DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

WEST WYTHENSHAWE YOUTH CENTRE
MOOR ROAD
BROOKLANDS
M23 9BQ

On Behalf of

KETUMATI BUDDHIST VIHARA TRUST
(REGISTERED CHARITY 1078173)

REF: FPSI-BPP-C-0542

30 JULY 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Design and Access Statement is provided in support of a full planning application, submitted on behalf of Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Trust (The Client), for the acquisition of a 200 year lease for a site located off Moor Road in the Brooklands ward of Manchester. The proposed Lease will be between Manchester City Council and the Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Trust.

1.2 Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Trust envisages using the premises as the new 'Ketumati Buddhist Vihara'; a place of worship dedicated to the practice of Buddhism.

1.3 The Client is proposing to restore and refurbish the property primarily as a Buddhist Temple (place of Worship) with ancillary living accommodation for three resident monks, whilst also undertaking minor external modifications to the property.

1.4 The site measures approximately 0.284 ha (0.57 acres). The building has formerly been occupied by 'Wythenshawe Youth Centre', and currently is vacant.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is located off Moor Road, via a single access point from the west.

2.2 The site comprises a vacant building, hard standing, which is used primarily for access, circulation, and car parking, and soft landscaping.

2.3 The vacant property is situated to the east of the site at the end of a long driveway. The two storey building was constructed circa 1960. The property is built with cavity masonry walls, and the ground and upper floors are of concrete construction.

2.4 The building is in a state of disrepair as a result of long-term vacancy and a degree of vandalism. This is having a detrimental visual impact upon the area and the amenity of the local residents. The site left in its current state without the level of proposed development will continue to deteriorate.

2.5 The site is surrounded almost exclusively by residential development, mostly new build and comprises a mixture of housing types including bungalows to the northwest, larger detached houses immediately north and a range of house types to the south.

2.6 The east and south boundaries are principally of a retaining brick wall structure with timber panel fencing approximately 3.0m in height, while the boundary to the west is demarcated by established vegetation growth and several mature trees. The boundaries give good enclosure and separation from the adjoining residential properties.

3.0 DESIGN

3.1 The application seeks consent for the alteration and conversion of a vacant youth centre to a religious use as a Buddhist Temple, place of worship and meeting place, incorporating accommodation capacity for three resident monks and an occasional visiting monk, with ancillary living and welfare facilities.

3.2 The Client's intention is to refurbish the existing property, predominantly retaining the majority of the existing internal configuration and layout. There will be total segregation between the living accommodation at first floor (mezzanine) and the primary temple use (ground floor), with the passive upgrade of the sub-dividing internal partitions to provide fire rating and fire doors working in conjunction with a new Class A zoned fire alarm. Independent first floor residential access will be created by removing the main stair from the mezzanine area near the entrance and creating new stairs where the female sanitary provisions currently exist. A new entrance to the residential accommodation will be created in the west facing gable elevation. The visibility of the property from the public highway is minimal and the proposed residential accommodation to first floor will provide no loss of amenity or privacy to adjacent properties.

3.3 Pursuant to the Change of Use of the property, some external alterations are proposed, including the formation of a new entrance door and window opening on the north facing elevation, insertion of a new roof light on the north roof slope and extension of the left hand side dormer window on the south facing elevation. There will also be modifications to the window openings on the west facing gable elevation to suit the proposed internal configuration.

3.4 The north, south and west facing elevations will be given additional emphasis by the application of full height render, painted off white or magnolia. A Buddhist symbol will be fixed to the west elevation combined with stainless steel 3D lettering.

3.5 All dormer windows are to be replaced with modern uPVC equivalents with larger glazing panels to maximise the internal daylight, making the interior more attractive for both the Temple and residential accommodation.

3.6 It is proposed that the main roof metal cladding is replaced with grey concrete interlocking tiles, incorporating new insulation and vapour control measures. All rainwater goods will be replaced with uPVC equivalents. Timber eaves soffits are rotten in places and require repairs prior to redecoration.

3.7 Roller shutters will be introduced to the existing and proposed entrances to improve site security, and are intended to prevent ongoing vandalism. The existing security grilles to ground floor windows will be retained. New windows would be white uPVC to match the existing windows, with new security grilles.

3.8 The substantial capital investment will significantly improve the aesthetics of the building and the changes to the external facade are thought to be subtle and unobtrusive.

3.9 The external parking area will be reorganised to accommodate additional parking spaces as illustrated on the site layout plan.

3.10 The existing trees and planting with high amenity and ecological value will be retained.

3.11 Lighting will be an important component for safety and security reasons. External entrances will be defined by wall mounted lights. Car park areas and the private approach road will require low level illumination to enhance the security and safety provision.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 The proposals have been discussed in some detail through pre-application consultation with the Wythenshawe area Manchester City Council Planning Officer. Consideration has been given to the proposal's impact upon existing level of residential and visual amenity and pedestrian/highway safety.

4.2 It is considered that the development provides regeneration benefits by bringing a vacant building into an effective and sustainable long term use. As the property has been vacant for a number of years and has fallen victim to vandalism it is considered that its reuse and physical improvement will enhance the levels of visual amenity in the area. It is considered that the re-use of the building will also improve levels of natural surveillance in the vicinity.

4.3 The site is within the area covered by the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for Wythenshawe. In line with the City Council's sustainable communities and wider regeneration objectives, one objective of the SRF is to make Wythenshawe the location of choice for existing and new residents. The proposed use has meaningful benefits to the community, including:

- Buddhism is a religion of peace, advocating unconditional love and compassion for all sentient (feeling) beings. It is a way of practice and a way of life in which people abide by moral and ethical principles, exercise patience, tolerance, sympathy, humility, compassion and kindness, create understanding and render selfless service; qualities any community would benefit regardless of race or faith.

