



PLANNING STATEMENT

In support of Express Solicitors' proposals for

Residential Redevelopment of Land at Resolution House & Annexe / 311 to 319
Palatine Road, Northenden

and

Proposed Residential Redevelopment of Transformulas House, 1a Brett Street,
Northenden

SEPTEMBER 2023

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Appendices

- 1 Town Centre Health Check*
- 2 Pre-Application Advice*

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This combined Planning Statement supports two planning applications made by Plan Red on behalf of Express Solicitors for redevelopment of its properties in Northenden for residential use. The two proposals are for:

Outline planning permission (with matters of access, layout and scale for approval) for demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment of site for up to 34 apartments and 3 townhouses (Use Class C3)

On land at 311 to 319 Palatine Road and rear to Allanson Road, Northenden (the 'Palatine Road' proposal), and

Outline planning permission (with matters of access, layout and scale for approval) for demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment of site for 2 townhouses (Use Class C3)

On land at Transformulas House, 1a Brett Street, Northenden (the 'Brett Street' proposal)

- 1.2 A combined Planning Statement is being used as the applications are being made by the same applicant and landowner, in parallel and at sites that are close by each other. Many planning matters relate to both sites though there is some departure. We make this clear in our analysis later in the Statement.
- 1.3 Express Solicitors is a highly successful legal practice specialising in personal injury claims, currently based in Northenden where the company started some 20 years ago. It has grown from its original premises at Resolution House, 315-319 Palatine Road to acquire the adjacent building 311-313 ('the Annexe'), and then Transformulas House, 1a Brett Street. It now operates from these three premises and one further temporary office location in South Manchester.
- 1.4 Express Solicitors is one of the largest employers of professional staff in south Manchester and currently employs some 560 staff with plans for growth to around 1,000 staff. Because of lack of accommodation space across its portfolio of premises the company works in a hybrid home / office working pattern. To redress this problem and provide room for future business growth the company has acquired 40,000 sq ft of office space at South Court, Sharston to act a single base. South Court has been selected for its suitability and location as many existing employees are based locally in south Manchester and the new offices remain within walking distance of Northenden. Transfer of the business is scheduled to complete in early 2024 following completion of its refurbishment.

- 1.5 Relocation will lead to vacating the premises and gives rise to the need to consider the future use of the buildings and the related sites hence the two planning applications.
- 1.6 As set out in the Design & Access Statement options for conversion / alteration have been considered but as each building is converted retail / storage space, each at the end of their useful life, and neither meet modern building requirements without extensive modernisation it is considered full redevelopment is the optimal choice for both sites.
- 1.7 The two large Palatine Road buildings were formerly in retail uses at ground floor level with rear yard servicing accessed via Allanson Road which is a relatively narrow residential street with on-street parking to both sides. It is considered a reversion to such use and service access would be detrimental to residential amenity and safe operation of the highway.
- 1.8 Outline applications are made, with matters of access, layout and scale for approval in order to establish the principle and scale of redevelopment and change of use to residential.

Palatine Road proposal

- The Palatine Road site is the larger site. It is rectangular in shape and situated between Palatine Road which forms part of the District Centre frontage and Allanson Road to rear which is a typical terraced residential street. Currently there is potential for vehicular access to either frontage, but in practice only the rear one is used off Allanson Road to serve the communal office car park. The narrow vehicular access to front is mainly used as an informal pedestrian route between the streets which is a convenience for residents though not a right of way.
- Fronting Allanson Road it is proposed to use a short terrace of three townhouses following the building line and reinforcing the residential character of the street. Each home will be provided with private rear garden. The three-storey townhouse illustrates a modern approach to a traditional style of property with an integral garage to provide one off-road parking space for each home.
- Fronting Palatine Road the existing premises will be demolished and replaced by a 5-storey (ground plus four upper floors) apartment building that can accommodate up to 34 apartments in a mix of one and two bedroom apartments across each floor, including ground floor to front. A communal parking area would provide 24 spaces with turning area – a 70% provision. Usual communal facilities, entrance, bin store and cycle stores can be accommodated on the ground floor.

- No ground floor retail / commercial units are proposed on the Palatine Road frontage. It is considered that national and local trend to reduced need for commercial floorspace and conversion into residential and other uses, combined with the arrangement of existing retail and food and drink uses in the centre, and continued vacancy of modern built units militates against providing what would potentially become dead frontage. By positively developing for residential use it ensures the frontage addresses the street.

Brett Street proposal

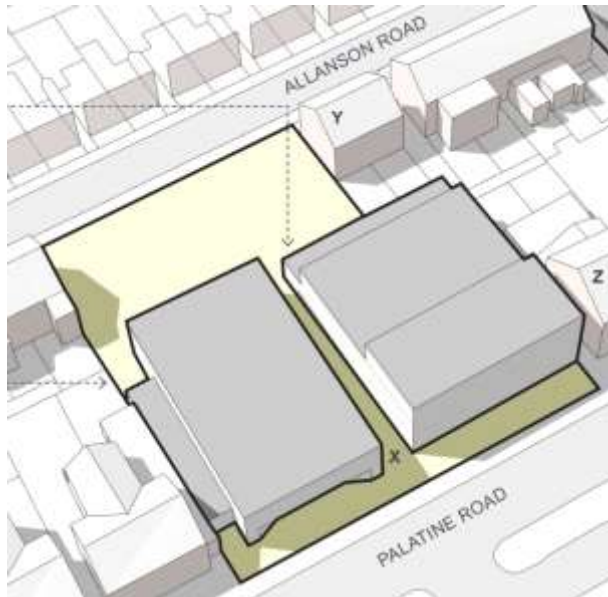
- Transformulas House is located at the junction of Brett Street and Allanson Road, a broadly square site. The existing building will be demolished and two townhouses built orientated toward Brett Street, bringing forward the building line behind a defensible space with gardens to rear. The three-storey townhouse design illustrated follows that at the other site, including integral parking / garage.

- 1.9 Outline planning permission is sought for both proposals. This is to provide an option for Express Solicitors to dispose of the site with benefit of planning permission or to enter into a development option with another party.
- 1.10 Affordable housing provision threshold is met for the Palatine Road site and 8 units, (20% requirement), is proposed as four 1-bed and 4 2-bed apartments. It is proposed this can be secured through planning condition for onsite provision.
- 1.11 Any other developer contributions sought by the local authority will be considered in accordance with relevant tests, i.e. open space, education or transport contributions.

2 SITES, SURROUNDINGS AND PLANNING HISTORY

Palatine Road site

- 2.1 The Palatine Road site comprises two buildings, Resolution House (Nos.317-319) and the Annexe Building (Nos.311-313). Both buildings are in occupation by Express Solicitors for its offices, Use Class E(c), formerly Use Class A2, with change of use from retail granted in 2006 for Resolution House (080073/FO/2006) and 2012 for the Annexe (098565/FU/2012). In 2017 retrospective consent for change of use was granted for 3 former flats at 2nd floor to Resolution House into additional office space (115948/FU/2017).
- 2.2 Presently the larger of the two premises, Resolution House, acts as the main office reception accessed off Palatine Road. It is a part 2 / part 3 storey building with the former flats at 2nd floor level, But because of the nature of conversion from the former flats this office space is not internally linked to the 1st floor and are accessed via a secured, rear external staircase. The Annexe is a two-storey building which shows evidence of past extension(s) to the north side. Both buildings have been extensively remodelled internally to provide work space, offices, internal corridors and alike.



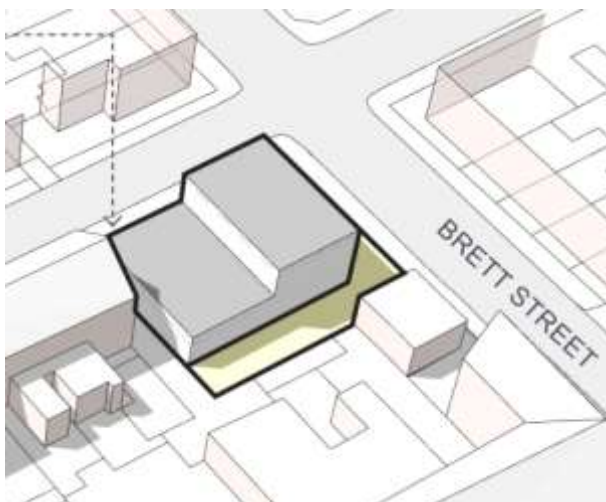
Existing Building Massing, AEW

- 2.3 A secure car park is provided at the rear accessed off Allanson Road to the east, which other than the rear of these premises, is characterised as a typical terraced street with on-street parking to either side. Allanson Road is a one way street heading south between Mill Lane and Brett Street. The gap between the two buildings whilst operable for vehicles managed through demountable bollards and is used informally as a pedestrian route between Allanson Road and Palatine Road by local residents.

- 2.4 The premises are both brick finished, circa mid-1950s and originally built as retail at ground floor with storage / office at first floor, with the addition of 3 flats at 2nd floor level on Resolution House. Appearance is functional and though the frontages have signage and vinyl applied relevant to the office use, the buildings continued to read as commercial in nature. Both buildings follow an established building line which is set back from the adopted back-edge of the highway. Elsewhere along Palatine Road examples of use of this space are for parking, outdoor seating or as with Express Solicitors it is open directly to the pavement.
- 2.5 Adjacent buildings to the Palatine Road site are two-storey semi-detached and terraced houses on Allanson Road to north, south and opposite the site. Nos.22 & 24 Palatine Road rear garden/yard areas back onto the existing car park of the site. On Palatine Road to south is a two-storey building with hot food takeaway and vacant unit at ground, with flats at first floor. To the south is a 2.5 storey building with ground floor commercial for a nail bar and barbers in the first two units, with flats over at first and second (roof).

