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INTRODUCTION: Rev A: 08.11.23

This design and access statement is to accompany the planning application for an extension to Park Hall, Thurloe Street, Manchester, M14 5SG.

The objective of the proposed development is to provide a high quality, sustainable refurbishment and extension to an existing PBSA building.

THE EXISTING BUILDING

The existing building is situated on the edge of the Victoria Park Conservation Area, and consists of a 3 storey masonry building with stone features to the principal elevation to the East. There is also a large basement under part of the existing building.

The North and East elevations are of high architectural merit. The south and west elevations are less architecturally important, and have been added to over time with a relatively small single storey extension.

The remainder of the site, to the South West, is a hard surfaced area which is currently enclosed by metal railings. Vehicular access is provided through a gated entrance from Thurloe Street.

In 2007, planning permission was granted for the "Retrospective change of use from a nursing home to student accommodation, (total 56no. single study bedrooms)." The design and access statement stated that the building has been used as student accommodation since the early 1990's. The fact that this was deemed to be a retrospective application concludes that the legally recognised use of the building is student accommodation (Sui Generis).

The internal layout of the existing building is largely as per drawings listed on Manchester Council's planning explorer, with one or two minor discrepancies. These are largely in the basement which has been used as additional bedrooms / storage over the years.

The proposed works are split into two main phases:

PHASE 01: Refurbishment of Existing Building.

Phase 1 will see the refurbishment of the existing part of the building to provide 51 bedrooms, which is a reduction from the 56 bedrooms stated in the 2007 planning approval. These are a mix of cluster flats and 1 bedroom studios. There are fewer rooms in the renovated scheme due to the inclusion of ensembles within each of the bedrooms, and more shared kitchens/living spaces.

These layout changes will ensure that the existing part of the building will offer far superior living standards and amenity when compared to the original 56 bedroom layout, as well as ensuring the complete internal and external renovation of the existing building.

2 New Rooflights are proposed within the existing roof to provide smoke ventilation to the stairs, as is detailed on the proposed elevations and plans.

An array of solar panels is proposed on the roof of the existing building, to help to ensure that the building uses renewable energy sources as much as possible.

There are a few other very minor alterations, such as the replacement of a couple of windows on the rear elevation, and the reinstatement of a basement window on the Thurloe Street elevation.

Phase 02: The Extension

Phase 2 of the project will be for the provision of a new extension. The new extension will be situated to the West corner of the site, adjacent to Thurloe Street, and has been positioned not to prejudice development of the adjacent sites to the South and West.

The extension will consist of 3 stories and a mansard roof will provide a further 17 bed spaces to the development in the form of cluster flats and 1 bedroom studios.

The existing stair core to the west of the existing building will be removed in order to facilitate the proposed new extension. This stair core is clearly not an original feature and is detrimental to the aesthetic of the building and the conservation area alike.

A gated access at the ground floor will provide access to the courtyard under the proposed new extension, and the extension will have its own entrance from inside this passageway.

The materials, detailing and fenestration of the proposed extension has been carefully designed to respond to the proportions and detailing of the host building, but in a more contemporary manner. Subtle brickwork detailing between floors responds positively to the stone banding of the host building. The extension is linked to the host building with an element that steps back from the elevation, and is clad in a metal standing seam cladding, which rises over the roof to form the

mansard on the third floor. The extension is clearly subservient to the host building in terms of its scale and form.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The relevant development plan policy is described within Manchester's Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Development Plan. A new Manchester Local Plan is currently being prepared.

Policy H12 is a specific Core Strategy policy which sets out criteria for new Purpose Built Student Accommodation. The relevant aspects of Policy H12 are listed below, together with justification of how the proposal positively responds to each part.

Policy H 12 Purpose Built Student Accommodation

The provision of new purpose built student accommodation will be supported where the development satisfies the criteria below. Priority will be given to schemes which are part of the universities' redevelopment plans or which are being progressed in partnership with the universities, and which clearly meet Manchester City Council's regeneration priorities.

