

Planning Statement

For Meredith Property Limited | 23-565

Conversion of existing building to residential and erection of new dwellinghouses
- 1 St George's Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ST

Project: 23-565
Site Address: 1 St George's Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ST
Client: Meredith Property Limited
Date: 01 March 2024
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Approved by: Caroline Payne

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This supporting planning statement has been prepared for our client, Meredith Property Limited, in support of a full planning application for the conversion of the former garage building into 4 x apartments and the erection of a pair of semidetached dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) within the curtilage including parking and amenity space provision at 1 St George's Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ST, referred to herein as the site.
- 1.2 The application is to be submitted by Crowstone Ltd who will be acting as agents for this application.
- 1.3 It will be demonstrated that the proposed development would comply with policies set out in the development plan and the Framework. As such, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework and s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted. There are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.



2. The application

- 2.1 The proposal seeks to convert the former garage building into 4 x apartments, demolish the eastern projection of the existing building (a later addition as set out in the planning history) and construct a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses. Offroad parking and private amenity space for the dwellinghouses will be provided within the site curtilage.
- 2.2 An extract of the proposed site layout is included below:



3. Context

Site location and description

- 3.1 The site currently comprises a former car mechanics premises and associated parking area. There is an existing dwelling, No. 22 Meredith Street between the garage building and the car park, however this is excluded from the red edge of this application site. The site is located on the south side of Meredith Street, on the corner with St George's Road. Meredith Street, as with many others in the local vicinity, comprises rows of terrace houses orientated towards the road with rear gardens backing onto neighbouring properties as can be seen from the location plan extract below:



- 3.2 The prevailing character of the area is high density residential development, within an urban area.
- 3.3 The site is located within the south character area of Manchester, as designated by the Core Strategy and falls within the Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation as designated by the draft Places for Everyone plan. There are no other designations such as Tree Preservation Orders, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas relevant to this site.



- 3.4 The site is located in Flood Risk Zone 1, with a low probability of flooding from rivers and sea and is at low risk from surface water flooding. Meredith Street itself is partly located within Flood Risk Zone 2, with a medium probability of flooding from rivers and sea (very low risk from surface water flooding). An extract from the Government Flood Risk map is provided below:



Relevant planning history

- 3.5 A search of the Authority's online application history page identified the following applications:
- Ref. 093393/FO/2010/S1 – Erection of single storey extension at side to form store – Approved 22.07.2010
 - Replacement of existing boundary fencing with decorative railings and gate – Approved 17.08.2000



4. Policy context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) and Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are material considerations in planning decisions.
- 4.2 For the purposes of this application, the development plan consists of the Manchester City Council Core Strategy and the Extant Unitary Development Policies. Given the stage the Places For Everyone Plan has reached and level of public consultation and scrutiny it has received, the Plan and its policies attract significant weight in the decision-making process.

Development plan context

Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Adopted 11 July 2012

- 4.3 The following policies of the Core Strategy are relevant to this application:
- C 6 – South Manchester District Centres – Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme and Wethington
 - DM 1 – Development Management
 - EC 2 – Existing Employment Space
 - EN 1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
 - EN 14 - Flood Risk
 - EN 15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
 - EN 18 – Contaminated Land and Ground Stability
 - H 1 – Overall Housing provision
 - H 6 – South Manchester

Extant Unitary Development Policies (UDP)

- 4.4 The following Citywide Development Control Policies are relevant to this application:
- DC5 – Flat Conversions
 - DC7 – New Housing Development



Emerging Places for Everyone (Modifications Version 2023)

4.5 The following policies of the Emerging Places for Everyone plan are relevant this this application:

- Strategic Objective 1 – Meet our housing need
- Strategic Objective 2 – Create neighbourhoods of choice
- Efficient Use of Land Resources
- JP-Strat5 – Inner Area
- JP-S1 – Sustainable Development
- JP-S5 – Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- JP-H3 – Type, Size and Design of New Housing
- JP-H4 – Density of New Housing
- JP-G9 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-C1 – An Integrated Network
- JP-C7 – Transport Requirements of New Development

National planning policy and guidance

4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (The Framework) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

4.7 The Framework emphasises that planning applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is a material consideration in decision making and provides a framework for the preparation of development plans (Section 2).