Brett Street site

- 2.6 Transformulas House is two-storey brick building which was granted retrospective permission in 2019 for conversion from a mixed office, workshop and show room use, to office use, Class E(g), (formerly Class B1), under permission 123841/FO/2019. There is a single-storey modular building for staff welfare use on sited on the west side of the site, (permission 126763/FO/2020). A small area of curtilage parking is available to front access off Brett Street.
- 2.7 Adjacent to west is a single-storey building occupied by a hairdresser with the Palatine Road terraced property beyond providing upper floor flat with access off Brett Street with the main building occupied by solicitors. Opposite on the south side of Brett Street are two-storey terraced homes set behind narrow walled front gardens. To north are side elevation of homes on Allanson Road and rear yards / premises (single-storey) of commercial premises with upper floor flats over fronting Palatine Road.



Existing Building Massing, AEW

- 2.8 Parking restrictions apply on the north side of Brett Street with lined bays to the south side except where access is required. Brett Street is two-way. Allanson Road to the east side of the site is one-way south bound, but across Brett Street it reverts to one-way north bound again leading onto Brett Street. Further east are more residential streets of varying early to mid-20th Century homes. A 3-storey retirement flats complex lies at the end of Brett Street to the east.

Surroundings

- 2.9 Palatine Road is the district centre of Northenden. It is a traditional long-established centre straddling the main road, typical of many suburban neighbourhoods found in British cities. The centre has a relatively low level of retail units, predominantly on its west side. Key units are the Tesco Express (former Metro brand) and Coop Foodstore. These are supported by a handful of local convenience stores, including a Polish convenience store. Typical of many high streets all 3 banks previously present closed between 2015 and 2016. The centre has a significant number of hot food take aways, with all but 1 of the 12 premises located on the eastern side of the road, along with a range of hair dressers / barbers and cafes.
- 2.10 Express Solicitors as a major office use is somewhat of an anomaly in the centre though smaller solicitors and service providers are present within the centre.
- 2.11 The centre is mainly formed of groups of two-storey terraces with two, three-storey terraces being the focus situated between Lingard Road and Heyridge Drive on the west side, set back behind a service road providing on-street parking. These two terraces provide commercial uses at ground with flats over. Upper floor uses within the rest of the centre are a mix of flats, small offices or storage.

- 2.12 Two modern apartment buildings have been built on the east side north of the Church Road junction, each with commercial units at ground level. The corner building is part 4/5/6 storeys and visually dominates the junction approached from the south. The commercial unit is operated by a local convenience store, “Northenden Superstore.” To its north is Heron House a part 3/4/5 storey building completed in 2021; its’ four ground floor commercial units have remained vacant since completion. A third 4-storey apartment building, with commercial ground floor use, is under-construction, also on the eastern side, at 351 Palatine Road, which is due for completion in 2024.
- 2.13 Allanson Road to the west is a residential street formed of late 19th / early 20th Century semi-detached and terraced properties. There are a mix of styles, mostly restrained in detail though some have attractive brick banding and detailing, nearly all are set behind short walled yards/gardens, some with original walling but by no means all. Further east are residential streets with a mix of terraced and semi-detached homes of a variety of periods.

Other site location matters

- 2.14 Because of the proximity of the River Mersey the two sites are subject to flood risk, with both sites within designated Flood Zone 2, (refer to Flood Risk Assessment, Figure 2.1). As matters currently stand the Palatine Road site is at risk in a 1-in-100 year + 41% (for climate change) event to flood to a depth of up to 0.53m and Brett Street up to 0.26m.
- 2.15 Design implications and policy response is set out later in this report and in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy.

3 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that determination of a planning application must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises the Core Strategy, 2012 and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, 1995.
- 3.2 Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework, 2021, which as an expression of Government policy must attract significant weight. Others material considerations are emerging policy in Places for Everyone which remains subject of Examination and therefore weight is limited, and supplementary planning documents and other local guidance where weight is variable depending on the nature, age and relevance of the policy or guidance.

Development Plan Policy

Core Strategy, 2012

- 3.3 The following policies are considered of most relevance, but this list is not exhaustive:
- Policy EC2 Existing employment space – policy generally seeks to protect and retain existing employment premises / sites, applicable to the existing office buildings though the policy is more directly concerned with premises in designated employment areas rather than a local or district centre.
 - Policy H7 Wythenshawe – area based policy that takes in Northenden and encourages high density housing within district centres, including Northenden, with a target of 1,830 units over the plan period 2009-27.
 - Policy H8 Affordable housing – sets a 20% target, split 5% social rent and 15% intermediate housing type based on a 15 unit threshold. There is SPG (2008) supporting the policy.
 - Policy C2 District Centres – supports retail, commercial, leisure and community uses within centres and permits new housing to support / complement such activities with explicit expectation of higher density housing schemes.
 - Policy C7 Wythenshawe District Centres – this covers Northenden and complements policy C2 with explicit support to retail and evening economy, and matters of balancing uses including residential amenity. Higher density residential development should be immediately adjacent the centre and appropriate to the prevailing scale and character.

- Policies T1 Sustainable transport and T2 Accessible areas of opportunity and need – taken together the policies place expectation on promoting walking, cycling and public transport in new development, particularly in accessible locations such as district centres.
- Policy EN14 Flood risk – applies to the Palatine Road proposals within Flood Zone 2, classing residential use as ‘more vulnerable’ in line with national policy guidance. Relevant analysis of flood risk and appropriate mitigation measures are required in support of such uses.
- Policy PA1 Developer contributions – applies to a range of potential factors on affordable housing, education, health and welfare facilities, community facilities, green infrastructure / open space, public realm, highway and transport improvements that may be relevant and viable to support.
- Policy DM1 Development management – a wide ranging policy to consider general planning matters of siting, layout, mass, scale, materials, amenity, accommodation space, lighting and parking. Policy cuts across several policy areas including flood risk, drainage and transportation.

Unitary Development Plan, 1995

- 3.4 Though now considerably dated at 28 years old, saved policies remain part of the adopted development plan. In our view none of the reviewed policies are of significance to the application proposals.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021

- 3.5 Sustainable development is at the core of the Framework, which takes in economic, social and environmental matters at paragraph 8, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development applying under paragraph 11.
- 3.6 Significantly boosting housing supply is a key aspect of national planning policy, (paragraph 60), with emphasis on the importance of identifying and meeting local housing needs, including affordable housing (paragraphs 61-63). Minimum requirement of 10% affordable housing applies to all major developments, (paragraph 65).
- 3.7 Chapter 7 seeks to ensure the vitality of town centres with a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation, which includes housing as part of a suitable mix of uses recognising its importance in ensuring vitality (paragraph 86).

- 3.8 Sustainable transport and taking opportunities to maximise density of development in centres is supported, that developments should have safe and suitable access, prioritise walking and cycling, (Chapter 9).
- 3.9 Making effective use of land (Chapter 11) extends to giving substantial weight to using suitable brownfield land in settlements for homes and using such land more effectively (paragraph 120). Planning policies and decision need to reflect changes in demand for land with regular reviews (paragraph 122), and a positive approach should be taken to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose where it will help to meet development needs (paragraph 123). Example is given of retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand provided it would not undermine key economic sectors of the vitality and viability of centres (paragraph 123a).
- 3.10 Achieving well-designed places (Chapter 12) is considered fundamental to good planning and to sustainable development, creating better places in which to live and work (paragraph 126).
- 3.11 Planning for climate change, including flood risk, (Chapter 14), requires a sequential risk-based approach to location of development, which applies here to housing. Policy is supplemented by guidance in NPPG on the sequential test, and if necessary, exception test.

National Planning Practice Guidance, since 2014

- 3.12 Introduced in 2014 and periodically updated as support, clarification and expansion on Framework policies.

Other matters

Supplementary planning documents / guidance

- 3.13 There are no supplementary planning documents / guidance considered relevant.

Other local guidance (non-SPD status)

- Manchester Residential Quality Guidance, March 2017
- Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments, GD 04 v 6.00, September 2018
- Air Quality & Planning Technical Guidance, August 2022
- Planning & Noise Technical Guidance, October 2022

Nationally Described Space Standards, 2015

- 3.14 NDSS sets internal space standards, including stipulations on gross internal floor area, storage and facilities in key dimensions of new homes related to the proposed occupancy of the home. Standards apply to key living areas, bedrooms and bathrooms, including provision of floor to ceiling heights.

Emerging Planning Policy

- 3.15 Places for Everyone is now unlikely to reach adoption by the 9 GM authorities in 2023 due to the extended Examination process. This also delays the preparation of the Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy and saved UDP policies. Consultation has been held on the Local Plan but the emerging plan has not reached either Regulation 18 or 19 stages to gain weight as a material consideration.
- 3.16 Given the strategic nature of Places for Everyone and that the replacement Local Plan has not significantly progressed we do not consider emerging policy further in this planning analysis.

4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Palatine Road proposals

4.1 Permission is sought for:

Outline planning permission (with matters of access, layout and scale for approval) for demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment of site for up to 34 apartments and 3 townhouses (Use Class C3)

4.2 The proposal will require the full demolition of all existing buildings and structures on site.

4.3 An apartment building of 5-storeys in height (ground + 4 upper floors) is proposed to the western Palatine Road frontage to provide 34 apartments in a mix of one and two bedroom units. Entrance to apartments will be available from the street and internal parking courtyard at rear. Building management and support uses will be located at ground floor.

4.4 A terrace of three townhouses, 3-storey in height, will be sited fronting Allanson Road with a revised means of vehicular access to the northside between the proposed homes and no.16 Allanson Road. Each town house will incorporate a garage accessed off Allanson Road with main living accommodation at intermediate, first and second storey. A rear garden is provided to each home.

