Planning, Design and Access Statement
Proposed Conversion of Existing Building to One Dwelling and Erection of Two New Dwellings
Land at 58 Belgrave Road, Manchester, M40 3ST

1.0 Site Location & Character Assessment

1.1 The application site is Land at 58 Belgrave Road, Manchester, M40 3ST which is a gap site between existing buildings fronting Belgrave Road. To the rear part of the site there is an existing brick building. The application site is within a predominantly residential area however the business use has been at odds with quietude of the neighbourhood. The VOA register shows the use as 'Vehicle Repair Workshops & Garages'. A photo of the property is shown below; photos of the surrounding area are appended within the enclosures.



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1.2 The site is an L shape plot with one frontage to Belgrave Road; the site is rectangular when viewed from Belgrave Road and opens out into a wider expanse behind the adjacent public house. The houses and public house that front Belgrave Road are mainly two storey however some, including the new infill houses to the other side of the public house have living accommodation including dormer windows in the roofspace. The topography of the site and its surrounding area is fairly flat.

1.3 The area is mainly residential in nature; the public house and the former use of this premises as a vehicle repair place aside. The existing use has potential to cause local residents amenity problems. Belgrave Road is conveniently sited close to shops and services as well as schools and employment. The Metrolink extension is close to the application site providing additional sustainable travel choices to the many local bus routes that pass near the site.

1.4 The site is not within a Conservation Area or other special policy area.

Proposal

1.5 Planning permission is sought for the erection of two family houses and conversion of the existing building to a third family house; however the proposed development is submitted in two separate applications.

1.6 The two new build houses will be constructed as a pair of semi detached properties and will each be two stories. Additionally the roof space utilised for additional bedroom space. The houses will be finished in brick with concrete roof tiles; materials appropriate to the area. The new build houses will have off street parking space provided to the rear of the properties which will be accessed via a vehicular gate to restrict miscreant entry. The houses will have front doors facing the street and will present living accommodation to present to the street. The proposal for the conversion provides two parking spaces although more could be provided if required.

1.7 In front of the houses there will be landscaping. Each house will have amenity landscaping to the front whilst all will have private amenity space to the rear. The houses will be of the same height as existing properties nearby and follow the general building line.

1.8 The new properties will face Belgrave Road with the kitchen and the entrance at the front providing surveillance. The houses will face to the west and benefit from natural light.

1.9 The design of the house is intended to give some slight variation in the elevation and overall form. The design quality is high and is reflective of some of the character of the surrounding area. The development as designed meets Manchester Council's standards for separation distances.

1.10 The proposed development is in line with National policy for the need to make efficient and effective use of land by encouraging residential schemes which utilise previous developed land and existing buildings.

Pre-application Discussions

1.11 Prior to this application being submitted the applicant had undertaken pre-application consultation was held with Council Planning Officer, Carolyn Parry. The officer advised that conversion of the unit was acceptable in principle as was development to Belgrave Road although the Officer considered there would not be sufficient room for two houses. Following this advice the architect carefully plotted the site and discovered there is sufficient space for two houses and for that development to comply with Council planning guidelines. The proposed development will improve the physical appearance of the site and surrounding area. The existing building has housed uses that has potential for significant disturbance to occupiers of neighbouring property.

2.0 Design and Access

2.1 This section of the statement responds to the Design and Access considerations as suggested appropriate in best practice guidance.

Amount

2.2 The two applications propose three houses in total. Two off street vehicle parking spaces are provided for each of the proposed dwellings. Each house will have secure bin storage. These will be sited at the rear of the building on either side of a soft landscaped area. The parking bays at the rear will not impede surveillance from the property or diminish the street scene. On the contrary it will mean less on kerb parking near the property.

2.3 The footprint of the proposed building has modern design features in its construction materials, doors, windows and finishing. The quality of its design and appearance will enhance the street scene, and make best use of an existing large un-kept space and problem neighbouring use.

Layout

2.4 The off-road parking bays will be provided at the rear of the property as detailed in the plans provided. The size of the development is similar to other developments nearby including other recently approved and built properties on Belgrave Road.

Scale

2.5 The height of the proposed buildings fronting Belgrave Road are in line with existing properties. Although the proposals include space in the roof the properties will appear two storey, as with the approved infill of three houses the other side of the public house as evidenced within the attached photos of the street.

