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Design & Access Statement

22031 Levenshulme ABS
Compiled for Carbon Co-op
09.06.23

Project Team

Carbon Co-op
info@carbon.coop

Bridge 5 Mill,
22A Beswick St,
Manchester
M4 7HR

Progress in Practice
info@progressinpractice.co.uk

Suite 2 Stanley House
19-23 Crofts Bank Rd
Urmston
M41 0TZ

B4Box
hello@b4box.com

Unit 2 Canal Wharf,
Wharf Street, Stockport,
SK4 1UD

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Revision	Date	By	Ck	Notes
P01	09.06.23	HD	HF	Issued for planning

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Brief

This application is for External Wall Insulation (EWI) to **27 Cuthbert Avenue, Levenshulme.** The proposals form Phase 1 of the Levenshulme Area Based Scheme, an innovative Carbon Co-op project for the retrofit of 7no. homes in Levenshulme, Manchester.

The work will radically reduce the space heating demand of the properties, whilst providing improved comfort and energy security. The works will hopefully identify an economical and viable pathway for mass improvement of similar housing stock.

1.2 A New Model for Retrofit

The scheme is a retrofit pilot, supported by Manchester City Council (MCC) with the aim of being as engaging and impactful as possible to encourage wider take up in the future.

It is to be funded through a combination of grants via Carbon Co-op and 0% loans by MCC. The works will be delivered by one contractor under one contract for all households. Whilst there will be fixed packages in the contract, there will also be customisable parts (ie. render colour) for the individual housholds to choose from and enable household 'buy-in'.

In addition, the project includes upskilling the workforce in retrofit, by partnering with B4Box.

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2.0 Context

2.1 Levenshulme

Levenshulme is located approximately 3 miles south east of Manchester city centre. The area is well connected with regular train and bus services to the city centre. The area is a diverse and vibrant suburb of Manchester with a youthful population.

The properties involved in the scheme are located on the east side of Levenshulme, approximately a 5 minute walk from the high street.

The area consists largely of back-to-back Victorian terraces and it is properties of this era the proposal involves. Of the 7 houses included, 4 are located on Cuthbert Avenue, 2 are on Greening Road and 1 is on Audley Road.

Fig.1 Levenshulme in relation to Manchester city centre

Fig.2 Streets in relation to Levenshulme town centre

Fig.3 Houses in relation to streets

Fig.4 10 Greening Road, Levenshulme

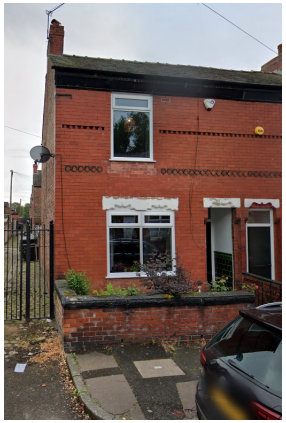

Fig.5 32 Greening Road, Levenshulme

Fig.6 55 Audley Road, Levenshulme

Fig.7 27 Cuthbert Avenue, Levenshulme

Fig.8 29 Cuthbert Avenue, Levenshulme

Fig.9 31 Cuthbert Avenue, Levenshulme

Fig.10 33 Cuthbert Avenue, Levenshulme

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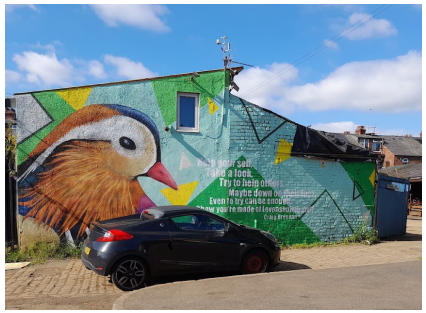
2.2 A Colourful Neighbourhood

Over the past year, the first part of a series of hand-painted murals have started to appear in Levenshulme. Commissioned by Manchester City Council and supported by residents, the murals aim to create a sense of pride in the area and brighten up the environment.

The artist behind the murals, Richard Preston, hopes the project will promote well-being, encourage community involvement in art, and foster appreciation for the area's diverse and beautiful nature.



2.3 Victorian Streets

All of the houses involved in the pilot scheme are of brick construction, with wirecut (higher quality, more expensive) red bricks to the front and stock (lower quality, cheaper) brown bricks to the side, rear and outrigger. Some front facades have been painted, but all remain a similar variation on the red brick colour. There is ornate brick and tile detailing to some of the front elevations, along with painted stone cills and lintels.

Windows and doors have been changed on most properties since they were constructed in the early c.20, which results in little to no fenestration consistancy between properties.

All houses in the area have a small front garden. Some are colourfully planted, whilst others are hard landscaped. Some houses have railings to their space at the front, whilst others do not and a few houses have rebuilt their front wall entirely.

Fig.11 Greening Road

Fig.12 Audley Road

Fig.13 Cuthbert Avenue

3.0 Pre-planning advice

3.1 Pre-planning advice

On 17th April 2023, Progress in Practice and Carbon Co-op met with Manchester City Council Planning Officer, Linda Marciniak, to informally discuss the ambitions for the pilot scheme and recieve advice prior submitting for planning.

Progress in Practice described the whole-house retrofit strategy of external wall insulation to the rear, sides and outrigger, whilst internally insulating on the front to maintain the brick facade and the character of the street.

Overall, Marciniak was supportive of the proposals to increase residents' comfort and the thermal efficiency of dwellings. She also commended the wider aim of encouraging a wider take up of retrofit in the future.

A variety of options on the render colours for the rear were presented (right). Marciniak felt the colours were effective, but she was concerned as it wasn't a whole street approach, it's impact would be weakened and it would look very different 'pepper-potted'. She suggested that a more restrained palette of materials should be considered to maintain the character of the original dwellings and street scene.