4.5 The new access will lead to a secure parking courtyard for up to 24 vehicles. The parking area will sit partly beneath the upper floors of the apartment building. The courtyard will also provide a communal bin store for apartment resident use. The three townhouses will have their own bin storage.

4.6 Pedestrian access will be provided between Allanson Road and Palatine Road along the northern site boundary. This will not be 24-hour for the safety and security of new and existing residents, but will be available during daytime hours for all to use to maintain the convenience of the link through the site used by existing residents.

Brett Street Proposal

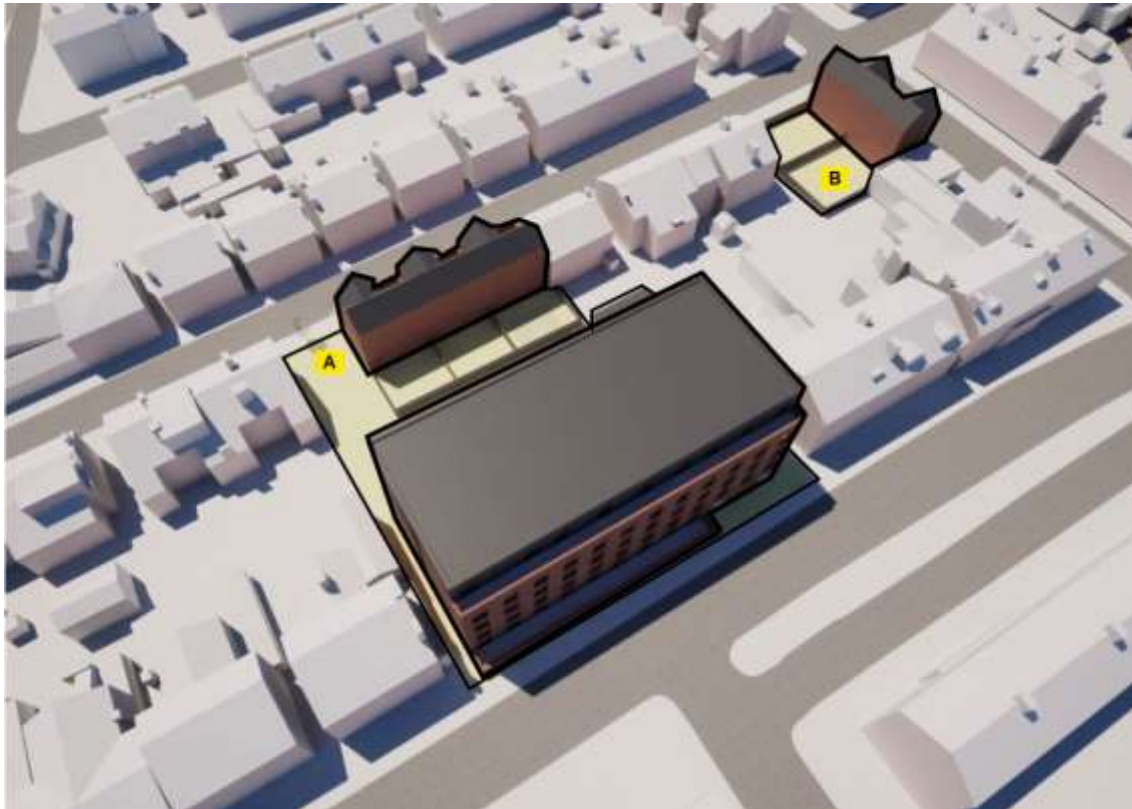
4.7 Permission is sought in separate application for:

Outline planning permission (with matters of access, layout and scale for approval) for demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment of site for 2 townhouses (Use Class C3)

4.8 Two townhouses, 3-storey in height, will be sited fronting Brett Street with revised means of access for each house onto Brett Street. Each town house will incorporate a garage accessed off Allanson

Road with main living accommodation at intermediate, first and second storey. A rear garden is provided to each home.

Illustrations below from Design & Access Statement, AEW.



Indicative 3d view of proposed apartment block to site A.



Indicative 3d view of proposed townhouses to site B.



5 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

5.1 Pre-application advice was provided via email in March 2023 – see Appendix 2.

5.2 In response to the advice we make the following comments as part of the scheme development:

- *In principle the use of the site(s) for residential and mixed residential/ground floor purposes is considered acceptable and one reflective of the character and context of the sites.*

We have maintained the residential use on Brett Street but have taken an option to go for 100% residential on the Palatine Road site and no commercial use at ground floor on Palatine Road. The reasoning is set out in Section 6.

- *Whilst the element to the Palatine Road frontage appears to reflect the height of recent approvals in the district centre there are some concerns with the intervisibility of rearward facing windows and existing residential properties. This is something that we would suggest is fully reviewed prior to any submission of planning applications and/or supported by appropriate assessment and drawings within any planning submission.*

Though the application is made in outline with the internal layouts for future detail design, the application drawings include potential arrangements to demonstrate that judicious placement of stair cores, apartments and windows and lead to avoidance of direct line of sight. Moreover elevation treatment could deploy angled windows to cast views which has been successfully used in other urban schemes of this nature.

- *The townhouses proposed on the corner of Brett Street and Allanson Road do present some challenges of acceptance based on the plans presented. The corner plot would have extremely limited (if any) external private amenity space, and all of the housing units would also be expected to have access to one off street car parking space. This element appears to be proposing too many units to be accommodated satisfactorily.*

The Brett Street site has been revised down to two townhouse, fronting Brett Street to reduce the density, provide off street parking and rear garden space to address the noted issues in the initial feasibility study.

- *The town houses proposed on Allanson Road to the rear of the main Palatine Road site as presented have no private external amenity space, it is presumed that the house type includes integral garages? The Council would require comfort that these were of adequate size to fulfil an off street car parking space*

and that the house type presented an 'active' ground floor aspect to the street. Any acceptance of these units would need to be based on them having external private amenity space.

The layout now accommodates a rear private garden / amenity space as sought, and the house type includes an internal garage that is dimensioned to 6 x 3 metres, plus an addition 2 sqm internal bin store area. For reasons of flood risk and raising the internal floor level 500mm the Allanson Road frontage will present with front door, window and garage, with habitable rooms outlook on upper floors. It will still present as a modern townhouse.

- *In terms of car parking requirements for the apartments, recent approvals in the district centre have been close to 100% provision. Any reduction below 100% would need to be fully justified and supported by appropriate transport statements and assessments in order that it be accepted, we would, with colleagues in Highway Services, be able to review this in more detail via further pre-application discussions. The servicing arrangements for the commercial uses would also need full consideration as part of those discussions.*

We are proposing 100% provision for the townhouses and 70% (24 spaces) for the apartment scheme. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan and we consider the approach is acceptable given this is a highly sustainable location in a District Centre and meets national and local policy objectives. A review of the Core Strategy, Appendix B shows that there are no residential parking standards to reference.

As there is no longer commercial space proposed at ground floor on Palatine Road issue of servicing no longer applies.

Servicing for waste collection for residents has been considered in the layout design to meet carry distances for communal bins to allow collection off Allanson Road; townhouses will have personal waste collection.

- *As with all developments in the City we would seek 20% affordable housing on -site provision for this scale of proposal, excellent sustainability and energy efficiency performance of the buildings, working towards on-site biodiversity net gain in line with forthcoming legislative requirements and high quality of design and material choice. We would of course be happy to have further meetings/ reviews going forward if your client wishes.*

On the Palatine Road site, which exceeds policy threshold, we propose affordable housing provision of 8 units (21.6%). At application we are assuming all will be for social rent, in a mix of 4no. 1-bedroom and 4no. 2-bedroom units, but the applicant is open to discuss this depending on consultee response and demand from registered providers.

A High-Level Sustainability Statement, prepared by BWB, addresses in principle how carbon reduction can be embedded into materials and construction, and use of low / efficient energy and renewable energy onsite. This will be for detail design and can be conditioned.

Biodiversity Net Gain will not strictly apply to an application made before 11 November 2023. Because each site has an effective ‘nil value’ baseline any improvements in the form of proposed bat and bird bricks (other measures might also be feasible at detail design stage), can be considered a “100% net gain.”

We consider a high quality design can ensue from the parameters of the layout and scale as set out in the Design & Access Statement and illustrations, but the choice of materials and finish will be a reserved matter.

We have not had further discussion pre-application submission as we consider the comments received have helped inform design choices and changes. We will nonetheless continue to work with officers during application on any matters raised by them or consultees.

- *In terms of specific questions; some of the site is located in Flood Zone 3 and 2, I am not aware of recent similar developments in the locality with these attributes with the most recent sites being outside of both. Clearly this is a matter that would need to be fully addressed in your FRA, the sequential approach etc and any application would be subject of consultation with the EA given the potential change in vulnerability of users on the site. You may wish to engage early with the EA to understand their likely response to the proposals.*

A Flood Risk Assessment has been commissioned and discussions held with Environment Agency. As a ‘more vulnerable’ use the acceptance of the proposed residential use has been demonstrated with the proposed mitigation measures, particularly the 500mm raising of internal floor levels.

- *In relation to additional height, this would be dependent on being able to demonstrate within the outline application that such a scale could be accommodated in terms of visual amenity and character of the area and that the requirements for car parking amenity space and refuse storage could all be successfully accommodated within the site.*

The Design & Access Statement addresses the concept of the height of the apartment building fronting Palatine Road for consideration, supported by illustrations for consideration and comments in the Section 6 to this Planning Statement. We’ve commented on the parking levels, amenity and refuse storage above.