4.8 Relevant in this instance are sections:

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 4 – Decision making
- 11 – Making efficient use of land

Other material considerations

4.9 The following policies of The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (Adopted April 2007) are relevant:



- 2 – Design
- 4 - Environmental Standards
- 6 – Parking Guidelines
- 7 – Housing Density and Mix
- Internal Design Principles and the Provision of Space within housing

4.10 The Manchester Residential Quality Guidance document (2017) is also relevant, providing residential parking standards for apartments.



5. Planning considerations

Principle of development

- 5.1 The site is located within the District Centre of Fallowfield, as designated by Policy C 6 of the Core Strategy (CS). In such areas, higher density development is supported in accordance with Policy H 6. Strategic Objective 1 of the Places for Everyone (PFE) concerns meeting housing need and seeks to increase net additional dwellings, increase the number of affordable homes and provide a diverse mix of housing. Objective 2 concerns creating neighborhoods of choice, in summary prioritising the use of brownfield land, focusing new homes in town centres in suitable locations and ensuring that there is no increase in the number of homes and premises at high risk of flooding.
- 5.2 Paragraph 4.8 of the PFE and Policy JP-S1 prioritise making as good use of suitable previously developed land and vacant buildings, with paragraph 4.13 providing further support for the use of previously developed land and increased densities within accessible places. Policy JP-P1 places further emphasis on providing sustainable development of a quality design, setting out further considerations for inter connectivity and locating / designing developments to deliver a significant increase in the proportion of trips that can be made by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.3 In summary, the principle of development is acceptable. The site is located within a highly sustainable location, within walking distance to the Co-op store (circa 70metres from the site), Medical Centre, convenience stores, Mauldeth Primary School and train station. There is also a bus stop along Mauldeth Road, within circa 86metres from the site. The proposals seek to convert (re-use) an existing building into residential apartments and re-develop a sustainable brownfield site, all of which is supported by both current and emerging planning policy. A mix of housing types are to be provided, with the apartments being 2 beds and the semi detached properties being 3 beds, enriching the existing housing stock in the area.
- 5.4 Policy DC 5 of the Extant UDP, supports the conversion of existing properties into flats and sets out the various matters the Council will take into account when determining such applications. In summary, these comprise the standard of accommodation being proposed, the effects the proposals would have on adjoining properties, adequacy of parking, general effects on the character of the neighborhood, adequacy of amenity space, access for all and the satisfactory provision for refuse storage and collection facilities. It will be demonstrated in the forthcoming sections of this statement how each of these criteria are met in full.



Loss of Employment

- 5.5 The site is currently vacant. It was last used as a car repair garage employing three people. The first floor contained office space, used in connection with the former owner's car parts business.
- 5.6 Policy EC 2 of the MCC concerns existing employment space and states the Council will seek to retain existing employment space and sites. The policy allows for alternative uses on such sites if they are allocated for an alternative use or, relevant in this instance:
- The existing use is un-viable in terms of business operations, building age and format.
 - The existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses.
 - On balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use.
- 5.7 The former garage closed as the previous owner relocated to a larger premises and the site has subsequently stood vacant.
- 5.8 The subject building is located within a predominately residential area, surrounded by existing residential development on all boundaries, including no. 22 Meredith Street which the former garage effectively surrounds. The former use of the building as a car repair garage was somewhat of an anomaly in the area and is considered to be a non-conforming use within the residential area. The conversion of the building / redevelopment of the site to provide 6 residential units is a much more suitable use for the area. The provision of residential development on this highly sustainable, urban site is a significant benefit and meets the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives regarding providing good quality homes within sustainable locations.
- 5.9 On balance, it is therefore considered the loss of the site as a car repair garage and the associated loss of employment, does not conflict with Policy EC 2.

Design

- 5.10 Policy EN 1 of the CS refers to the Southern Character Area as having a presence of older development, with a more regular layout of predominately residential development. EN 1 states that new development needs to retain the identity and focus of activity associated with District Centres, and where appropriate, development should be commensurate in scale with the prominence of its location. Policy DM 1 of the CS in summary, requires development to be appropriate in terms of siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.