Appearance

2.6 The designer has been sympathetic and respectful to the colours and design of existing properties nearby; what is proposed is attractive, functional and sustainable in accordance with Manchester Council policies. The detailed design and form of the buildings provides an interesting and quality development.

Landscaping

2.7 There is scope for soft and hard landscaping within the development. The rear garden is appropriately sized for a family houses the garden areas are noted on the submitted site layout plan. Each house has amenity landscaping to the front of the property. The converted house will have a large garden area.

Context and Use

2.8 The development responds to a desire cemented in local plan policy to retain the character and appearance of the area. The proposed use is compatible with adopted local planning policy.

Access

2.9 There are two off street parking spaces for two houses and two spaces (potential for more) for the existing building that is to be converted to a house. The development is within the urban area and is close to public transport, services and employment. The location is accessible.

3.0 Planning Policy Framework and Appraisal

3.1 Government guidance within NPPF requires that each Council contributes to meeting national housing objectives. Advice within NPPF provides that each Council should ensure a five year supply of housing that is available, suitable and achievable. At present there is not a five year supply of housing.

3.2 The Manchester evidence base shows a shortage of family housing across the City. The proposed development is for three family houses which are suitable for families and will assist in housing supply.

3.3 The houses are to be sited on a east to west to axis with most of the habitable rooms facing either west or east. The views and sunlight will be possible from all rooms.

3.4 In terms of separation distances the scheme achieves a distance of around 22 metres to houses across Belgrave Road. We consider sufficient light will remain once the development is complete. The architect has designed the development in order to ensure the scheme complies Council policies that seek to protect light and privacy.

3.5 In terms of the street scene the submitted plans assist in showing how the proposal will tie in with the surroundings. As mentioned above, the shortfall in large detached dwellings guides us to promote a house suitable for families. In terms of parking there is space for at least two off street car spaces for all houses. For the three houses there are six off street spaces which is a parking ratio of 200% for the development. Many houses in the locality do not have off street parking. The proposed development will have access to public transport as well as having onsite parking. The parking layout and layout of development is similar to the surrounding area including the new houses along Belgrave Road. The attached photographs show similar development locally.

3.6 Of great importance within the NPPF are issues of sustainability, economic growth and housing shortage. NPPF confirms: *"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision- taking…….for decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission 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." (Paragraph 14, NPPF).

3.7 The site is accessible and the use will certainly constitute sustainable development. Public transport and walking to shops and services is certainly possible; there is no need for a car to access services and employment.

3.8 As the Council will be aware on the 6th September 2012 the Government issued various Ministerial Statements in support of new housing development to reinforce earlier statements of March 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 49 of the Framework states that 'Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'.

3.9 Paragraph 47 of the Framework indicates that where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, the 5 year supply buffer should be increased from 5% to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. The Planning Inspectorate have placed a significant amount of weight in favour of housing development where under supply occurs. The latest annual monitoring report for the Council confirms the under supply which has been consistent for many years.

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3.10 Whilst this is only three dwellings the proposed houses will contribute to the supply of housing and such windfall should not be overlooked. The Prime Minister confirmed the importance of positive planning decisions in a statement of the 6th September 2012 aimed at boosting the supply of new housing and construction:

"The measures announced today show this Government is serious about rolling its sleeves up and doing it all it can to kick-start the economy. Some of the proposals are controversial; others have been a long time in coming. But along with our Housing Strategy, they provide a comprehensive plan to unleash one of the biggest homebuilding programmes this country has seen in a generation. That means more investment around the county; more jobs for our people; and more young families able to realise their dreams and get on the housing ladder." (Statement of David Cameron, Prime Minister, 6th September 2012)

Code for Sustainable Homes

3.11 Policy EN 6 does not require submission of Code Pre-Estimator. The Framework (NPPF) does require submission of Code pre-estimator. The applicant understands the need to comply with City Council and NPPF policies to ensure sustainable development - the development will be. The measure to control this, in my opinion, is via a planning condition. Paragraph 203 of NPPF advises: "*Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition*."

Paragraph 206 advises further: "*Planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects*."