- *Other constraints of the site are that it currently lies within the safeguarded land for HS2, they would be a statutory consultee for any application.*

The point is noted and we will await any response. It is not anticipated that the depth of the proposed tunnel alignment will pose risks from initial review.

- *Your document list appears to cover those elements we would wish to accompany such an application, we would also wish to see commitments to sustainability and energy efficiency set out within the design and access statement.*

We have chosen to prepare a separate High Level Sustainability Statement to cover those matters to enable it to be conditioned to inform future detail design at reserved matters.

- *The advice in this email is given in good faith on the basis of the information available at the present time. The advice may be subject to revision following further examination or consultation, or where additional information comes to light, and is therefore not binding on any future recommendation, that may be made by the Council or any formal decision by the Council.*

The standard caveat to the advice is fully understood and the office's advice has been accepted and welcomed on that basis.

6 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 As the Statement covers the proposals at the separate sites, we have approached our assessment by issue and draw either parallel or diverging conclusions on each. In the subsequent Conclusions we then draw separate summations on each proposal so that our case in support for each can be seen solus drawn from these considerations.

6.2 The considerations are:

- Principle of proposed use
- Proposed access, layout and scale
- Detail design, appearance and landscape
- Environmental matters, including flood risk, noise and air quality
- Transport matters
- Sustainable development
- Other matters

Principle of proposed use

Palatine Road Proposal

New market / affordable homes

- 6.3 The proposal will see the demolition and redevelopment of the existing buildings to provide new residential development in the form of an apartment building and short terrace of three townhouses. The number of units formed will be up to 34 apartments and 3 townhouses; 37 in total.
- 6.4 A total of 8 apartments (21.6%) will be provided as affordable homes, all proposed social / affordable / intermediate rent by application in a mix of 4no. 1-bedroom and 4no. 2-bedroom units.
- 6.5 The provision of new market housing and affordable housing will support the long-term requirement to meet housing needs locally and within the city region. National policy supports the provision of housing in our town centres as part of forming sustainable communities and to make the best and most efficient use of our land resource.
- 6.6 In line with national planning policy the provision of new housing and new affordable housing should be given significant weight in support of the proposal.

Loss of office use

- 6.7 The proposal will see the loss of the existing office use in both buildings. Express Solicitors is relocating its business into a consolidated site at South Court, Sharston Business Park which is located around 1.2km from Northenden centre and 1.5km from the existing premises. The relocation is allowing for the continued growth of the business from some 560 employees to a planned 1,000 employees. Those jobs will continue to be provided within and mainly taken-up by people resident in South Manchester.
- 6.8 For planning purposes it is the loss of the future potential of the re-occupation of the offices that is in consideration. The buildings are both repurposed retail units, with Resolution House (317-319) also formerly having 3 flats at 2nd floor level. As the business has organically grown from the first floor of Resolution House to the ground floor, then the Annexe Buildings and finally the apartments, it has done so with each floor becoming subdivided to provide offices, meeting rooms, storage, kitchen and facilities to meet needs. It is inefficient in layout and movement and the three former flats only accessible from an external staircase to the roof top.
- 6.9 What the buildings are not suitable for are reletting to another office occupier without extensive refurbishment and remodelling. And since Express Solicitors has announced its relocation its marketing of the buildings has yielded little interest, with that received for short-term, part lets, which is not of scale to allow the necessary renovation / remodelling to allow multiple occupation / reuse. The buildings are at the end of their effective use with the vacating of Express Solicitors with no realistic prospect of re-occupation as an office use.

Palatine Road frontage

- 6.10 A design decision has been taken not to provide commercial units at ground floor on the Palatine Road frontage. This decision has been informed by layout and amenity considerations and the provision of existing commercial units in the centre and lack of take-up of completed units at 391 Palatine Road since completion in 2021 and a further commercial unit at 351 Palatine Road under-construction to come onto the market.
- 6.11 In terms of layout and amenity the key consideration is servicing. Because of the importance of Palatine Road as a key bus route and thoroughfare, servicing from the front would not be supported. This means deliveries and waste collection must come from the rear via the residential area of Allanson Road. This itself leads to potential conflict and it is notable no existing unit – due to age and legacy – has servicing from the rear off Allanson Road. Though the two buildings when

previously in retail use were serviced from the rear it is our view that to reintroduce this arrangement will be a retrograde step for residents and amenity.

- 6.12 Setting aside the use of Allanson Road, there is also an internal layout consideration on how to separate commercial and future residential uses in a mixed-use scheme to which there is no ideal design solution, and all compromises will have a degree of harm to existing and future residential amenity from location and access of commercial bin stores, service areas and receiving of deliveries. Were any uses to be food & drink then there are added issues of noise, fumes, plant and ventilation to consider, aside from any proliferation issues with existing uses in the centre.
- 6.13 Turning to the existing centre, a centre health check, (see Appendix 1), finds that the centre currently has a 9% vacancy rate which is better than national average, currently at 13.8%¹. Retail is the main use within the centre, though it only comprises 28% of units, with two-thirds concentrated on the west side of Palatine Road, with the Parade as the focus and notable outlier retail units of Tesco Express, Coop Local and Northenden Superstore. Most retail provision is convenience targeted at daily needs, with handful of national retailers.
- 6.14 The other main use in the centre is food & beverages in the form of cafes, hot food takeaways and restaurants, comprising nearly one-third of all units (31%). Though the cafes and restaurants are more evenly distributed to either side of Palatine Road, all bar one takeaway (93%) is located on the eastern side.
- 6.15 Though a traditional linear centre with units to either side, the arrangement of uses to east and west sides, means there is a distinct different character to each side. The west side, focused on the Parade, but extending down to Tesco is the 'retail core' so to speak. The on-street parking bays beside the Parade further encourages activity and the west side is also the departure side for buses heading into town. All lead to more daytime activity on this side of the centre.
- 6.16 The east side is dominated by takeaways with an evening bias to opening / use, and a number of hairdressers and barbers, which though open throughout the day do not drive footfall in the same manner as the retail on the west side. And the lack of activity is accentuated by shuttered takeaways in mornings and afternoons for those that do not open for, or remain open after, lunch trade.

¹ Source: Retail Insight Network – Q1 2023 High Street vacancy 13.8%; all centres vacancy (including shopping centres and retail parks) 15.7%

- 6.17 We consider that these characteristics has led to the difficulty in the letting of the new, modern unit(s) at Heron Point, 591 Palatine Road, still advertised to let two-years after completion in 2021. This will shortly be added to by the new unit at 531 Palatine Road. All three on the east side of Palatine Road.
- 6.18 Should the redeveloped Express Solicitors site be provided with a traditional commercial /retail unit mix at ground floor, which would lend itself to smaller, lock-up units given the layout, (and setting aside the servicing issue), it would in our view compound the issue. It could well raise vacancy levels in the centre, concentrated on the eastern side, and at a time when the trend nationally and locally is for less commercial / retail floorspace in response to changing habits.
- 6.19 Any such units would also be unsuited to the most common use on the east side for hot food takeaways because of the residential uses over and the placing of extraction flues into the rear. Though these uses already exist, it would not in our view represent an ideal intensification of such uses for future and existing residential amenity. And, because of how the centre operates it is also unlikely a retail use would locate on the east side given the dominance the west side has, and that there is availability of vacant units on the east side. Though as noted the modern unit(s) remain vacant for over 2 years indicating a potential lack of further local market demand.
- 6.20 For these reasons we consider rather than the new apartment building being saddled with unlet units and more dead frontage that it is better to take a positive planning and design step to build residential to ground floor. With the building line already established behind the property curtilage there is ability to provide defensible space between apartments and pavement edge, and the raised internal floor level, brings residents above street level, which assists amenity.
- 6.21 It is our view that by taking this positive design step on the ground floor use it will not only remove a potential harm to the vitality of the centre of long-term vacancies but will positively improve the vitality through use.

Brett Street Proposal

- 6.22 The Brett Street proposal seeks redevelopment of the existing office building and outbuilding to form two townhouses.
- 6.23 The site is located on the eastern edge of the defined District Centre, as are all the homes along the west side of Allanson Road to the north of the site. It is partly surrounded by terraced houses to north, east (across Allanson Road junction) and south (across Brett Street). Only to the east toward

Palatine Road is commercial with single-storey unit housing a hairdresser before reaching the end terrace elevation of premises fronting Palatine Road.

- 6.24 Two market townhouses, each potentially of 3-bedrooms as indicated are proposed with integral garage. This will help support local housing demand for family housing.
- 6.25 The proposal will lead to the loss of the existing 2-storey office building / workspace. Currently the space operates as an annexe to the main site. This has advantage that the limited parking availability (7 frontage spaces) can be managed as part of a wider Travel Plan implemented by Express Solicitors given that the premises itself accommodates in the region of 60 employees. This advantage is lost with separate occupation of the unit with a clear mismatch in the floorspace and parking facilities, even for a unit with a District Centre location.
- 6.26 And the provision of two new homes falls in line with national policy to diversify and make best use of land resource in our urban areas, supporting sustainable living choices.

Access, layout and scale

Palatine Road Proposal

- 6.27 Vehicular access is currently taken off Allanson Road at the rear of the site with a through route available, though not generally used for vehicles between the two buildings off Palatine Road. This gap is more generally demountable bollard controlled and used for pedestrian access only, with the pedestrian route between the two streets used by local residents as a convenient shortcut. To be clear this is not a public right of way.
- 6.28 The proposal will maintain vehicular access off Allanson Road but proposed moved to the northern edge of the eastern boundary as illustrated. The Transport Statement, prepared by Prime, confirms that the proposed access meets relevant access / visibility requirements to serve the development.
- 6.29 A separate pedestrian access will be formed along the northern side boundary to retain a permissive route for local residents, with night time gating to improve security to future and existing properties / residents.
- 6.30 With the access position the layout follows the clear building lines set by Allanson Road and Palatine Road with a central parking courtyard. This provides separation between the proposed townhouses and apartment buildings for privacy and outlook of circa 18 metres. But as conceived in the townhouse design the main habitable room windows to, or principle where more than one exists, are formed to the Allanson Road frontage with only one bedroom window to rear at mezzanine level.