- 5.11 Policy JP-H3 of the PFE states that residential developments should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, reflecting local planning policies and guidance. Policy JP-H4 states that new housing development should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high quality design. In 'other designated areas', such as this, the minimum residential density is 35 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.12 Further guidance on housing density, mix and design is set out within the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (SPD). Section 2 of the SPD relates to design and in summary, requires the design of a proposal to respect and be informed by its location. Paragraph 2.7 seeks to encourage development of the most appropriate form to enliven neighborhoods and sustain local facilities and achieve a unified urban form regarding design, scale, massing and orientation. Paragraph 2.12 states that buildings should front onto streets, with buildings presenting their main face and pedestrian entrance to the adjacent main street to contribute to its vitality and informal surveillance. The SPD also requires buildings to relate well to each other, enhancing the street scene and recognising the common building line created by the front face of adjacent buildings (para. 2.13). Building height should be carefully considered, having regard to location and character and boundary treatments should contribute to the street scene (para 2.14 & 2.15).
- 5.13 Further support for the proposals are provided at paragraphs 2.53 and 2.54 of the SPD which support infill development, providing they respect the existing scale, appearance and grain of the area and the conversion of existing buildings.
- 5.14 Chapter 10 of the SPD provides further guidance on matters such as internal and external space, for example making the best use of the space available.
- 5.15 The proposals have been designed to retain the features of the existing building, such as the lintels and utilising the existing positions for windows and doors. Where new materials are required, these will be sourced to match the existing. The detailing from the existing building / neighbouring properties has been carried over into the proposed new build semi-detached dwellings. These properties have been designed to reflect the scale and appearance of the neighbouring properties / buildings to ensure they integrate readily into the existing street scene. As can be seen from the street scene extract below, the new semi-detached properties have been design to create a step in ridge heights between the existing building and terrace dwellinghouses:





- 5.16 Regarding proposed materials, where required reclaimed Accrington / Pre War bricks will be used. The stone heads / cills are to be painted white and existing stone surrounding the arched door on the front elevation painted black and the door itself refurbished. Facias are to be black wood grain and the vent grilles anthracite grey. The windows will be replaced with white uPVC units and doors anthracite grey. Materials details are specified on the proposed elevations.
- 5.17 The existing building proposed for conversion into apartments, will retain its active frontage with living / kitchen / bedrooms fronting Meredith Street and the main entrance off St George's Street as per the existing arrangement. The new build semi-detached properties will front onto Meredith Street, with their kitchen windows orientated towards the street at ground floor level and bedrooms at first floor level.
- 5.18 Regarding outdoor amenity space, policies DM 1 / H 1 of the CS requires development to have adequate / useable external amenity space. Paragraph 10.9 of the SPD provides further guidance, stating: *"all new developments should be designed to provide on-site amenity space which is fit for purpose and which is informed by, and relates to, the character of the area"* with paragraph 11.23 stating the amenity space should *"contribute to the feel and urban character of the area."*
- 5.19 The new semi-detached properties have their own private amenity space which wraps around the side / rear of the dwellings. This can be accessed from the driveway at the front of the properties or from the side doors, from the living rooms. The size of the outdoor space proposed is commensurate to the size of the dwellings and their context at 21 sqm per dwelling.
- 5.20 Space for the storage of bins has been created between the rear wall of the dwellings and the boundary with the neighbouring properties.
- 5.21 For the 4 x apartments, no on site outdoor amenity space is proposed. This, however, is not uncommon for apartments within urban areas, and for some purchasers, the lack of garden is an attractive proposition given the lack of maintenance required. There are a number of parks within walking distance from the site,



for example Ladybarn Park circa 230 metres south and Kingswood Park circa 380 metres north, therefore occupiers of the apartments have access to outdoor amenity space when required.