In this case the Council could not insist on pre-estimator information to register the application. As an alternative if the Council consider such information is essential the Council could potentially justify attaching a condition requiring the code information but in accordance with paragraph 203 a condition would mitigate for that. The Planning Inspectorate include a CODE condition on their model list of conditions:

"The dwelling(s) shall achieve Level X of the Code for Sustainable Homes. No dwelling shall be occupied until a final Code Certificate has been issued for it certifying that Code Level X has been achieved"

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 We consider the proposed house is in accordance with the policy framework as: The site is within a residential area. The use of land for housing is in line with NPPF, UDP and the Design Guide SPD

- Existing uses have potential to cause significant amenity problems through noise, disturbance and parking problems
- The development will improve natural surveillance and safety in the immediate area
- Appropriate levels of amenity are afforded to the occupiers of nearby properties
- Off street car parking and space for bicycle parking is provided
- The proposal offers a good design response to the existing site and the proposal is sympathetic to surrounding buildings
- The site is within the urban area in a position close to public transport links, local shops and services
- NPPF requires a five year supply of housing
- NPPF, Planning for Growth and the Budget support new build housing
- Where possible minimum building regulations standards will be exceeded to make the building as energy efficient as possible

4.2 NPPF advises that when there is less than a five year supply local planning authorities should consider favourably applications for housing. Manchester does not have a five year supply of housing. It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the planning policy framework of Manchester City Council. The proposed development comprises sustainable development of which there is a clear presumption in favour. The Government through Ministerial Statements and Planning Inspectorate through the granting of planning permission at appeal for new housing development have emphasised the importance of providing more homes. There are no adverse impacts of approving this application as such we trust the Council is able to approve the application.

Enclosures:

- VOA information
- Photographs of the site and area

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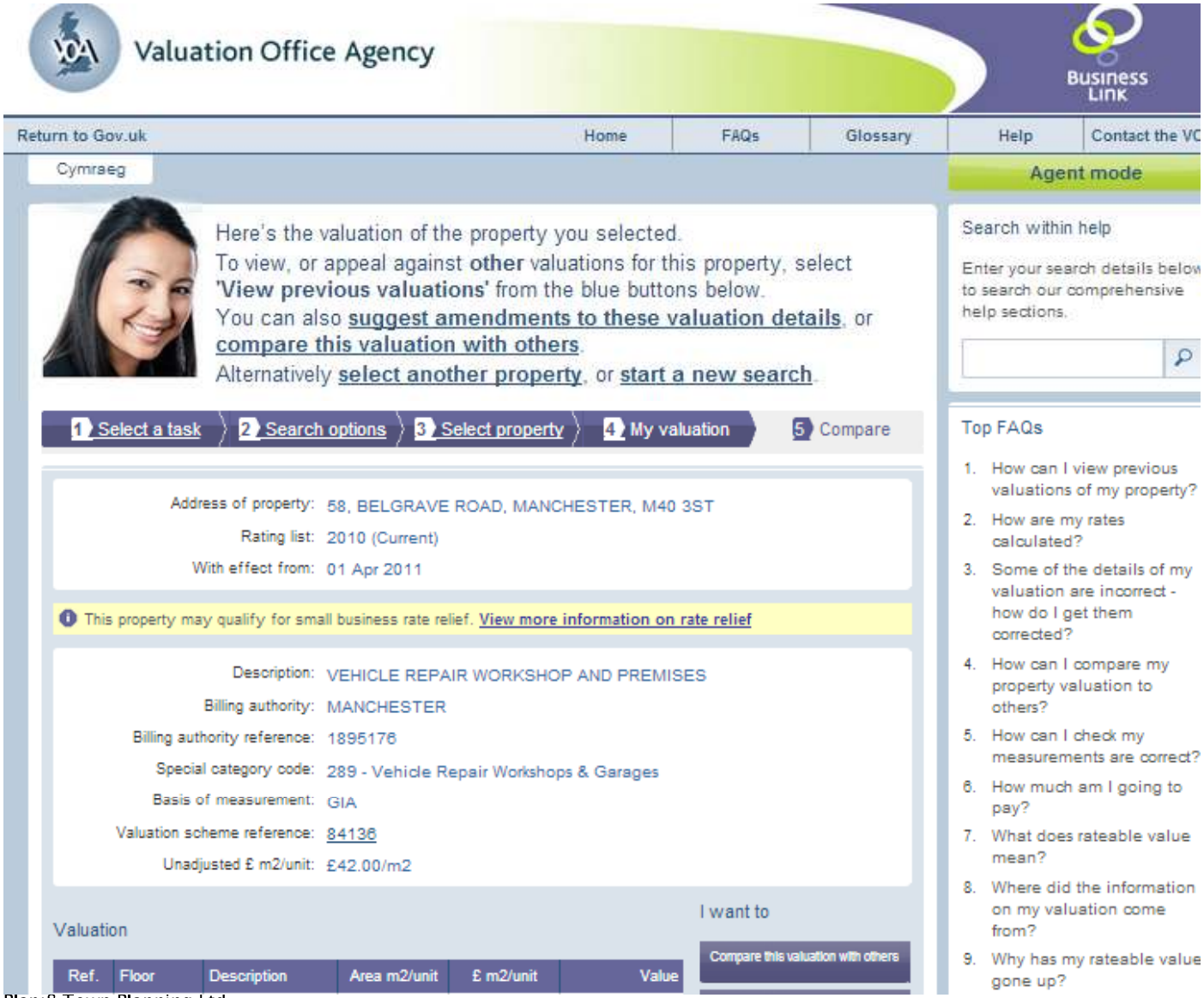
Enclosures:



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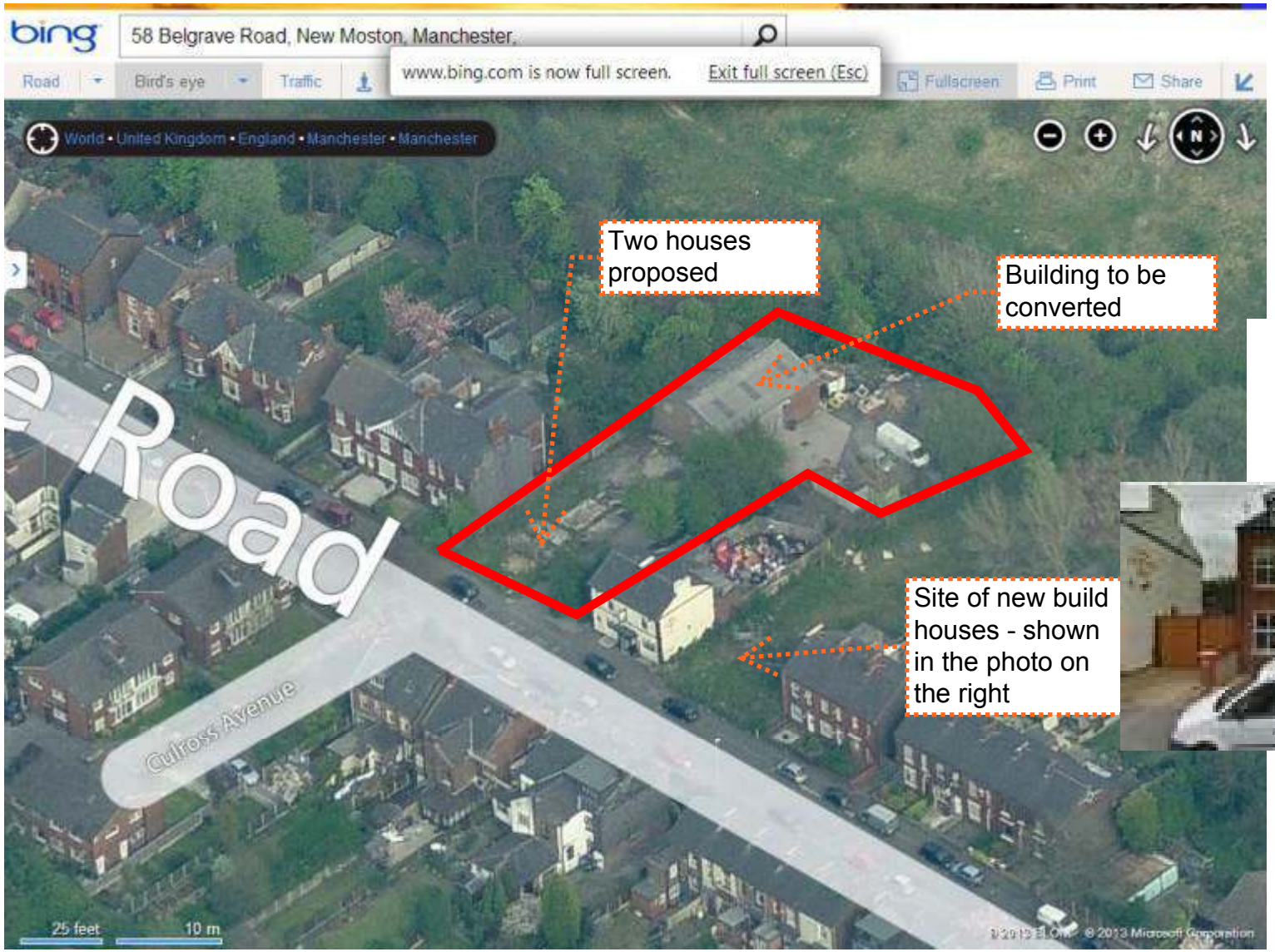



