THE REDEVELOPMENT OF NEEDHAM HALLS, PALATINE ROAD, DIDSBURY, MANCHESTER



PLANNING - DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
in support of proposed revisions to
Block C.
Amending the approved design from
14 apartments including 6 duplex and 8 single level apartments
to
16 single level apartments.
(Revision A)

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Introduction and Planning History

Outline planning permission was granted in July 2005 (Ref: 064199/OO/SOUTH2/02) for the 'redevelopment of existing university accommodation comprising erection of 48 apartments and houses following demolition of existing buildings'.
The outline permission establishes the number; size (footprint) and siting for new build development on the site. The approved outline design required the removal of the existing 1950-1960's Halls of Residence and the construction of 42 new build apartments and 6 new build houses, all to be built in six distinct blocks to the east / south east of the site. Manchester City Council planners revised its policy with regard to the mix of tenancy on the site, due to the high number of apartments in the Didsbury area, and changed it in favour of the provision of family houses. The outline application established the height of the development by indicating the number of storey for each of the six blocks, the two blocks nearest to the Main Hall to the south and east being two storey, the two blocks bounding the southern edge of the site being three storey and the two blocks to the east of the site facing onto Holme Road being 4 storey.

Full planning approval was granted in 2007 (082214/FO/2007/02) which consisted of the conversion of the Main Hall into 11 apartments, and the construction of six distinct blocks set within the existing mature landscape, in keeping with the large houses in the Didsbury Area. Four of the blocks were three storey, with one 3.5 storey and another 4 storey. Block C is the 4 storey block nearest to the corner of Holme and Spath Road.

The proposed revisions to Block C

Block C is the largest new build blocks within the current approval. It consists of 6 duplex apartments / town houses, and 8 single level apartments, 4 on each of the upper floors, 14 units in total. Each of the 6 duplex apartments would have its own separate entrance / front door. Each would also have its own patio / back garden area facing on to Holme Road. Despite each of these units having separate entrances we have been advised that each unit would not be viewed as a town house by potential purchasers, because they have apartments above them. If they are not viewed as town hoses they are ostensibly just large two bedroom duplex apartments which are too large for this market. Each of the eight upper two bedroom apartments are roughly two thirds the size the two bedroom duplex apartments below with the same number of rooms. We have been advised these duplex units do not have the required distinctiveness and are therefore too large and simply will not sell.
Our revised design proposal removes the duplex units and merely duplicates the approved layout of the two upper floors on to the two lower floors. Both the footprint and the volume of the building will not change from that of the approved block C. The only changes proposed are to the facades and internal layout of the lower floors. The building will remain in the same contemporary vernacular style of the approved design and will also be constructed from the same approved pallet of materials.

Design for Access

Each of the new apartments will now be accessed through a single common entrance lobby and a roughly central corridor for each floor. The whole building will be served by a single lift and stair. Level access and wheelchair accessibility will thus be provided to all

accommodation from main entrance to front door. Each apartment front door and all fire exits will have a minimum clear opening of 850mm to comply with Manchester's DDA requirements.
Internally each of the apartments will have the following to ensure the accessibility requirements: One bedroom within each unit will be capable of having a clear 1500mm turning circle enabling wheelchairs to turn. Each apartment will have the capability for its bathroom to be enlarged through minor building works into one suitable to meet the DDA requirements. All bathroom doors will open out. Each kitchen will have 1800mm turning circle capability.
The architects have also designed within the mandatory requirements of Part B and M of the Building Regulations which include requirements to ensure that facilities are provided for people, including those with disabilities, to access, exit and move around inside buildings. They also adapt designs to meet, as far as possible, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Lifetime Homes' standards for adaptability and flexibility in the design of residential units. This meets with the PPS1 requirement for 'high quality inclusive design for all developments and individual buildings, public and private spaces in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

Sustainability

The pre-assessment report submitted as an appendix to our 2007 approval documents, indicated that a rating of 'very good' would be achieved in BREEAM assessments. In April 2007 the DCLG 'Code for Sustainable Homes' replaced Eco-Homes for the assessment of new housing developments and we are working towards achieving level 3 within this Code as part of the conditions for the original application. As such we feel no further pre-assessment is required for this application.

Trees and Landscape

With neither the location, footprint nor volume changing, clearly this new design will not affect the existing trees beyond that which is established within the approved design. Our approved proposal for replacement trees will also not be affected by these design proposals.
The 2007 planning approval was supported by a Tree Survey recording the age and condition of all the existing trees and we feel in light of the above there is no need to update this document.

Boundary Treatments

We are proposing no changes to the outer boundary treatment to Spath or Holme road from the approved details contained in our 2007 planning consent. Internal fences will be reduced because there are only four units with ground floor access in the new proposed design as apposed to six in the approved design.

Secured by Design/Crime Impact Statement

We consulted with Mr Steve Elsden, the Architectural Liaison Officer for Greater Manchester Police Crime Prevention Unit, on the requirements of the 'Secured by Design' and the crime and Impact Statement. The original approved proposals for the layout and design of the development took on board this advise. Our changes proposed

to Block-B do not contradict that advice and therefore we feel no further consultation is necessary.

Conclusion

The site has been vacant for some time following the demolition of the former halls of residents. The mature trees to Holme Road will not be affected by the changes proposed to Block C. We also feel the addition of two extra units will not materially affect the car parking provision for the whole site. The Needham Hall site is well served by public transport and is within walking distance of a range of local services in West Didsbury.
The reduction in size of the apartments will obviously reduce the price which will not only make the units more saleable but will also bring them within the range of young families.
The completion of the scheme will enhance the residential character and the visual quality of the surrounding area, for the benefit of the existing and incoming residential occupiers. The proposals have been the subject of pre-application consultations with officers of the City Council and discussions. In our view the revisions to block C accords with the previous planning approval and with local, regional and national policies that support the sustainable development of previously developed land and buildings.