- 5.22 Secure bin and cycle storage for the apartments is provided on the ground floor, accessed from the rear of the building down the ginnel between the subject building and the neighbouring properties.
- 5.23 In terms of plot density, the proposals equate to 182 dwellings per hectare within the red line boundary. When taking into account the wider area along Meredith Street / Mauldeth Road, the density falls to 106 dwellings per hectare. The density along Meredith / Bowers Street is 164 dwellings per hectare. The density of the proposal in isolation is higher than the immediate areas, given part of the proposal includes the conversion of the existing building into apartments. Notwithstanding this, the proposed density is still commensurate with the surrounding development in the local area.
- 5.24 In summary, the proposals are of a scale and design which integrate readily into the existing street scene and make best use of this highly sustainable previously developed site. The conversion, works within the existing parameters of the building, utilising existing openings and maintains the character / detailing of the building. The conversion will bring a new lease of life to the building, creating a new chapter in its history and greatly improve its external appearance which is gradually falling into a state of disrepair, accelerated by the building now being unoccupied. The proposed new build properties are in place of a later extension to the main garage building and have been designed to achieve a balance between making effective use of the site and proposing a scale of development that reflects the local context. The proposals pick up on detailing from building proposed for conversion, such as the lintels and window sills and have a simply plan form and façade, as per the existing terrace properties along Meredith Street. The proposals will see a high quality, residential scheme which will make a positive contribution to the existing street scene.

Residential amenity

- 5.25 Policy DM 1 of the Core strategy requires developments to have regard to their effects on amenity, including matters such as privacy, light and noise.
- 5.26 The proposals comprise the conversion of the former garage building into 4 x apartments, the demolition of the existing side extension to the garage building and the erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses in its place. The semi-detached properties will project no further into the rear of the site than the existing garage building.
- 5.27 The orientation and internal layout of the proposed units will match the existing arrangements within the immediate vicinity i.e. the rear of the properties facing each other, separated by a ginnel beyond which are the rear gardens. The living areas are proposed to the rear of the ground floor level within the semi-



detached properties, with bedrooms at first floor level. In the apartments, unit 1 will have the living / kitchen area and bedrooms to the rear of the ground floor and unit 1 having the living / kitchen area and bedroom at first floor orientated to the rear of the building.

- 5.28 It is understood that the internal layout of the properties along Mauldeth Road (which back onto the site) contain the kitchen area at ground floor to the rear of the property and a bedroom at first floor level. The existing fencing between the properties either side of the ginnel are to be retained to maintain privacy. The interface distances between the rear of the existing properties along Mauldeth Road and proposed units on Meridith Street will be circa 11 metres, with the exception of 135 Mauldeth Road, which will have an interface distance of circa 7.5 metres due to an existing ground floor extension to the property.
- 5.29 The interface distances between the proposed and existing properties across Meredith Street will be circa 11.8 metres and are comparable to the existing properties along the road / local area.
- 5.30 The proposed interface distances, are comparable to existing properties in the area as are their orientations backing on to each other, separated by the rear gardens and ginnels. It is widely accepted that interface distances will be reduced in higher density developments within urban areas, given the need to make effective use of sustainable brownfield sites. We consider the proposals provide adequate interface distances to protect the residential amenity for occupiers of the properties along Mauldeth Road and the proposed dwellings along Meredith Street.
- 5.31 It is worth noting that the existing properties along Mauldeth Road, backing onto the site, have provided adequate accommodation with the site operating as a car mechanics for many years. Changing the use of the site to residential will improve the amenity for the neighbouring properties, reducing noise and activity on site. The presence of residential development will also create a greater degree of active surveillance, especially during the evenings / nighttime when the former garage would have been closed, reducing the likelihood of antisocial behaviour, especially down the ginnel.
- 5.32 For the reasons set out above, we consider the proposals would achieve an adequate level of residential amenity for the occupiers of the existing dwellings along Mauldeth Road, which back onto the site and the occupiers of the proposed dwellings along Meredith Street. Compliance is therefore demonstrated with Policy DM 1 of the Core strategy.

Parking / Highways

- 5.33 Policy H 1 of the Core Strategy requires proposals to make provision for appropriate parking cars. It is noted that Appendix B of the CS, parking Standards, does not provide a specific requirement for residential development in District Centres.



