DESIGN, ACCESS
AND
HERITAGE STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is prepared in support of a planning application which seeks Listed Building consent for works to be carried affecting the inside/interior of the Grade II listed building at No.15 Smedley Lane, Cheetham, Manchester. The statement aims to explain the reasons and necessity for the proposed works which, it is considered, have no detrimental impact on the character and historic significance of the listed building and are therefore in compliance with the relevant national/local planning policies.

1.2 In addition to this statement, the documents submitted in support of the application comprise the following:-

- A location plan with the application site marked as edged red: Scale 1:1250

- Drawings showing details of the existing ground floor layout, the front, rear and side elevations of the building: Scale 1:100

- Drawings showing details of the proposed ground floor layout, the front, rear and side elevations of the building: Scale 1:100

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 This application site relates to a Grade II listed semi-detached dwelling located at No.15 Smedley Lane, Cheetham, Manchester. According to the historical records, the dwelling was constructed around 1850 and first listed in 1974. The dwelling is attached to another dwelling at No. 13 Smedley Lane which is also a Grade II listed building.

2.2 The application dwelling comprises a two storey building with basement (the original house) and single/two storey outriggers attached to its rear elevation. The single/two storey outriggers are not part of the original house and are not therefore part of the listed structure. The dwelling enjoys the benefit of a reasonable sized garden in front and concrete yard to rear. The site premises is bounded by a 1.5m high stone wall with steel railings in front and full width 2m high metal gate to rear.

2.3 The surrounding area within which the site lies, is predominantly residential in character. On the opposite side of Smedley Lane is a church and churchyard with a primary school beyond. To the rear of the premises are terraced residential dwellings. Access to the property can be gained both from front and rear. Vehicular access to the premises can be made via the back lane through the rear metal gate.

3. THE LISTED BUILDING/HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 The two story original house (listed Grade II building) is constructed with solid red facing brickwork, with sandstone dressing and pitched roof clad in roofing slate. Roof lights have been inserted into the front and rear roof pitch. The architectural quality of the building is concentrated on the front elevation where Flemish bond brickwork is laid with fine joints and eaves defined by wood modillioned cornice. The first floor is emphasised by a moulded stone sill band and windows with flat brick arched heads. The front doorway has stone pilastered doorcase, dentilled cornice, pediment, panelled door and rectangular overlight. There is a tall stone canted bay window (to the right) with pilasters, dentilled cornice, blocking course,

3.2 Internally, although the listed building has been subject to various alterations by way of re-plastering of walls and replacing the original floorboards, however much of the original plan-form is intact and the original features such as chimney breasts remain in place.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The following planning applications are considered relevant to the proposed development.

Planning application 078203/FH/2006/N1:
Erection of boundary treatment to front and rear.
Withdrawn on 24 May 2007.

Planning application 078204/LO/2006/N1:
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT. Installation of replacement windows and rear door, together with erection of boundary treatment to front and rear.
Withdrawn on 24 May 2007.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 The application is for a listed building consent to carry out internal works involving:

a) Removal of an internal wall & installation of a bi-folding door

A section of the loadbearing wall between the two front rooms would be removed and the resulting wall opening fitted with a bi-folding door. The bi-folding door would run on a track the full length of the opening in the wall and would fold to the left of the opening when open fully. The bi-folding door would be timber 5 door shaker style glazed door, approximately 224cm high and 320cm wide. The wall separating the front rooms forms part of the listed structure.

b) Refurbishment /renovation of the existing kitchen at the ground floor.

This would involve replacement of the existing kitchen fittings with new ones, carrying out necessary plumbing and electrics works and making good of the affected sections of the floorboards and walls. The kitchen forms part of the listed building.

c) Refit/renovation of the existing bathroom at the ground floor.

This would involve replacement of the existing bathroom fittings with new ones, carrying out necessary plumbing and electrics works and making good of the affected sections of the floorboards and internal walls. The bath room forms part of the extension to the original house and therefore is not listed.

6. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The central theme to the NPPF is to achieve sustainable development. The Government states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: an economic role, a social role and an environmental role (paragraphs 6 & 7).

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF goes on to state that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation:

> "*…to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system"*

Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment as well as in people's quality of life. This includes making it easier for jobs to be created in cities.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the NPPF outline a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". This means approving development, without delay, where it accords with the development plan.

Paragraph 126 of the Framework stipulates that local planning authorities should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Paragraph 128, requires developers to identify any heritage assets which may be impacted by a proposed development and describe its significance, including any contribution to that significance that may be made by the asset's setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to asset's significance and should allow the planning authority to understand potential impacts to that significance.

Paragraph 129 states Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 131 states 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.

Paragraph 132 goes on to state 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. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 133 states that 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.

Paragraph 134 states 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.

Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

The Development Framework

The principal document within the Local Development Framework is the Manchester Core Strategy which sets out the spatial vision for the City and includes strategic policies for development during the period 2012 – 2027.

The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents.

The following policies of the Core Strategy are considered relevant:

Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles): Refers to the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester together with core development principles. It is stated that developments in all parts of the city should create well designed places which enhance or create character, make a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents, consider the needs of all members of the community and protect and enhance the built environment. Further development should seek to minimise emissions, ensure the efficient use of natural resources, reuse previously developed land wherever possible, improve access to jobs, services and open space and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

Policy DM 1(Development Management): States that new development should have regard to more specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within supplementary planning documents. Issues include: the appropriate siting and appearance of development, the impact upon the surrounding area, the effects on amenity, accessibility, community safety and crime prevention, health, the adequacy of internal accommodation and amenity space and refuse storage/collection.

Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage): Seeks to secure the design of new buildings to the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The policy emphasises the need to preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments

Policy EN3 (Heritage): States that throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester

The following saved policies of the UDP are considered relevant to the proposal.