Fig.14 Option 1 - Conservative

Fig.15 Option 2 - Vibrant

Fig.16 Option 3 - Brickwork hues

4.0 Proposal

4.1 Principles

Coloured render has been added to the rear, side and outrigger of the property. The colour aims to reflect Levenshulme's vibrant and diverse community, as well as it's emergining street art scene.

The choice of colour came about following consultation with the householders involved in the pilot scheme. Despite being individual to the properties, the colours have been selected from a small palette agreed by the householders and this aims to unify the houses part of the scheme.

The eaves have also been extended to accommodate the external wall insulation and new high-performance windows have been installed to the rear and side.

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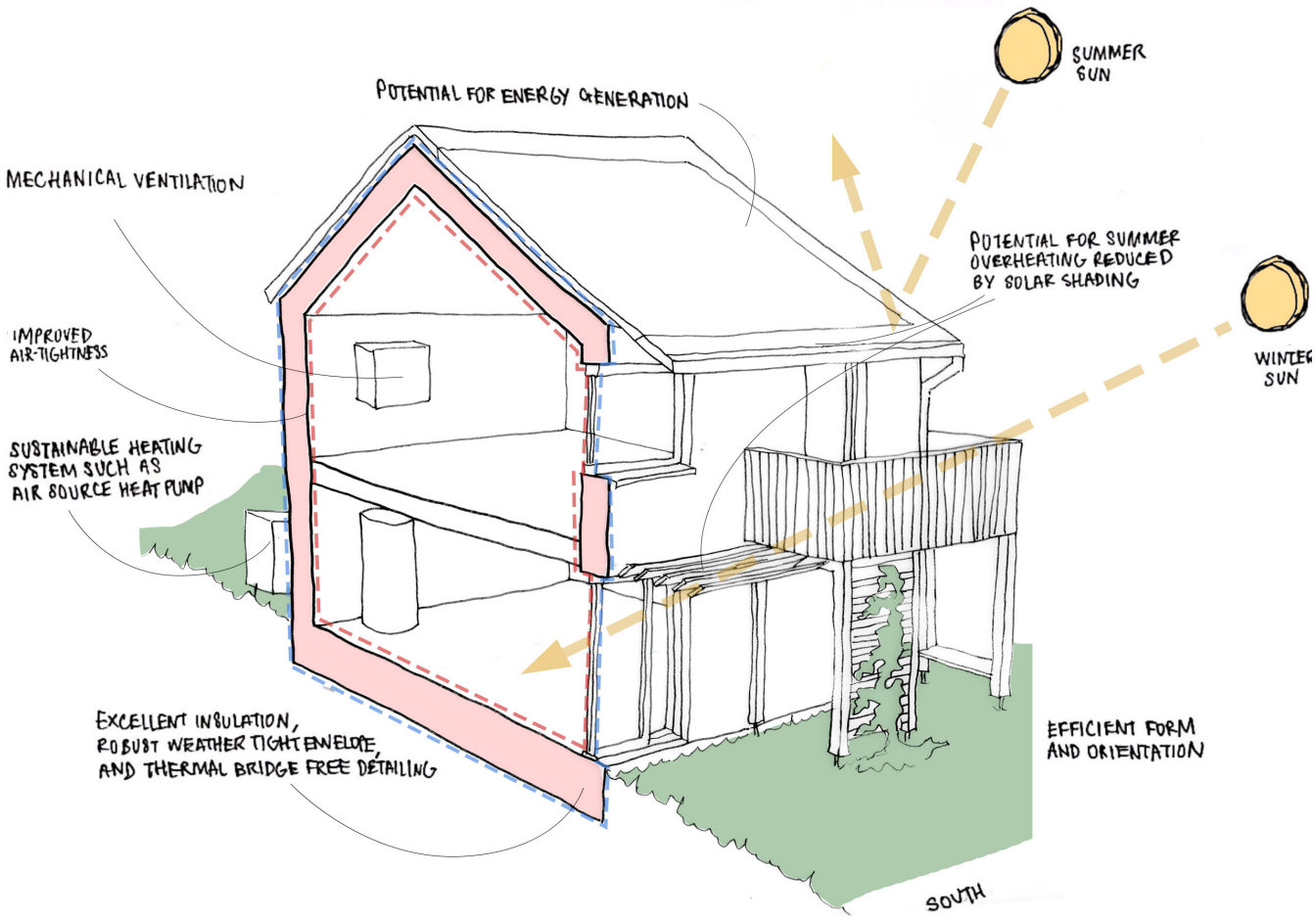
4.2 Precedent

Colour on period properties is nothing new. There are many examples across the UK, where terraces have been brightly coloured- even in conservation areas. Notable examples include in Bristol, London and Edinburgh (right). Despite being controversial interventions initially, the colour brightens up the street and adds character to an area. As a result of the colour, these streets are now Instagram hotspots, which further markets the local area.

4.3 Sustainability

This scheme uses the princples of Passivhaus design to provide a reduction in space heating demand. Those principles include;

- Improved airtightness
- Increased insulation
- Thermal bridge free design
- High-performace glazing
- Mechanical ventilation



5.0 Summary

5.1 Conclusion

External wall insulation is the first step in retrofitting these buildings and this ensures that they meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to enjoy them. Insulating the lofts and external walls will reduce the space heating demand of the property's.

Radically transforming the energy performance of these homes will not only creates a comfortable, low energy long term home for the owners, but it will also enhance the appearance and improve the building's relationship with the street.

Retrofit projects such as these, represent a significant step forward in the discussion around energy demand and decarbonisation. We hope that this transformation can provide precedent for further radical decarbonisation of homes, combating the immediate threat of the climate crisis.

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