- 5.34 Policy JP-C7 of the Emerging PFE, requires new development to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment / Statement where appropriate and make adequate car parking provision. Section 6 of the SPD provides further guidance on parking provision in new developments, advising it should be designed innovatively and imaginatively as to not dominate the street scene.
- 5.35 One parking space for each of the proposed semi-detached properties has been included on site (total of two spaces). No on site parking provision has been made for the 4 x apartments. Parking along Meredith / the surrounding streets is unrestricted and there is a carpark off Green Street, circa 75 metres north west of the site. The site is also in a sustainable location, within walking distance of numerous local services and amenities, with a bus stop along Mauldeth Road, within circa 86 metres from the site.
- 5.36 A Transport Statement prepared by SLR – Vectos North Limited accompanies this application.
- 5.37 The report concludes:
- The site is located within an area of excellent accessibility to public transport, including Mauldeth Road Railway Station and numerous local bus stops,
 - The proposals accord with the NPPF and Policies T1 and T2 of the Manchester City Council Core Strategy
 - The proposals for a residential development of both four apartments and two houses will generate less vehicular traffic than the site's existing use and will therefore have an immaterial impact upon the operation of the local highway network, resulting in a reduced on-street parking demand; and
 - The proposed car parking provision for the development is sufficient for a site of this scale based on the highly accessible location, available existing on street parking and cycle provision on site.
- 5.38 In light of the above, the report concludes that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that the residual cumulative impact cannot be considered severe. On this basis, it is concluded the development is acceptable from a transport perspective.

Contamination

- 5.39 Policy EN 18 of the Core Strategy relates to contaminated land and ground stability and requires any proposal for the development of contaminated land to be accompanied by a health risk assessment. As the site was formerly used as a car mechanic garage for many years, a Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Investigation Report, prepared by IGE Consulting accompanies this application. The report concludes there is a low to moderate risk to human health on the basis that potential sources of contamination have been identified on site for end users and construction workers. The report recommends ground investigation



works are undertaken and this can be secured as part of the planning permission via a suitable worded condition.

5.40 Compliance is therefore demonstrated with Policy EN 18.

Ecology

5.41 Policy EN 15 of the CS and Section 4 of the SPD concern ecology and in summary, seek to safeguard protected and priority species and any adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation.

5.42 Emerging Policy JP-G9 of the PFE also seeks to safeguard biodiversity and achieve a biodiversity net gain.

5.43 A Daytime Bat Survey prepared by Rachel Hacking Ecology accompanies this submission. The report concludes no evidence of use by bats was recorded during the survey and the site is located in a low-quality foraging habitat. Consequently, the site is assessed as offering negligible suitability for roosting bats. In order to enhance the site for wildlife, the installation of integral bat boxes and bird nesting bricks in the new buildings is recommended.

5.44 Compliance is therefore demonstrated with Policies EN 15 of the CS, Section 4 of the SPD and Policy JP-G9 of the Emerging PFE.

Flood Risk

5.45 Policies EN 14 of the CS and JP-S5 of the Emerging PFE in summary, require development to be directed away from sites at the greatest risk of flooding and new development should minimise the risk of flooding to propose, property and environment within the site without increasing risk elsewhere.

5.46 As set out earlier within this statement, the site is located in Flood Risk Zone 1, with a low probability of flooding from rivers and sea and is at low risk from surface water flooding. Meredith Street itself is located partly within Flood Risk Zone 2, with a medium probability of flooding from rivers and sea (very low risk from surface water flooding).

5.47 The site is part of a wider predominately residential area and we are not aware of any flood risk issues. The proposals will see a reduction in the amount of hardstanding on site, compared with the existing situation, given the areas of soft landscaping proposed.

5.48 Compliance is therefore demonstrated with policy EN 14 of the CS and JP-S5 of the Emerging PFE accordingly.



6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 In summary this application seeks to convert the former garage building into 4 x apartments, demolish the eastern projection of the existing building (a later addition as set out in the planning history) and erection a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses. Offroad parking and private amenity space for the dwellinghouses will be provided within the curtilage of the building.
- 6.2 The proposed development makes efficient use of this site, in a highly sustainable area, through the conversion of an existing building and re-development of its curtilage. The principle of development is acceptable.
- 6.3 The proposal has been designed to reflect the existing character of the area and meets the relevant development management policies as set out within this supporting statement.
- 6.4 Overall, the proposed development would comply with the policies set out in the development plan and the Emerging Places for Everyone. Therefore in accordance with s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 11 of the Framework, this application should be approved. There are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.