Whilst this arrangement is not for approval at outline stage, it demonstrates that an acceptable arrangement for future residential amenity in an urban location can be formed.

- 6.31 As for existing residential properties the nearest homes are 20 and 22 to the rear of Resolution House. Currently their rear garden / yard areas end at the 2-storey elevation of Resolution House with the external staircase rising behind and overlooking the gardens. The proposal will see the large wall and staircase removed and the new apartment building set back 10m from this point, widening the separation to 18 metres and considerably opening out the outlook of the two properties and removing the direct overlooking from the rear staircase. It is considered this degree of separation is acceptable within the urban location.
- 6.32 The apartment building will rise to 5 stories (ground + four upper storeys) from this new position. The building is of a larger scale than its immediate neighbours, but comparable to recent nearby development at 391 and 395 Palatine Road, which include 5 and 6 storey elements, and the under-construction development at 351 Palatine Road which is set at 4-storeys.
- 6.33 Government promotes the upward expansion of our urban centres to make efficient use of land, particularly to provide housing, and centres such as Northenden are largely unable to use height away from Palatine Road due to the changing suburban character. As part of scheme appraisal permitted development rights do apply to Resolution House to enable change of use to residential and an additional storey to be formed. Whilst it would not be a full floor plan and would need articulation to work for residential use it demonstrates how Government intends to push higher density development in urban locations. That option was not pursued because the better design option is the layout proposed which greatly improves setting and separation distances.
- 6.34 A stair core is proposed to the southeast corner thereby offsetting direct back-to-back visibility and outlook between new apartments and Nos.20 and 22. Outlook of the uppermost two floors will be over rooftops to west. There will be a change and its presence will lead to a perception of overlooking, but we consider this perception does not amount to actual overlooking or loss of privacy. This is because of the separate, offset and height of the development which will allow views over rooftops. And the scheme delivers wider improvements to the setting and amenity of 20 and 22 Allanson Road.
- 6.35 For 12 Allanson Road to the north a similar arrangement exists. A stair core removes a direct offset and the building line of Palatine Road slightly angles the elevation aware from straight-on. Moreover the rear of 12 Allanson Road does not back onto the site and it is principally overlooked by the

outrigger at rear of 307 Palatine Road. We do not consider its residential amenity will adversely be harmed by the scale of the apartment building.

- 6.36 Presenting to Palatine Road, the highway ranges from 21 to 25 metres wide (318 and 324 Palatine Road). Palatine Road can already accommodate buildings of scale per the approved developments at Nos. 351, 391 and 395; indeed the Parade opposite is three stories too, as of course is the existing Resolution House.
- 6.37 The proposed 5-storey building will materially change the appearance of this section of Palatine Road for the better by introducing a new building to replace the ageing converted retail premises, injecting further confidence in the centre as a place to invest and to live, raising the profile and quality of the centre. The visualisations demonstrate the transition and change from adjacent 2 and 3 storey terraces which will provide visual interest and variety.
- 6.38 Finally, the layout practically addresses the needs of the future development with each townhouse provided with its own private garden and parking (integral garage to front) to be attractive to families. The courtyard provides secure communal parking for apartments and location for bin store. Though landscaping will be minimal, this is an urban site, plus the layout allows for pockets of planting / trees in the courtyard and options on the Palatine Road frontage where the building line set back provides a buffer zone to residents.

Brett Street Proposal

- 6.39 Brett Street is a different scale of proposal. The key consideration in layout of the two townhouses was whether it could accommodate more than two properties with adequate amenity / parking provision and should it be orientated to Allanson Road or Brett Street.
- 6.40 The first assessment was found in the negative that even with variety of house designs any increase over 2 homes would lead to unacceptable compromise. The second assessment to orientate to Brett Street was driven by the existing street layout whereby the terrace to east of the Allanson Road junction also fronts Brett Street, presenting its gable end to Allanson Road. This is mirrored on either side of the junction to the south too. It would have appeared unusual to orientate this one corner plot to Allanson Road.
- 6.41 Prime Transport advise that the layout for direct parking space / garage access off Brett Street is acceptable and an effective improvement on the existing arrangement of the office building.
- 6.42 By using a broader townhouse design it allows a useable rear garden depth and provides a 15m separation to the side elevation of 32 Allanson Road (the proposed garden and elevation is separated

by a 3rd party access to rear of 333 Palatine Road). As such no harm to amenity of existing or proposed residents is considered to arise from the layout and scale.

Detail design, appearance and landscape

Palatine Road Proposal

- 6.43 The Design and Access Statement, prepared by AEW and the illustrative CGIs provide an indication of the quality of appearance and use of a predominantly brick materials palette, with tile roof to the townhouses. In truth there are multiple ways the appearance can be shaped, including in the rear elevation of the apartment building windows that are articulated to cast views away from the perpendicular should concerns still remain on perception of overlooking.
- 6.44 As mentioned above landscape is limited to pockets in the layout, a function of the urban and need for a parking courtyard. However, vertical planting to the apartment buildings is an available option to add visual interest and biodiversity which could be considered.
- 6.45 All matters are reserved and can be guided through relevant condition.

Brett Street Proposal

- 6.46 The townhouse proposals will follow the same brick and tile finish but need not follow the same design or appearance as those on the Allanson Road location, though the degree of visual separation would prevent both being clearly seen in one view that it would matter little given most urban areas have repetitive house types from a variety of periods, which cumulatively builds character.
- 6.47 Other than some minimal frontage planting the landscaping of this site is predominantly private rear gardens. As the site is presently open hardstanding occupied by cars, the proposal will make a significant qualitative improvement to the streetscape with hard and soft landscape features.

Nationally Described Space Standards

- 6.48 The illustrative layouts for the townhouses and apartments will meet Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) which can be conditioned as a requirement for detail design under reserved matters in each application.

Environmental matters, including flood risk, noise and air quality

Flood risk

- 6.49 BWB has prepared a combined Flood Risk and Drainage Scoping Study, Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Statement in support of the two outline applications.

6.50 The key findings and summary provided by BWB on matters of flood risk are:

- Both sites are located entirely within Flood Zone 2. Minor updates to the Upper Mersey (2018) hydraulic model show the sites to be located outside of the 1 in 30-year floodplain. Both sites are located within the extents of the 1 in 100-year, 1 in 100-year +41% and 1 in 100-year flood events.
- Within the design flood event (1 in 100-year +41% climate change event) peak depths within the Palatine Road Site (which BWB in its report refers to as 'Parcel A'), are shown to reach up to 0.53m; at the Brett Street Site ('Parcel B') depths reach up to 0.26m.
- BWB pre-development correspondence with the Environment Agency has confirmed that as there is no increase in built footprint compensatory floodplain storage will not be required as the existing building footprint can be 'banked'. This applies to both sites.
- The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) recommends that floor levels for habitable uses (are raised to an agreed freeboard (which may typically be 600mm) above the maximum water level during a 1 in 100-year flood event plus climate change. This information has informed the levels used in the layout for approval, and in the case of Palatine Road site leads to the raising of internal floor levels from adjacent properties.
- The site is located within the 'Middle River Mersey catchment including areas near Bramhall, Stockport, Sale, Altrincham and Urmston' EA Flood Alert Area and the 'River Mersey at Northenden' EA Flood Warning Area. BWB recommended that site owners and users sign up to receive EA alerts and warnings to understand when flooding may occur so the appropriate action can be taken. A matter that is commonly sought through planning condition.
- Both sites are considered to be at a medium risk of flooding from groundwater sources. It is considered that the raising of FFLs as advised by BWB will provide mitigation against the groundwater and pluvial risk.
- The site is considered to be at a low risk from other sources of flooding including canals, reservoirs and large waterbodies, and sewers.
- Palatine Road site will discharge surface water to the local combined sewers in Palatine Road and at a restricted runoff rate that will provide betterment on the existing conditions. Whereas the Brett Street site is proposed to be drained utilising existing connections.

6.51 As such on the evidence and findings it can be determined that the development will not itself be susceptible to unacceptable risk from flooding nor will it lead to increase of any risk to existing homes and properties in the area.

- 6.52 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 2² has been assessed by BWB through its Flood Risk Assessment. As a ‘more vulnerable’ use defined by the Framework (Annex 3), development is appropriate within Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flood).

Drainage

- 6.53 The Sustainable Drainage Statement (SDS), prepared by BWB has found two slightly different approaches to drainage for the two sites given the nature of the proposals on each, but in each case an overall betterment on existing conditions is being provided for, in line with City Council guidance.
- In the case of the Palatine Road site, a restriction based upon 50% betterment on the existing brownfield rate has been proposed with a mechanical vortex device and associated attenuation in the form of below ground cellular storage being put forward to enable this restriction. The attenuation has been sized to accommodate up to, and including, the 1 in 100 year + climate change rainfall event.
 - As the proposed layout progresses other SuDS features such as, but not limited to, permeable paving, tree pits and rain gardens could be investigated. The outfall for both surface and foul water is proposed to be to the existing United Utilities (UU) sewer network. UU have confirmed that foul flows could be discharged at an unrestricted rate.
 - The Brett Street site has a slightly different approach, with the restriction being based upon the fact that green space in the form of gardens is being introduced as part of the development, rather than any sort of formal restriction rate through a mechanical device. Therefore, attenuation is not proposed to be provided, with surface water being discharged to the existing UU sewer network.
- 6.54 BWB would expect standard conditions to be applied in both applications for approval of relevant drainage arrangements, which would include further liaison with United Utilities and LLFA. A CCTV survey of existing drainage is proposed and again can be conditioned. Finally, BWB mentions the presence of an easement to the Palatine Road frontage but this is anticipated to relate to the existing connection to the buildings and can be clarified through detail drainage design.

