Design and Access Statement
For Proposed new Dwellings,
at 30 & 32 Humphrey Street, Manchester M8 9JR
for Sohail Sabir

19th June 2008

Design Assessment

30 and 32 Humphrey Street are an existing adjacent pair of semi detached houses, currently the dwellings occupied by Mr Sabir and his parents and sisters.

Physical

The properties are two storey and of similar character to other semi detached properties in the area on that side of Humphrey Street.

At some time in the past the loft space of number 30 has been converted to provide an extra bedroom at 2nd floor level, with a rooflight introduced at the rear, and accessed via an internal ladder stair rising from 1st floor level.

The external walls are red facing bricks to the front elevation, with the remainder of the property built in red/brown brindled commons. A timbered and rendered gable to the front elevation rises above the two sets of bay windows.

There are painted concrete/ stone lintels, sills, and posts forming architectural dressings to the front elevation.

The roof to number 30 is in red clay pantiles, and the roof to number 32 has been replaced in the distant past in grey brown profiled concrete interlocking tiles.

Humphrey Street slopes up to the South, ie climbing in the direction from number 32 to number 30. The site itself slope down from Humphrey Street to the rear of the property, and along the rear boundary the land drops on average a further 1350mm or so across a rear retaining wall to the gardens of the properties at the rear.

The combination of street and floor levels means that there is a steep ramp plus entrance steps up to the front door of number 32, whereas the ground rises from the entrance steps to number 30 towards the street.

The properties have fallen into a state of some disrepair and are in need of refurbishment and structural repair work. Considerable settlement has occurred in the past which has led to as much as 100mm drop in the floor level at the rear of number 32, 50mm at the rear of number 30, and a drop of 25mm from the entrance to number 30 to the entrance to number 32.

The roof has spread and pushed the external walls out of true in some places by as much as 17mm horizontal spread in 1000mm vertical run.

Horizontal displacement of up to 15mm out to the side, and 10mm out to the rear has occurred, particularly at the rear side of number 32.

There are considerable area of structural cracking and failing lintels both externally and internally.

Ground investigations have shown there is significantly deeper filled ground than might be expected, extending to 3.0 to 5.0 metres depth at the rear building line with generally soft clay with occasional firm pockets beneath. The bearing capacity is poor to considerable depth

indicating a need to take foundations down to at least between about 9.5m and 12.0m to prevent further movement, making conventional footings to any extension inappropriate, and indicating the need for piled foundations, which would not be feasible below the existing structure.

Special Needs

Mr Sabir was injured in a road traffic accident which has left him severely disabled, and generally unable to negotiate normal stairs on a daily basis, although on 'good days' he can manage short flights of suitably designed 'ambulant standard' stairs with resting places. At other times he will need to be able to make use of a wheelchair, and needs to be able to reach the passenger seat of his car (driven by others) by wheelchair undercover, with level access. He therefore needs his own dwelling to be on a single level. He now requires the assistance of a carer who needs bedroom accommodation at the property. He also requires special facilities to adequately meet his needs which are out of the range of normal housing and cannot be adequately met within the envelope and structural limitations of a semi detached two storey property.

Mr Sabir's parents and their daughters continue to need the usual range of family accommodation, separate to Mr Sabir's home, although reasonably accessible to him on 'good days' when he may wish to visit them.

An analysis of the spaces required for Mr Sabir's dwelling and his parents dwelling, showed that a suitable solution could be achieved by demolishing the existing two dwellings and rebuilding in the form of a ground floor flat for Mr Sabir, and a first floor flat with bedrooms and bathroom facilities at second floor for his parents and sisters as a second dwelling, although some extension to the existing area of the dwellings would be needed.

Use

The building forms two existing dwellings, and this use will continue. There is no change in the number of dwellings proposed in that it is proposed to demolish two dweliings and build two replacement dwellings.

Layout and Pre Application Planning Consultation

Various layouts were considered with larger areas of extension, and after discussion with planning officers the proposed layout was evolved to meet the advised planning criteria.

