required as the site is adjacent to the Albert Park Conservation Area, with Barlow Moor Road forming the boundary. The Blackburn Park Conservation area lies on the eastern side of Palatine Road further from the application site. The Council has published Conservation Area Leaflets which briefly describe the history and character of these areas.

Silverwood House is not in a Conservation area, nor is it a Listed Building. However, it is an attractive building of some age (circa 1890) and may be considered as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

POLICY CONTEXT

This is repeated from the Planning Statement for ease of reference.

NATIONAL

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The main aims of the document are to outline that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

It explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- an economic role, contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- a social role, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role, contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The Framework re-iterates that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory status of the development plan remains as the starting point for decision making. However, paragraph 14 states

that 'at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and, in 'decision-taking', this means that development proposals should accord with the development plan should be approved without delay unless: Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

Core planning principles in the Framework - Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. In relation to the regeneration of this site and the surrounding neighbourhood, it seeks positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment as well as improving people's quality of life by:

Chapter 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes - Refers to the delivery of policies that will result in significant increases to the supply of housing. Policy 6 specifically states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Local planning authorities should, subject to a range of specified criteria, seek to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Chapter 7: Requiring good design - Reflects upon the importance of design to the built environment and its contribution to sustainable development and making places better for people.

Chapter 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - Refers to the delivery of policies to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment; and encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) provided that it is not of high environmental value.

Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment – sets out the criteria that should be taken into account when assessing the impact of development on heritage assets when determining planning applications.

The NPPF states that where proposed development accords with an up-to-date Local Plan it should be approved. The proposals would provide good quality residential accommodation in a predominantly residential area, does not harm the character of the area, and as there would not be any significant impacts on the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers and are in accordance with the up to date Core Strategy Development Plan Document and therefore accord with the main principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RELEVANT LOCAL POLICIES

CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012 and is the key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework (LDF). It replaces significant elements of the existing Unitary Development Plan as the document that sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester's future development, the Core Strategy is to be used as the framework that planning applications will be assessed against.

There are a number of relevant policies within the adopted Core Strategy relevant to the consideration of the current application, in summary these are set out below.

Policy **SP1** (Spatial Principles) - states that there should be a significant increase in high quality housing provision at sustainable locations throughout the City.

A further strategic objective is that the natural and built environment of the City should be protected and enhanced. Outside of the inner areas of the City, its Core Strategy provides emphasis upon increasing the availability of family housing with lower densities. It is a stated objective that 90% of residential development will be provided on previously developed land and take full advantage for the conversion of existing buildings. The design and density of housing schemes should contribute to the character of the local area and provide usable amenity space and provision for parking.

Priority will be given to bringing forward sites in close proximity of existing centres and high frequency public transport routes. Regard should be had to privacy of proposed and existing residents.

Policy **H6** (South Manchester) – provides that South Manchester will accommodate around 5% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy and that high density development will only be appropriate within District Centres as part of mixed use schemes. Outside the District Centres, priority will be for housing which meets identified shortfalls, including family housing.

Policy **EN1** (Design Principles) - requires that all development will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design and that opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes. The Strategy notes that within the Southern Character Area, there is a notable presence of older developments at key junctions and along historical radial routes such as Oxford Road, Wilmslow Road and Palatine Road. New development should seek to retain identity in such locations.

Policy **EN3** (Heritage) - provides that the Council will encourage development that compliments and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. The Policy provides that new developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving and where possible enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and

buildings of acknowledged importance including listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas.

SAVED POLICIES OF UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (UDP) FOR THE CITY OF MANCHESTER (1995)

The UDP is contained within the City Council's Local Development Scheme as a 'saved' document, and the following 'saved' policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

Policy **E3.3** (Enhancing the City's Environment) – seeks to upgrade the appearance of the City's major radial routes and orbital roads, including improvements to the appearance of adjacent premises. This proposal would retain and enhance a building and its setting which contributes to the visual amenities of the area, and would thereby upgrade the appearance of an important major route into Manchester.

Policy **DC18.1** (Conservation Area) – advises that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated Conservation Areas by carefully considering the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces and the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings. Consideration will be given to the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens and trees.

Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within current government policy; NPPF policies 127 and 128 (CLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2012). A key objective in the NPPF is '*the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation ...*' (NPPF Para. 126). The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation (policy 132). English Heritage issued *Conservation Principles* in 2008 to explain its philosophical approach to significance and managing change and identified four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. There are four levels of significance as well as neutral and an intrusive grade:

- **Exceptional Level of Significance**

The element is relatively intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the site. This would correspond to an individual grade I or II* listing. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

- **High Level of Significance**

A designated asset important at national and regional level, including Grade II listed buildings. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

- **Medium Level of Significance**

An undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including locally (non-statutory) listed buildings and those which make a positive contribution to a conservation area. (May include less significant parts of listed buildings). Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

- **Low Level of Significance**

Structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. Some historic fabric but limited evidence and makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is more scope for adaptation.

- **Neutral**

The element is historically unimportant but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. (May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area). The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

- **Intrusive**

Structure or feature which harms the value of or has a negative visual impact on a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SILVERWOOD HOUSE

Following the methodology for assessment of cultural significance set out in the English Heritage *Conservation Principles*, Silverwood House can be identified to have the following heritage values:

Evidential Value:

This building is an attractive example of domestic architecture of the late 19th Century, which has been subsequently altered and extended unsympathetically. However, it has been well maintained and is capable of continuing beneficial use

Historic Value:

There is no known historic association with any persons or events. The association with Moor Allerton School is interesting.

Architectural Value:

The building, as originally constructed, is not of sufficient quality to be Listed.

Aesthetic Value:

The original building is attractive, although subsequently its aesthetic value has been compromised.

It is concluded that Silverwood House is itself a MEDIUM level of significance. Similarly, the significance of the site as part of the setting of the Conservation Areas is a MEDIUM level of significance.

IMPACT ON SILVERWOOD HOUSE

The proposed development retains all the original built structures on the site, which are Silverwood House and The Coach House. The unsympathetic extensions are remodelled or removed entirely.

The external and internal alterations required for the conversion of Silverwood House have been designed to retain or reinstate original features and materials. The conversion has a POSITIVE impact on the Non-Designated Heritage Asset. The new-build elements have been designed following Pre-application Consultation with the South Area Planning team and are considered to have a POSITIVE impact on the setting of this Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

IMPACT ON THE SETTING OF THE ADJOINING CONSERVATION AREAS

The application site does not immediately abut either the Albert Park Conservation Area or the Blackburn Park Conservation Area but is separated by a wide road and a crossroads. The Design and Access Statement includes a full contextual analysis which demonstrates the impact the proposals will have on the streetscene. Whilst it is acknowledged that development will occur on what is currently an open part of the site, it is considered that this will have a NEUTRAL impact on the setting of these Conservation Areas.