1. Sites should be in close proximity to the University campuses or to a high frequency public transport route which passes this area.

The site on Thurloe Street is 0.7miles away from the southern edge of Manchester University Campus, which is a 14 minute walk, or 3 minute cycle via the purpose built cycle track. The route to the campus is along Wilmslow Road and Oxford Road, which is also a well serviced bus route. It is therefore submitted that the location of the proposed extension is in close proximity to the campus and accords with this part of Policy H12.

2. The Regional Centre, including the Oxford Road Corridor, is a strategic area for low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure. Proposed schemes that fall within this area will be expected to take place in the context of the energy proposals plans as required by Policy EN 5.

The site lies outside of the Southern extent to the Oxford Road Corridor and the Regional Centre, so this part of policy H12 does not apply. However, the proposed extension will exceed the standards laid down by Part L2a, 2022.

3. High density developments should be sited in locations where this is compatible with existing developments and initiatives, and where retail facilities are within walking distance. Proposals should not lead to an increase in on-street parking in the surrounding area.

The proposed extension is to an existing PBSA building, and as such can only be seen as being compatible with the existing development. Further to this, retail facilities are in abundance along Wilmslow Road and Oxford Road, which are both within a few minutes walking distance from the site.

Whilst no car parking is proposed for the site, the applicant is committed to minimising car usage, and adequate cycle storage will be provided in secure lock ups on site. It is not intended that the students would be eligible to apply for resident's parking permits. Each student will be issued with a travel information pack to raise awareness of sustainable / public transport within the area.

4. Proposals that can demonstrate a positive regeneration impact in their own right will be given preference over other schemes. This can be demonstrated for example through impact assessments on district centres and the wider area. Proposals should contribute to providing a mix of uses and support district and local centres, in line with relevant Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, local plans and other master plans as student accommodation should closely integrate with existing neighbourhoods to contribute in a positive way to their vibrancy without increasing pressure on existing neighbourhood services to the detriment of existing residents.

As has been previously discussed, the proposals are for the extension of an existing student accommodation facility. The existing building is of high architectural merit, and sits on the edge of the Victoria Park conservation area. The proposals offer a significant regeneration impact on both the existing building and conservation area and therefore accord with this part of Policy H12.

5. Proposals should be designed to be safe and secure for their users, and avoid causing an increase in crime in the surrounding area. Consideration needs to be given to how proposed developments could assist in improving the safety of the surrounding area in terms of increased informal surveillance or other measures to contribute to crime prevention.

The proposed extension has been designed with crime mitigation in mind, to both the residents of the building and the surrounding area. Refurbishing and extending the existing building will bring back activity to the area and offer passive surveillance of both the streets and the internal courtyard area formed by the extension.

All entrances are in prominent locations, and the cycle shelters will be securely enclosed and gated to prevent any unauthorised access.

The staff presence on site will help to manage and address any issues or concerns that might arise in or around the building.

All accessible windows in the extension will be designed to comply with Approved Document Q, and certified to BS PAS 24. All ground floor windows will be on restrictors to ensure the windows open to a maximum of 100mm.

Dusk until dawn lights will be included in and around the buildings, especially around external doors. The building will be fully covered by CCTV externally, and communal corridors internally.

6. Consideration should be given to the design and layout of the student accommodation and siting of individual uses within the overall development in relation to adjacent neighbouring uses. The aim is to ensure that there is no unacceptable effect on residential amenity in the surrounding area through increased

noise, disturbance or impact on the street scene either from the proposed development itself or when combined with existing accommodation.

The design of the extension ensures that the only access to it will be via the internal courtyard formed by the development. This will reduce any potential increase in foot traffic along Crescent Range, which consists of residential dwellings and flats. The position of the extension is within an area of the site which is not directly adjacent to any existing buildings (other than the host building).