The principle of providing the accommodation as a ground floor flat extending back beyond the line of the original property, but otherwise generally within the footprint of the existing building, and with a second dwelling accessed at first floor with bedroom and bathroom accommodation at second floor partly within the roof space was confirmed to be an acceptable solution by the planning officer consulted. He also confirmed that the principle of adjusting existing ground levels to provide level access from a garage and a set down position at the front of the ground floor flat, was acceptable.

It was originally proposed to place the entrance to the ground floor flat (number 32) centrally between the two sets of bay windows, and provide independent gables over each set of bays. This had the advantage of placing the hall to the ground floor flat centrally to provide efficient circulation to rooms on either side.

This arrangement was considered unsuitable by the planning officer consulted, and we were requested to rearrange the position of entrance hall and bay windows so that the entrances would be at either end of the front elevation with the bay windows between linked by a single gable, similar to the existing arrangement.

This has been adopted in the present proposal, although it has generated a considerable amount of additional circulation space at the expense of usable accommodation.

In the original proposals, the single storey projection to the side of the kitchen of number 30 had not been replicated. It was indicated by the planning officer that the building footprint should be extended to this line to emulate this single storey projection, and this has been incorporated in the present proposals.

The original proposals incorporated gables to each end of the property to provide adequate headroom above stairs, and reasonable headroom within other rooms within the roof space. It was indicated by the planning officer that these gables were unacceptable and that the property should be hipped at each end. The stair has been redesigned to accommodate the hipped roof requested, however, to maintain adequate headroom it has been necessary to incorporate a rooflight over the head of the stairs.

The original scheme took advantage of the fact that the property sat between similar properties with progressively higher ridge and eaves height as one moved up the hill, and had increased the ridge and eaves height somewhat to provide reasonable headroom in the rooms in the roof space. This was considered inappropriate by the planning officer who asked that the ridge and eaves be reduced to be similar to that originally in the existing building. This has been adopted in the present proposals.

The original scheme incorporated projecting porch roofs, with the porch roof to the ground floor flat extended to provide undercover access to a car. This was not considered appropriate to the existing streetscape by the planning officer, who requested the entrance porches be redesigned to be recessed in a similar manner to the existing building. This has been adopted in the present proposals.

The original scheme incorporated a first floor conservatory, with an area of first floor roof balcony above the garage. This was not considered appropriate by the planning officer who asked that the conservatory be omitted, and the balcony reduced in size and kept closer to the main rear façade at first floor level. This has been adopted in the present proposals.

The original scheme pushed the garage back closer to the rear boundary than in the present proposals. The planning officer asked that the garage be brought forward to some degree. This has been adopted in the present proposals.

The present proposals therefore have been tailored to meet the requirements and recommendations made by the planning department in earlier consultations.

Scale

The scale of the proposals is intended to minimise the intrusion into the streetscape and the visual effect on the existing buildings, whilst being adequate to address the needs of all users.

Landscaping

The car parking area at the front of the property is separated from the front garden wall and the entrance to number 30 by a number of planted beds which will provide a planted front garden area to reasonably maintain the effect of front gardens when viewed from the street. At the rear of the property the garden is given over to a level access patio and lawn with surrounding planted beds.

Access Assessment

Policy
The special needs of a specific disabled individual have been considered as of primary importance and the proposals reflect those needs, and generally go beyond the normal minimum standards applied to dwellings.

Access Routes
Gradients have been kept to a minimum, and there is a level access route from the setting down point on the front drive to the front door of the ground floor flat at number 32. There is level access from within the garage into the ground floor flat. Gently rising paths (1 in 21 max gradient) are provided between the public footpath and the entrances to both flats. There is a wheelchair route from the entrance of number 32 to the entrance of number 30, via the existing slope of the public footpath across the front of the properties (which is of similar gradient to the new paths proposed).

A short flight of steps to disabled ambulant design standards rise from the front parking area to the entrance of number 30.

The internal stairs from the entrance of number 30 to the principle storey are a short flight and are to ambulant disabled design standards, and are designed to allow installation of a stair lift when required. There is provision of adequate space in the halls and elsewhere in both properties to allow a wheelchair to be turned around and for wheelchair transfers where needed.

Internally the whole of the ground floor area is to be made suitable for wheelchair and ambulant disabled access.