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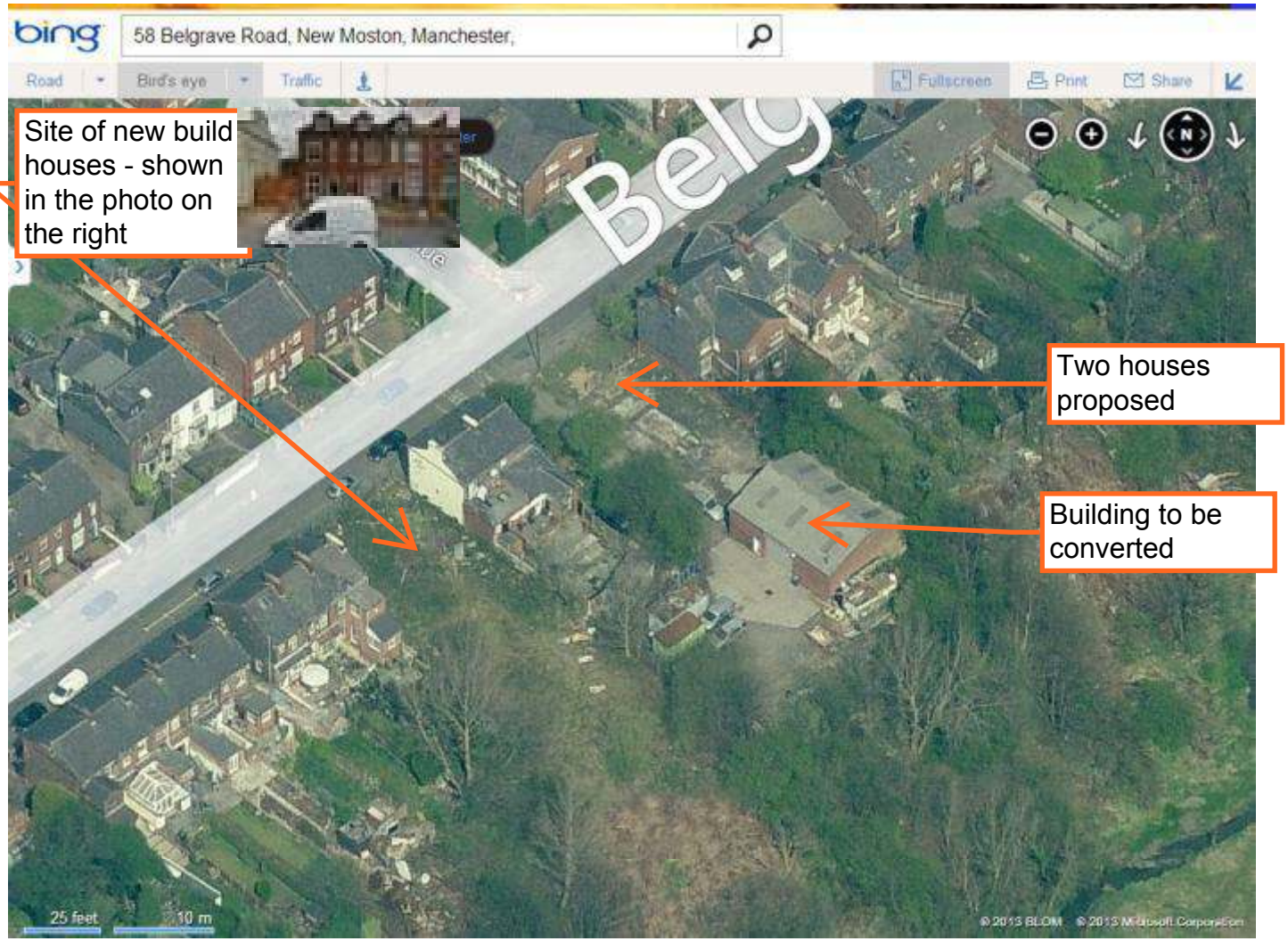