² Manchester City, Salford City and Trafford Councils Level 2 SFRA, JBA Consulting, March 2011

- 6.55 As such there is no flood or drainage matter of concern arising from the two proposals that has not been assessed and can be conditions for detail design control and implementation in line with local and national policies.

Ecology

- 6.56 UES was commissioned to provide initial review of the two sites. Only a bat survey scoping survey was considered necessary to undertake for the existing buildings, which resulted in only one requirement for further survey on Resolution House, and it is this Bat Presence / Absence Survey which accompanies the application. It has found no evidence of roosting bats at Resolution House and therefore no further survey or mitigation work is necessary.
- 6.57 As best practice it is proposed that the detail designs should incorporate measures for bat and bird boxes in each development site which can be secured through relevant planning condition.
- 6.58 As submission will pre-date 11 November 2023 it is confirmed by government that Biodiversity Net Gain will not formally apply to the applications. However, given that the effective baseline of each site is nil as fully developed sites with no existing ecology value, any mitigation through installation of bat and bird boxes which can be secured by condition will lead to a 100% improvement over the effective baseline, well in excess of BNG 10% improvement requirement.

Noise

- 6.59 A Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by BWB accompanies the application.
- 6.60 Its findings show that; *'noise levels can be suitably controlled to within recommended acoustic design standards, subject to a commensurate level of protection being included in the design of the building façade, so that an appropriate acoustic environment can be provided to all future occupants, and that impacts associated with the operation of the Development can be controlled.'* [Executive Summary]
- 6.61 The baseline survey was undertaken in March 2023 and the internal noise level design criteria within residential spaces on the most noise affected façade (Palatine Road) will require a glazed unit with sound reduction in the region of 27-35 dB in conjunction with an active, whole building mechanical ventilation system. This can be secured in detail design through relevant planning condition.
- 6.62 As to any installation of plant, which is likely to be limited to the apartment building, this should meet emission limits specified in accordance with BS4142:2014, which the report notes should be capable of achieving through attention to the selection, installation and attenuation of the plant. Once more this can be controlled through relevant condition to meet required standards.

- 6.63 It therefore can be concluded that noise levels received by future residents can be mitigated to provide a suitable residential environment and amenity, and that the development should not itself give rise to noise to detriment of existing noise sensitive neighbours / users.

Air quality

- 6.64 An Air Quality Assessment, prepared by BWB accompanies the application.
- 6.65 Its findings show that the proposed developments trip generation (cross-referenced from the Transport Assessment) did not exceed the relevant screening criteria for development both outside and within an Air Quality Management Area. Therefore, a detailed impact assessment is not required and the impact of the proposed development on local air quality is considered to be not significant.
- 6.66 A detailed road traffic emissions exposure assessment was undertaken to consider the suitability of the site for the proposed residential use. Concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) were predicted across and compared to the current air quality objectives for England. The modelling assessment was undertaken in accordance with Defra Local Air Quality Technical Guidance and Institute of Air Quality Management & Environmental Protection UK guidance. Pollutant concentrations were predicted to be below the current relevant air quality objectives for England and the site was considered suitable for the proposed residential use. No mitigation measures are therefore required to minimise the exposure of future occupants of the sites to elevated pollutant concentrations.
- 6.67 Even though no mitigation measures are necessary it is both supported by the assessment and proposed in application that all parking spaces (communal and garage) shall be fitted with an electrical vehicle charging point. This can be secured by condition.

Land contamination

- 6.68 A Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment, prepared by BWB accompanies the application for the two sites.
- 6.69 Within its Executive Summary it notes the historic land uses of the sites prior to 1897 were undeveloped land, with residential and garden development following later, leading to mid-20th Century land uses as seen today on site. Limited potentially contaminative land uses have been identified within or adjacent to either site.
- 6.70 From review of ground conditions, geo-technical and environmental factors it is considered that the proposed use is at moderate risk from hazardous ground gas being present and it is recommended

that ground investigation is undertaken to confirm ground conditions on each site, to assess the ground gas regime and to allow for in-situ and laboratory testing. This can be controlled by standard planning condition(s).

- 6.71 As such ground conditions present not obstacle to the proposed residential use of either site.

Transport matters

- 6.72 Prime Transport has prepared a combined Transport Statement and draft Travel Plan in support of the applications.
- 6.73 Both application sites are found to be in a highly accessible location for access to shops, employment, services, facilities, schools and public transport which is not surprising given the location within Northenden centre.
- 6.74 By comparison of the existing office use profile of each site to the proposed residential uses the trip generation is significantly lower in each case leading to a betterment on the local highway network. The location within the District Centre allows a significant opportunity for journeys to be undertaken by foot for most day to day needs, with cycling and public transport connections available to multiple areas to access schools, employment and larger shopping facilities, including the city centre.
- 6.75 The vehicular access onto Allanson Road is found to meet relevant visibility and access standards and the layout will accommodate bin store to meet carry distances for refuse collectors on street and for residents internally. Vehicular drive access onto Brett Street from the proposed town houses is considered to be safe and improvement on existing curtilage parking arrangements.
- 6.76 Pedestrian access and permeability are suitably balanced with need for security and safety.
- 6.77 Cycle parking meets a standard of 1 space per apartment in a communal store with additional visitor hoops proposed within the communal car park area. As illustrated the townhouse garages have a 20 sqm internal area (including clear 6m x 3m space) which will allow for cycle storage internally.

Sustainable development

- 6.78 A High Level Sustainability Statement, prepared by BWB accompanies the applications.
- 6.79 The purpose of the HLSS is to address national and local policy considerations for the energy and sustainable design of the development, including use/incorporation of energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, carbon management measures to address climate change resilience. Because the

applications are made in outline it is intended that the HLSS and its recommendations are subject to relevant planning condition(s) to inform the detail design.

- 6.80 The findings are presented in two strategies for energy and sustainable design.
- 6.81 Energy strategy is summarised to meet the energy hierarchy to lower energy consumption and demand ('be lean'), then seek to utilities the cleanest means possible to meet the lowered demand ('be clean') and finally exploring any opportunities for renewable onsite energy ('be green'). More specifically to be lean the development will meet new Part L (2021) Building Regulations, meaning issues of energy consumption via space heating, passive solar heating / excessive solar gains, and fabric specification will be factored into design. Through assessment the lack of any planned district heat networks or sufficient scale for a centralised air source heat pump energy centre for the apartments rules out these options. However, there are opportunities for solar photovoltaic (PV), air source heat pump (ASHP) and solar hot water technologies to be considered for the apartments and townhouses in detail design.
- 6.82 In Sustainable Design strategy proposals can be made for water efficiency and lowering of consumption through water metering, low flow installations and rain water harvesting. Material selection can include suitable timber and timber-based products that meet sourcing specifications such as FSC and BES 6001. More detail will be derived at detail design on construction techniques, foundation design and other materials selection.

Other matters

Crime impact

- 6.83 At this outline stage of planning we propose that a Crime Impact Statement be provided to inform the detail design at reserved matters. We would expect a planning condition to be applied to the outline permissions to require such reports and recommendation to adhere to GM Police Design for Security standards to reflect any physical security specialisation that may flow from the detail design.
- 6.84 Broadly the layout and apartment building concept for the Palatine Road site will provide access control throughout the apartment building; robust ground floor façade and door specification; CCTV and lighting to communal areas and parking courtyard; secure cycle storage and visitor cycle hoops within the courtyard; and gated control of the northern footpath between Allanson Road and Palatine Road to allow its closure overnight as part of building management.
- 6.85 For the townhouses security arrangements are different with emphasis on providing robust ground floor façade and door specifications, security lighting and smart doorbells installed.

Waste storage

- 6.86 A central waste collection facility sized to meet required capacity of the apartments, including recycling, will be provided within the communal courtyard. Carry distances for residents and refuse collectors will be observed in the detail design.
- 6.87 Each townhouse will be provided with a 2 sqm space for bin storage for general refuse and recycling to current City Council requirements.

Developer contributions / Section 106 Agreement

- 6.88 The Brett Street site at 2 units is understood not to trigger any developer contribution threshold.
- 6.89 On the Palatine Road site the affordable housing delivery can be secured through planning condition and does not need to be part of Section 106 agreement
- 6.90 We are not currently advised on any other specific developer contribution that might arise on the Palatine Road site from pre-application advice but will consider such request through the application process.