7. Where appropriate proposals should contribute to the re-use of Listed Buildings and other buildings with a particular heritage value.

Whilst the existing building is not a listed building, it is of high architectural merit with some heritage value. It is also located on the edge of the Victoria Park conservation area. The refurbishment of the existing part of the building under phase 1 of the project will ensure compliance with this part of Policy H12.

8. Consideration should be given to provision and management of waste disposal facilities, that will ensure that waste is disposed of in accordance with the waste hierarchy set out in Policy EN 19, within the development at an early stage.

A large, secure and covered bin stores is proposed to the west of the site, with space for general waste and recycling, which will be separated at source. The location is ideal given its proximity to the refuse collection on Thurloe Street.

9. Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for additional student accommodation or that they have entered into a formal agreement with a University, or another provider of higher education, for the supply of all or some of the bedspaces.

Policy H12 describes how there may be a potential oversubscription in PBSA proposals when matched against the potential growth in student numbers to 2014/15 and the latent demand from students living in the general rented sector. However, a significant material consideration is an interim local policy approach to PBSA endorsed by the Executive Committee of Manchester City Council in December 2020.

The report states that “As shown by the evidence, Manchester is one of the most expensive cities in the UK for PBSA. A more diverse pipeline of new PBSA is now needed to help stabilise rental growth. It is critical to ensure there is a residential market, which meets the needs of students at an affordable price” (3.1c).

The report goes on to describe how “The overall quality of Manchester’s PBSA stock is poor compared to other cities. For Manchester to remain competitive as a world class education hub, with an accommodation offer to match, the current level of poor quality accommodation needs to be addressed. New stock in appropriate locations represents an opportunity to deliver an improved student experience, which better reflects Manchester’s institutions and its educational reputation overall, and also helps to contribute to sustainability targets” (3.1d).

Paragraph 6.8 of the report states that *“In terms of the proposed geographical location of PBSA within the Oxford Road Corridor, it should also be noted that the closure of MMU’s Crewe and South Manchester campuses has resulted in an even larger number of student places being located at city centre campuses. Whilst there might be a short term dip in the number of students taking up places as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is expected that numbers will continue to remain strong over the medium term, indicating a need for accommodation close to the university campuses. There has been an increase of people living and wanting to live in the city centre, and their needs must be balanced with the needs of new students and the needs of communities in South Manchester, to support diverse communities and good quality housing options for all residents”*

To conclude this section, Paragraph 6.11 summarises that *“Manchester has seen a relatively low level of investment in new PBSA compared to other cities, as a result of the careful management of the pipeline through Policy H12. This has been reflected in the high levels of students living in mainstream housing and the high take up of places in the new PBSA accommodation. MMU are currently not able to provide accommodation to all first year undergraduates. The Council therefore, believe that there is scope to provide additional PBSA, provided it is of the right quality, price and in the right locations, without leading to a high number of voids. However, we recognise the continued need to see a planned and judicious level of growth, in line with the principles of H12.*

It is clear from studying the aforementioned document, that an extension to an existing PBSA building, as sought by this application, is in line with this part of Policy H12.

10. Applicants/developers must demonstrate to the Council that their proposals for purpose built student accommodation are deliverable.

The applicant, VSHF Developments Ltd, has a proven track record of successfully delivering the highest quality PBSA schemes in a range of locations across the UK, including Loughborough, Nottingham, and Liverpool. Their continuing experience within this sector will ensure that the extension will be delivered to an exceptional standard.

CONCLUSION

As has been discussed in detail in this document, this application is for an extension to an existing building on the edge of the Victoria Park conservation area. The existing building will be refurbished under the first phase, which will provide a much needed renovation of a prominent building which is in a poor state of repair. The second phase will provide a new, sympathetically designed extension to provide additional bed spaces on the site.

Planning policy H12 has been discussed in detail, and the development fully justified within the context of the planning policy. It is therefore submitted that the planning application should be passed without delay.