- The Vihara would provide facilities as Centre for Meditation open to the Public and advocate contemplative, tranquil stress free way of life through active Buddhist Meditative practice by experienced Monks; designed and tailored to individual needs.

- To organise facilitate and enhance cultural activities with emphasis on fostering and promoting shared values and morals between different communities; so creating bridging links and alliances.

- The Vihara would participate in youth programs, incorporating education in self discipline and psychological and mental stability of youth, and acceptance of civic responsibilities as useful citizens of the community.

- The Client would be delighted to engage with any member of the local community who wishes to learn more about Buddhism and visit the Temple facilities based upon their own initiative.

4.4 The premises will be occupied by 3 resident monks. The general daily routine involves accepting arms (offerings of food and other essentials) from devotees and benefactors in the morning and at noon. Generally a family or two will bring in arms (offerings) during the day. Further few visitors could be expected for meditation and discussions in the evening. These will take place inside the premises.

- On a weekly basis small meditation groups of about 10 to 15 individuals will meet on Wednesdays and Sundays from 7:30pm - 9:00pm (approximately). The meditation will be conducted indoors usually in the shrine room.

- On every 2nd Sunday of the month from 2:00pm – 5:00 pm (approximately). there will be programme for children. Approximately 25-30 children of the age 3-13 years accompanied by their parents attend the temple to practice the Buddhist way of life. This children's programme will be held in the shrine room and other ancillary rooms within the building.

- A Monthly Sermon; a talk in relation to Buddhist practice delivered by a monk will be held every first Saturday of the month from 7:30 to 9:00 pm (approximately) in the shrine room. According to past experience about 30-35 people participate in this monthly event.

- It is envisaged that two annual events of the Buddhist calendar will be conducted within the premises, namely; *Wesak* which falls within the month of May, to commemorate the birthday, enlightenment and passing away of Buddha, and; *Katina*, to mark the end of rainy retreat (a precept observed by monks for duration of three months), which falls on a day within the month of October. On these occasions devotes will congregate to make offerings to monks and to meditative contemplation. These occasions are always celebrated at a weekend from about 9:30 am to 5:00 pm (approximately), minimising traffic related issues, and according to past experience these infrequent gatherings would only amount to approximately 50/60 people for *Wesak* and approximately 100 people for *Katina*.

4.5 The Client engages in quiet forms of worship, therefore the proposed use of the building will provide much greater peace and tranquillity to the local amenities of the properties and residents, in contrast to the previous use as a youth centre.

4.6 The most relevant sustainability objective is to reduce any need to travel by car. The location of the site is highly sustainable in terms of its accessibility by public transport services. A good transport system operates close to the site with access to the city centre and Wythenshawe town centre. Transport services will be further improved with the opening of the new Metrolink extension from the city centre to Manchester airport. The route will travel along Moor Road with a new stop at the junction of Moor Road and the A560 Altrincham Road. In this instance the site is considered sustainable for its intended use because of its excellent location to transport links. Car sharing is an established feature of use of the present Temple in Oldham, and this is predicted to continue. Safe and well located cycle parking will also be provided.

4.7 The proposed Buddhist Centre will be a valuable and sought after resource for Wythenshawe and the premises is an ideal location, convenient to public transport.

5.0 ACCESS

5.1 Vehicular access to the development is derived from Moor Road making use of the existing access into the site. The access point is to be protected by electrically operated gates. Visitors may gain access to the car park by contacting residents or management from the call system that will be mounted alongside the gates.

5.2 It is not considered that the proposed use will prove detrimental to current levels of pedestrian and highway safety. There will be modifications to improve the parking provision within the curtilage of the site, including a designated disabled parking bay along with sufficient maneuvering space. All parking spaces will be marked out with painted lines. Sufficient parking has been provided and good public transport services available in the vicinity will be sufficient for the need of the development. A review of traffic management has been undertaken with a view to properly marking the traffic flow via a one-way system.

5.3 The design of the proposal is in accordance with Approved Document M 2004 'Access to and the use of Buildings'. There will be two main entrances to the building on the north and south side elevations, with full wheelchair access to the main entrance lobby. A designated disabled car parking bay will be provided, and a disabled toilet inside the building at ground floor level.

5.4 Fire exit signs will be specified and placed in the appropriate locations. A comprehensive fire exit strategy will also be drawn up by the Temple management team.

APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: West facing elevation.



Photo 2: South facing elevation.



Photo 3: East facing elevation.



Photo 4: North facing elevation



Photo 5: Internal view of existing main hall.



Photo 6: Internal view of existing main hall.



Photo 7: Metal roof covering.



Photo 8: Adjacent residential developments; south west.



Photo 9: Adjacent residential developments; south east.



Photo 10: Retaining brick wall and timber fencing; south and east boundaries.



Photo 11: Deterioration of dormer windows.



Photo 12: Retain metal security grilles to ground floor windows.



Photo 13: Deteriorated fascia boards.



Photo 14: Decayed barge board.



Photo 15: One way traffic route.



Photo 16: One way traffic route.



Photo 17: North boundary line.



Photo 18: Adjacent residential properties to the north.



Photo 19: West facing gable elevation.



Photo 20: Access off Moor Road.



Photo 21: Access off Moor Road.



Photo 22: Existing mezzanine level where residential accommodation is proposed.