7 POLICY COMPLIANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is considered that the two proposals represent sustainable development. Each proposal represents the efficient reuse of brownfield land both generally within the urban area and also within a defined District Centre, which offers a significant level of sustainable transport and lifestyle choices for future residents.
- 7.2 Provision of new housing – here a mix of market and affordable housing in a range of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments (up to 34 in total) and five 3-bedroom townhouses – represents a suitable land use within a sustainable location which can add to the vitality and viability of the District Centre.
- 7.3 Each development therefore meets Policy H7 Wythenshawe objective to encourage high density housing within district centres, including Northenden, assisting wider housing target objectives in the plan period. And it supports Policies C2 District Centres and C7 Wythenshawe that supports complementary uses such as housing within centres, with explicit expectation that housing in centres should be higher density.
- 7.4 Policy H8 Affordable Housing is met with 20% onsite provision within the Palatine Road site, which exceeds the 15 unit threshold. No provision is required on the Brett Street site under policy.
- 7.5 Provision of the housing represented in the two application support Framework paragraph 60 objective to significantly boost the supply of housing, including affordable housing needs (paragraphs 61 to 65).
- 7.6 The loss of the existing office uses across the sites will be consolidated into new office premises at South Point, Sharston which lies between 1.2 – 1.5 km from the District Centre, meaning that there will continue to be opportunity for linked trips by office workers and the centre, offsetting some of the lost expenditure and footfall.
- 7.7 Because the buildings are at the end of their useful life and unsuited for reoccupation without extensive renovation there is no realistic prospect of new employment use. By reason of existing distribution of shops, services and in particular cafes and takeaways in Northenden the location on the east side of Palatine Road in our view militates likelihood of retail use of any commercial ground floor units. The presence of two, unlet modern units after two years at Heron Point and a further new unit to be completed nearby on the western side of Palatine Road only adds to the likelihood any commercial ground floor use may lead to more ‘dead’ space on the frontage leading to harm to the vitality and viability of the centre through vacancy. Further food and beverage uses we suggest

are unnecessary but moreover would harm residential amenity to the site and the wider centre through over exposure.

- 7.8 It is therefore considered that there is a degree of harm to Policy EC2 Existing Employment Space through the loss of the existing buildings in a commercial use, though the policy is more directed to existing employment zones than district centres in approach. We consider that harm to be outweighed by the positive redevelopment of what are time-expired buildings and the effective, reuse of brownfield land in accordance with other aforementioned district centre focused policies.
- 7.9 The proposal therefore supports national policy objectives in Framework paragraph 87 that seeks a positive approach to the growth, management and adaptation of town centres, including the provision of new housing to create a sustainable, vital centre. It also supports objectives to make best use of previously-developed land at Framework paragraphs 120, 122 and 123, including reviewing existing land use to reflect changing demands and positive approach to considering alternative uses, in this case residential, a matter directly referenced at paragraph 123a. We do not consider on the balance of existing commercial uses that the loss of the potential for units on Palatine Road will undermine the vitality and viability of Northenden as a district centre.
- 7.10 The layout and scale of the townhouses are appropriate to their location on Allanson Road and Brett Street in the two proposals.
- 7.11 The apartment building on the Palatine Road frontage offers the opportunity for a larger scale apartment building taking advantage of the position, maximising the site potential to deliver new homes and can be done so without harm to residential amenity of existing properties on Allanson Road. In particular the development will, in our view, improve the amenity of Nos.20 & 22 Allanson Road that are currently hemmed in and overlooked by the rear staircase access by significant widening the separation of buildings here. And it is demonstrated that the internal arrangement of the future building can be delivered to prevent direct overlooking which can be controlled through future reserved matters design approval.
- 7.12 We consider the scale, mass and layout proposed is in keeping with the character of the district centre frontage on Palatine Road and to the urban residential street of Allanson Road / Brett Street and will maintain suitable residential amenity for existing and future residents as required by Policy DM1 Development Management. Though detail design is a reserved matter for appearance and landscaping, the submitted Design & Access Statement and visualisations demonstrate that an effective, legible development can be achieved on each site that reflects its character and context. This can be delivered to accord with principles in the Manchester Residential Design Guide, 2017, in

ensure that it mixes old and new character, is accessible and adaptable. We consider that a well-designed and sustainable development can evolve at reserved matters stage on the presented parameters to meet Framework paragraph 126 expectations.

- 7.13 The draft scheme to inform the layout, mass and scale incorporates the requirements of NDSS and accessibility / adaptability set out in Building Regulations. Though it will be for reserved matters and detail design, the proposal can demonstrably meet the requirements and therefore future residential amenity and accommodation space required under Policy DM1 and principles in the Design Guide.
- 7.14 Access for vehicles can be safely accommodated onto the local highway network to a net benefit through reduced trip generation over the existing office use, i.e. fewer car movements. A permissive pedestrian link between Allanson Road and Palatine Road will be maintained, with night time security closure for safety of existing and proposed residents. Secure cycle storage for apartment residents will be provided with additional visitor hoops to meet standards. Townhouse garages will be sized to accommodate cycle storage and bin storage as illustrated. The location of the development in a sustainable district centre location alongside the proposed layout means it accords with the principles and design approach advocated through Policies T1 Sustainable Transport and T2 Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need.
- 7.15 In terms of parking provision each townhouse will have a dedicated parking space and the apartments served with 70% provision (24 spaces). All will be electric charging enabled. We consider that this successfully balances national planning guidance to encourage non-car modes of transport, particularly in sustainable locations such as this. The proposal is accompanied by a Travel Plan framework to embed principles of sustainable travel choices in new households. As such the proposal meets Policies T1 and DM1 and reflects best practice in national guidance to discourage car use.
- 7.16 The two development sites are both in Flood Zone 2 as evidenced. The evidence also shows that through raising of internal floor levels, and in each proposal the area of built development, and hardstanding, will reduce. As such on the evidence and findings presented by BWB it can be determined that the development will not itself be susceptible to unacceptable risk from flooding nor will it lead to increase of any risk to existing homes and properties in the area as required by Policy EN14 Flood Risk, and it follows the sequential approach to risk set out in Framework Chapter 14 for housing as a 'more vulnerable' use. The 'exception test' does not apply to either proposal.
- 7.17 Associated evidence from BWB also shows how sustainable development principles can be applied to the delivery of the site as required in national policy and through Policy DM1 Development Management. Subject to conditions proposed by BWB and may be requested by statutory

undertakers / bodies it can be concluded that there is no drainage matter of concern arising from the two proposals that has not been assessed in line with local and national policies.

- 7.18 The noise survey evidence provided by BWB shows that noise levels received by future residents can be mitigated to provide a suitable residential environment and amenity, and that the development should not itself give rise to noise to detriment of existing noise sensitive neighbours / users. This aligns with objectives at national level, Policy DM1 and the Noise & Planning Guidance, 2022 provided by the authority. Suitable planning condition(s) can secure new homes meet the required internal noise limits for daytime and night-time, as well as control installation and operation of any plant.
- 7.19 The air quality assessment prepared by BWB finds that no road traffic emissions assessment was necessary due to low trip generation being below relevant screening criteria thresholds. In addition assessment of pollution concentrations were found below current air quality objectives for England leading to no requirement for specific mitigation measures, though it is intended to provide 100% electric vehicle charging points. The proposal therefore does not harm objectives of Policy DM1, relevant national policy nor the authority's Air Quality & Planning Technical Guidance, 2022.
- 7.20 The proposals are accompanied by a High-Level Level Sustainability Statement, prepared by BWB. This is proposed for approval and condition to inform the detail design to ensure that the potential to embed carbon reduction in materials, construction and energy use / generation on site is secured to meet wider national planning objectives of tackling climate change, and specific requirements of Buildings Regulations, Part L as may apply at time of development.
- 7.21 As regards forthcoming Biodiversity Net Gain calculation this will not strictly apply to proposals submitted prior to 11 November 2023, but as the sites have an effective 'nil value' as baseline, proposed bird and bat boxes, which can be secured by condition, can achieve an effective 100% improvement over baseline, exceeding future national policy requirements.
- 7.22 In conclusion we consider the proposals for each site generally accord with the development plan having balanced the relevant planning policies. As such each application should be considered sustainable development under Framework paragraph 8 and benefits from the presumption in favour under Framework paragraph 11. Accordingly planning permission for each application can and should be granted.

Appendix 1 – Town Centre Health Check

Introduction

Northenden District Centre is a traditional suburban centre which straddles Palatine Road. It provides local retail and services. The centre has few multiple retailers with two small convenience stores located at either end of the centre and has seen limited investment in the past decade, the most recent significant development being the Coop (formerly Morrisons) convenience store and adjacent retail unit now occupied by Halfords Autocentre.

Diversity of uses and vacancies

An assessment of units by use class was undertaken in August 2023 by Plan Red. Table 1 sets out the results of the survey.

Table 1 Northenden diversity of uses by Use Class

Use Class	No. Units	Percentage
Class E(a)	24	28%
Class E(b)	15	17%
Class E(c)	20	23%
Class E(e)	1	1%
Class E(g)	1	1%
Sui generis - HFTA	12	14%
Sui generis - other	4	5%
Vacant	8	9%
B2 motor repairs	2	2%
	87	

The table demonstrates that though the largest number of units are retail as a use it makes up less than a third of all units in the centre, with a significant level of services which are principally barbers and hairdressers, Class E(c), cafes / restaurants, Class E(b) and hot food takeaways, *sui generis*. Indeed taken together cafes, restaurants and hot food takeaways as food & beverage uses comprise the greatest activity in the centre at 37% of units. This is a significant level and underlines that retail activity is not the predominant role in the centre.

Vacancy levels are significantly lower than national average 13.8%³ but this masks the circumstance of Northenden centre as being a non-retail focused centre evident from the mix of uses present.

Distribution of uses

Table 2 further demonstrates that the linear nature of the centre with restricted designated crossing points has led to a pattern of distribution of uses that sees retail focused onto the western side of Palatine Road and all but one hot food takeaway onto the east side, and two thirds of cafes and restaurants also on the eastern side.

Table 2 Proportion of Uses East and West Side of Palatine Road

Use Class	Proportion Use East Side	Proportion Use West Side
Class E(a)	38%	63%
Class E(b)	53%	47%
Class E(c)	75%	25%
Class E(e)	100%	0%
Class E(g)	100%	0%
Sui generis - HFTA	92%	8%
Sui generis - other	50%	50%
Vacant	50%	50%
B2 motor repairs	100%	0%

On the western side the main retail function is within ‘The Parade’ situated between Heyridge and Lingard Roads. This contains nine retailers including a B&M Express store, and four non-retail units including a Costa Coffee. The principal retail outlier on the western side is Tesco Express to the south. On the eastern side the two main retail operators bookend the long run of takeaways, cafes and hairdressers with Coop to the north and Northenden Superstore to south at Church Road.