Policy 19 (LISTED BUILDINGS)

Policy DC19-1: States that in determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

a. not grant Listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;
b. not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
c. not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
d. seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;
e. permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;

f. not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 As stated above, the application premises comprises a listed Grade II building which, due to its distinctive architectural features, plays a significant contribution to the historic character of the adjacent listed buildings and the area. The building makes a positive contribution to the street scene in the area and complements adjoining buildings in terms of scale, form and proportion.

7.2 Although the listed building, in terms of the scale and proportions of the front and side elevations including the arrangements of entrance door and window openings remain unaltered, however some alterations affecting its exterior and interior have taken place over a period of time. These alterations include the installation of upvc window frames, provision of railings on top of the boundary wall in front, a large metal gate to rear boundary, re-plastering of the interior walls, replacement of floor boards etc. The applicants believe that although these alterations, due to their scale and proportions, are minor and have no unduly unacceptable impact on the historic significance of the building, nevertheless in order to improve and enhance the architectural significance and historic heritage of the building, it is necessary that some the features such as the window frames, railings and gate in front, rear metal gate etc, are altered/amended. The applicants are committed and wish to bring about these changes as soon as possible.

7.3 In view of these considerations, the applicants have worked out a schedule of works which they believe, if carried out satisfactorily, would not only help enhance the historic heritage of the building but would also enable the building to be used more efficiently to their satisfaction. However, for practical reasons and due to financial constraints, all the envisaged works cannot be carried out concurrently. They must therefore be phased out and scheduled accordingly. The proposed works, the subject of this application, constitute phase 1 of the envisaged works. The listed building consent/ planning permission for the remainder works would be sought out later.

IMPACT ON THE HERITAGE ASSETS

7.4 It should be emphasised that both the national and local planning policies stress upon the desirability of sustaining, preserving and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and to avoid new development which could have detrimental impact on the integrity of the listed buildings. Policy DC19 (Listed Buildings) of the UDP emphasises this point and states that in dealing with planning applications for listed building consent or for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the

desirability of preserving the building or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This point is also strongly echoed under policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 131 and 132 of the NPPF.

THE PROPOSED WORKS

7.5 The proposed works involve internal alterations affecting the interior of the listed building and its extension. The impact of the proposed alterations is discussed as follows:

A) Removal of the internal wall & installation of a bi-folding door

7.6 Currently the front two rooms are separated with a loadbearing internal solid brick wall. The rooms form part of the original house and are therefore listed as part of the Grade II structure. It appears that over years the original plaster has been removed and walls of the rooms re-plastered. Similarly floorboards appear to have been replaced. Although the rooms contain some decorative features such as skirting boards, plaster ceiling cornices etc, however, it is not clear whether they are the original features when the building was listed.

7.7 Due to the internal layout and relationship of the front rooms with other rooms in the house, the applicants have some practical difficulties concerning their utility and accessibility. They believe that the rooms are too small, provide a restricted use and are not easily accessible from other parts of the house. They feel that if the separating wall between the rooms is removed, this would result in the creation of a spacious floor area which the family could use for multiple purposes at a time. The applicants believe that the removal of the internal wall would help create more space enabling the house to be used more efficiently.

7.8 As shown on the submitted drawings, the wall opening would be supported with a steel girdle/beam to be designed to the Structure Engineer's design and specifications and in accordance with the Building Regulations approval. The girdle/beam would be covered with skimmed plaster work coving. The wall opening would be made good by using materials (plastering/painting) to match the existing. The proposed bi-fold door would be approximately 224cm high and 320cm wide and would run on a track the full length of the opening in the wall.

7.9 The internal wall is constructed in brick and its removal would result in the removal of a section of the skirting boards in both rooms. Whilst it is not clear whether the skirting boards in the rooms are "the original features" however, it is considered that the removal of a section of the wall and skirting boards would have no or minimal detrimental impact on the heritage aspects of the listed building.

B) Refurbishment of the kitchen

7.10 The kitchen forms part of the listed building (original house) and therefore must hold some heritage significance or historical interest. The heritage interest of the room must be portrayed by the original works/features such as plaster, floorboards, ceiling cornices etc. From the inspection of the site, it appears that the room has been re-plastered and original floorboards re-placed. As such currently the room contains no original plaster or floorboards and therefore has little historical interest attached to it. In view of the fact that most of the fabric identifying the historical significance of the room has been lost, it is considered that the proposed refurbishment of the kitchen involving fixing of new units, moving the radiator, electrics/ plumbing works would have no or minimal impact on the historical interest of the kitchen. It is considered that the proposal would result in the provision of a modern kitchen without having any detrimental impact on the historical interest of the structure.

C) Refurbishment of the bathroom

7.11 The existing bathroom is part of the rear extension which is not listed and holds no heritage significance or historical interest. The proposed refurbishment, apart from providing necessary bathroom fittings, would involve electrics/plumbing works which it is considered, would have no impact on the adjoining listed part of the structure. To preserve and enhance the historic significance of the building, every endeavour would be made to ensure that any pipe works on the outside of the bath would be complimentary and matching both in terms of materials and texture to that of the listed building.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The applicants are committed to preserve and enhance the heritage significance of the application site. They are therefore anxious to carry out certain works which would not only help achieve that objective but also enable the dwelling to be used more efficiently to satisfy the daily needs of the family.

8.2 The proposed internal works are part of a schedule of works which the applicants intend to carry out over a period of time. As explained above, due to their nature and scale, the proposed works are considered appropriate and would have no or minimal impact on the historic significance of the listed building. It is considered that the proposed works are in accordance with the advice/guidance provided in paragraphs 131/132 of the NPPF, policies CC9, EN3 of the Core Strategy, and saved policy DC19.1 of the UDP.