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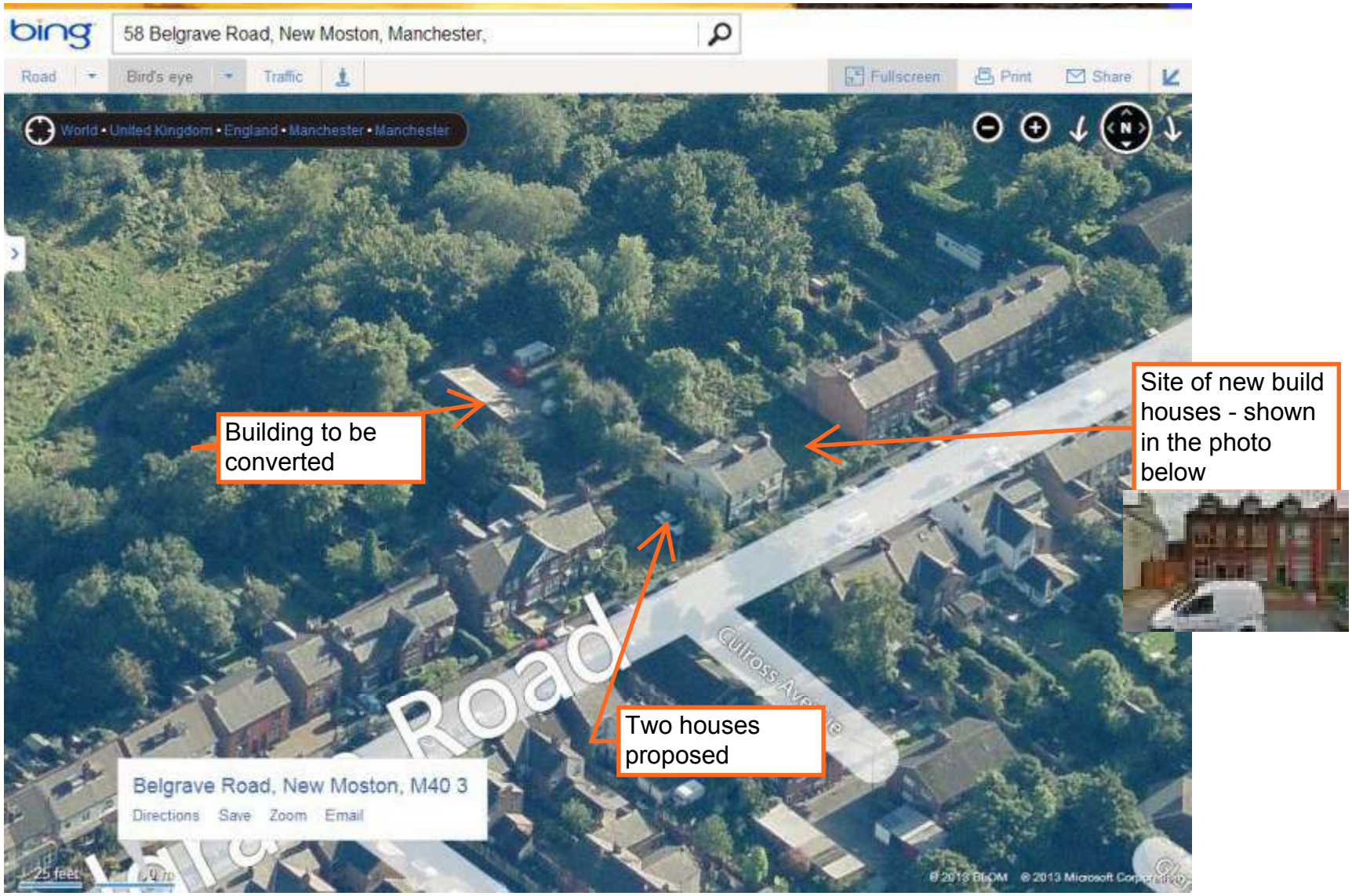

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