Vacancies are distributed around the centre with notable exception of the Parade which at time of survey had a pop-up retailer in a vacant unit (ex-dry cleaner). It is notable that new retail units constructed at Heron Point (east side) remain vacant 2 years after completion and remain marketed⁴.

³ Source: Retail Insight Network – Q1 2023 High Street vacancy 13.8%; all centres vacancy (including shopping centres and retail parks) 15.7%

⁴ Source: <https://www.mansionhousegroup.com/commercial-developments/heronpoint>



Notable is the absence in centre of any financial services with Lloyds Bank, Barclays and NatWest all closing branches between 2014 and 2016. This is not unusual for a centre of this size and national trends for reduction in the estate of High Street banks. Northenden does retain a Post Office which provides some financial services and a number, though also decreasing, of ATMs.

Retailer representation

With a limited retail function the number of multiple retailers is also limited. Those present are Tesco Express, Coop convenience store, B&M Express and Well Pharmacy. In addition there is a Costa Coffee in the Parade which though a non-retail use is a nationally recognised brand and outlet. The centre is therefore predominantly represented by local retailers.

Potential for growth and change

Northenden has limited potential for growth given its linear nature and surrounding residential areas to east and west.

The centre has seen change to the high street with the loss of financial services in the past decade. It has also seen the concentration of non-retail function in food & beverages and personal services (hair & nail) proliferate. In connection with new residential development on the eastern side it has seen the creation of new potential retail floorspace, but only the Northern Superstore at corner of Church Road has been occupied, leaving the other new units remaining vacant at adjacent Heron Point. A further development under-construction will lead to additional new floorspace on the east side. There is no indication of any pre-let.

At time of survey the Tesco Express was undergoing refurbishment demonstrating confidence in its trading location.

It is anticipated Northenden will remain confined to its presents limits and its retail function is unlikely to see any meaningful growth given national trends to reduce retail floorspace and that the centre has already pivoted away from a primary retail function at less than a third of units. Food, drink, hot food takeaway and services (hair & nail) may continue to see growth.

Closure of the offices of Express Solicitors will create two large vacancies on the eastern side of Palatine Road and will reduce potential footfall in lunchtimes within the centre which may impact some food & drink outlets currently operating.

Appendix 2 Pre-application advice

From: Robert Griffin <robert.griffin@manchester.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 March 2023 15:00
To: Richard Purser
Subject: Fw: Request for Pre-application advice - Land at Palatine Road and Brett Street, Northenden

Dear Richard

Thank you for your patience whilst we reviewed your pre-application submission.

In principle the use of the site(s) for residential and mixed residential/ground floor purposes is considered acceptable and one reflective of the character and context of the sites.

Whilst the element to the Palatine Road frontage appears to reflect the height of recent approvals in the district centre there are some concerns with the intervisibility of rearward facing windows and existing residential properties. This is something that we would suggest is fully reviewed prior to any submission of planning applications and/or supported by appropriate assessment and drawings within any planning submission.

The townhouses proposed on the corner of Brett Street and Allanson Road do present some challenges of acceptance based on the plans presented. The corner plot would have extremely limited (if any) external private amenity space, and all of the housing units would also be expected to have access to one off street car parking space. This element appears to be proposing too many units to be accommodated satisfactorily.

The town houses proposed on Allanson Road to the rear of the main Palatine Road site as presented have no private external amenity space, it is presumed that the house type includes integral garages? The Council would require comfort that these were of adequate size to fulfil an off street car parking space and that the house type presented an 'active' ground floor aspect to the street. Any acceptance of these units would need to be based on them having external private amenity space.

In terms of car parking requirements for the apartments, recent approvals in the district centre have been close to 100% provision. Any reduction below 100% would need to be fully justified and supported by appropriate transport statements and assessments in order that it be accepted, we would, with colleagues in Highway Services, be able to review this in more detail via further pre-application discussions. The servicing arrangements for the commercial uses would also need full consideration as part of those discussions.

As with all developments in the City we would seek 20% affordable housing on-site provision for this scale of proposal, excellent sustainability and energy efficiency performance of the buildings, working towards on-site biodiversity net gain in line with forthcoming legislative requirements and high quality of design and material choice. We would of course be happy to have further meetings/ reviews going forward if your client wishes.

In terms of specific questions; some of the site is located in Flood Zone 3 and 2, I am not aware of recent similar developments in the locality with these attributes with the most recent sites being outside of both. Clearly this is a matter that would need to be fully addressed in your FRA, the sequential approach etc and any application would be subject of consultation with the EA given the potential change in vulnerability of users

on the site. You may wish to engage early with the EA to understand their likely response to the proposals. In relation to additional height, this would be dependent on being able to demonstrate within the outline application that such a scale could be accommodated in terms of visual amenity and character of the area and that the requirements for car parking amenity space and refuse storage could all be successfully accommodated within the site.

Other constraints of the site are that it currently lies within the safeguarded land for HS2, they would be a statutory consultee for any application.

Your document list appears to cover those elements we would wish to accompany such an application, we would also wish to see commitments to sustainability and energy efficiency set out within the design and access statement.

The advice in this email is given in good faith on the basis of the information available at the present time. The advice may be subject to revision following further examination or consultation, or where additional information comes to light, and is therefore not binding on any future recommendation, that may be made by the Council or any formal decision by the Council.

Kind regards

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e: robert.griffin@manchester.gov.uk

From: Richard Purser <richard@planred.co.uk>
Sent: 07 February 2023 10:34
To: Planning <Planning@manchester.gov.uk>
Subject: Request for Pre-application advice - Land at Palatine Road and Brett Street, Northenden

Hello

I would like to receive initial advice please on the attached proposal for two sites in Northenden, both currently operated and owned by Express Solicitors as its offices, for potential residential redevelopment, with the larger site fronting Palatine Road including ground floor commercial units.

As announced recently in the press Express Solicitors is relocating to a 40,000 sq ft office at South Court, Wythenshawe. The business has expanded significantly and cannot be accommodated in its existing premises. To give some context the combined floorspace of the buildings in Northenden are 2,080 sqm and the new offices area 3,716 sqm, and with many advantages of a regular floorplates, one location, purpose-built offices, etc.

This has left Express Solicitors, which is owner of the Northenden premises, with a need to dispose. Its favoured approach is to acquire planning consent for redevelopment for a residential-led (apartment and town house) mixed use development on the main site, with commercial ground floor uses fronting Palatine Road, and residential town houses (4 no.) on the smaller Brett St site.

I've attached a Feasibility Study prepared by AEW Architects (only conclusion page removed for confidentiality) to indicate the potential redevelopment options. It is intended to go for the New Build option (PDF pages 15 forward) for both sites, but the earlier pages explain the site, buildings, context and PD options considered less optimal.

I would like initial planning advice of the Council on the Feasibility Study in terms of the scale, siting and layout and any views on residential amenity, applicable parking standards for Northenden and commercial uses for Palatine Road frontage.

Though the buildings are in office use presently, the use has been for the specific end user of Express Solicitors, and internal fit out is unsuited to subletting or subdivision (PDF pages 5 & 6 are useful here). As former retail units and upper floor storage areas, the depth of plan and lack of windows make the space unattractive for smaller, multiple occupiers. As such the design team considers there is little merit in undertaking a marketing exercise which would only lead to delay in application and a longer-term void in the centre. However, if this is considered necessary by the council please set out your minimum requirements of duration and nature of marketing and we will take a considered view on the matter.

Usual residential amenity, parking, access, affordable housing, open space and other matters relating to developer contributions will no doubt apply. Again, advice on expected policy requirements would be helpful as Manchester is not a CIL authority. At this stage I am not advised we will be preparing any viability argument, so a policy led position will be the expected starting point.

We are aware the main site is potentially affected by flood risk from the River Mersey. An FRA and Drainage Strategy is commissioned to review. If you are aware of any recent applications to reference of assistance that would be helpful.

We know that parking has been an issue with residents in the past on Allanson Road at the rear, but Express Solicitors has quite successfully managed staff of late. But this will change in the new development and we are keen to understand where the balance on parking provision / sustainable transport lies. A TS and draft TP will support the application and we will liaise with MCC Highways in due course.

In commentary AEW raises the prospects of an additional storey to the apartment building fronting Palatine Road. We'd welcome officers views on this.

Lastly. We intend to present an outline planning application on both sites. This would be in what I would term a "full outline" in terms of supporting information and we would look to approve layout and siting as a minimum given amenity, access and flood risk considerations. We may also look to agree scale if deemed appropriate, or an upper parameter at least.

From the online checklist the application package for both sites would appear to require the following documents if you could confirm or amend please:

- Drawings – mix of layout / access for approval, and illustrative drawings, i.e. elevations, sections, 3D visual

- Design & Access Statement and I suggest this includes a Daylight / Sunlight assessment
- Crime Impact Statement
- Air quality assessment
- Noise impact assessment
- Preliminary ecological assessment / follow up survey(s) as directed by ecologist
- Phase 1 Desk Study
- Flood risk assessment
- Drainage assessment
- Transport statement
- Draft Travel Plan
- Planning Statement (incl. affordable housing, open space assessments)
- Heads of Terms

I understand advice can take 2-4 weeks depending on workload from previous advice from the Technical team. If you need further information or wish to discuss my contact details are below.

I would not expect an application much sooner than 3 months given the range of supporting technical information to provide.

Kind regards, Richard

Richard Purser

Director

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