

CONVERTING EXISTING STORAGE AREA WITHIN THE
BASEMENT TO CREATE A 1 BEDROOM APARTMENT

10 ELLESMERE ROAD

CHORLTON

Planning Statement

On behalf of Mrs Tahira Akram

Nov 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mrs Tahira Akram to support her application for planning permission to change the use of the basement of No.10 Ellesmere Road, Chorlton M21 0SR, currently used for storage by the applicant, to form a one bedroom apartment with associated external works, including the formation of a dedicated amenity space / secure cycle storage facility to the rear of the property and landscaping / provision of electric vehicle charging point to the front of the property.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application and it provides an assessment of its compliance with relevant planning policy.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION, SURROUNDINGS AND PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The application site, No.10 Ellesmere Road, comprises a 3 storey plus basement semi detached Victorian property, with a paved forecourt and garden to the rear.
- 2.2 The application site contains 3 apartments arranged over ground, first and second floors. The basement, which this application seeks permission to convert, is currently used by the building owners for storage.
- 2.3 Ellesmere Road is comprised of similar large residential properties, of which 10 have been subdivided into apartments (see Site Plan drawing 26/20-02).
- 2.4 Ellesmere Road is a cul-de-sac, at the end of which is located South West Manchester Cricket Club (SWMCC).
- 2.5 Ellesmere Road is accessed by vehicles from Wilbraham Road (A6010). The application site is 110m from the junction of Ellesmere Road and Wilbraham Road.
- 2.6 Wilbraham Road is a major arterial route with cycle lanes to both West and East bound carriageways.
- 2.7 Wilbraham Road provides access to a high level of public transport options with 3 No. bus stops located within 230m of the application site.
- 2.8 In addition there is Chorlton Metrolink Station located 330m from the application site giving rapid direct access to Manchester city centre, the rail network and beyond.
- 2.9 The aforementioned sustainable modes of transport contribute to the sites "Greater Manchester Accessibility Level" (GMAL) rating of 6, which is considered very good (please see appendix with extract of GMAL rating and data web site link).
- 2.10 The publicly available planning history from Manchester City Councils Planning Website shows the following applications :-

1991 - Change of use from four bedsit flats to three self contained flats provision of dormer window in roof space – Approved - Ref 039650

1999 – Conversion of basement into self contained flat – Refused – Ref 056721/FO/CENTL1/99

1999 - Conversion of basement into a 2no. bed self contained flat with additional car parking within the rear garden – Withdrawn – Ref 058236/FO/SOUTH1/99

2003 - Conversion of ground floor and basement to form 2 duplex flats giving a total of 4 flats with 4 parking spaces in front garden – Refused – Ref 068196/FO/2003/S1

2003 - Change of use of basement and ground floor into two duplex flats and enlargement of existing side dormer window with associated landscaping and car parking to front – Refused – Ref 069562/FO/2003/S1

2015 - Conversion of basement into a self contained flat, making 4no. flats in total, installation of side dormer and roof extension – Refused – Ref 108219/FO/2015/S1

- 2.11 A copy of the Councils decision notice for the most recent application, Ref 108219/FO/2015/S1, is contained within the appendix.
- 2.12 This application seeks to address the reasons cited by the Council to refuse planning consent for that application and demonstrate that the planning balance is now tilted in favour of the current proposal.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The policy context governing the determination of the application is given by the Manchester City Council Core Strategy that was adopted by the Council on 11 July 2012 and the Unitary Development Plan that has a number of 'saved policies' relevant to this application and 'Guide to Development in Manchester' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

3.2 Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) identifies the City Council's Core Development Principles and states that development in all parts of the City should:-

Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-

- Creating well designed places that enhance or create character
- Making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents
- Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.
- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment

Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.

Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

3.3 Policy H6 (Housing - South Manchester)

South Manchester will accommodate around 5% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. High density development in South Manchester will generally only be appropriate within the district centres of Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme, and Withington, as part of mixed-use schemes. Outside the district centres priorities will be for housing which meets identified shortfalls, including family housing and provision that meets the needs of elderly people, with schemes adding to the stock of affordable housing.

3.4 Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) states that all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes. Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives.

3.5 Policy DM1 (Policy DM 1 (Development Management)) states that all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality and road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.
- Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.
- Community safety and crime prevention.
- Design for health.
- Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.
- Refuse storage and collection.
- Vehicular access and car parking.
- Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.
- Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.
- Flood risk and drainage.
- Existing or proposed hazardous installations.

- 3.6 Saved Policies from the UDP –
- 3.7 DC1.1 – In determining planning applications for extensions to residential properties, the Council will have regard to :
- a.the general character of the property;
 - b.the effect upon the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers;
 - c.the desirability of enabling people to adapt their homes in appropriate ways to meet changing household needs;
 - d.the overall appearance of the proposal in the street scene;
 - e.the effect of the loss of any on-site carparking
- 3.8 DC5.1 In determining planning applications to convert property to flats, the Council will have regard to:
- a. the standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises;
 - b. effects on adjoining houses as a result of noise from flats passing through party walls and affecting adjoining houses;
 - c. adequacy of car parking, off-street car parking being normally required where practicable, and essential where there is so severe an existing on-street parking problem that unacceptable additional pressures would be created;
 - d. general effects on the character of the neighbourhood, including the extent to which flat conversion schemes are a new or an established feature of the immediate area, avoiding the loss of front gardens and the retention of existing trees and shrubs;
 - e. adequate private outdoor amenity space;
 - f. the desirability of achieving easy access for all, including disabled people (as a minimum, access for disabled people will normally be required in conversions of ground floor accommodation);
 - g. the satisfactory provision of refuse storage and collection facilities.
- 3.9 DC5.2 There will be a general presumption in favour of flat conversions within residential areas, on the upper floors of businesses within commercial areas and in properties on main road frontages, subject to other relevant policies of the Plan. They will be particularly welcome where large, old, difficult to re-use properties are involved, and where proposed schemes provide investment enabling the retention and improvement of housing stock.

3.10 DC5.3 Notwithstanding policy DC5.2, the Council will normally refuse permission for any developments in this category which:

- a. do not provide accommodation to the Council's current approved standards;
- b. are in tightly-packed residential streets where there is no scope for off-street car parking and where there is already an acknowledged problem of on-street congestion;
- c. involve conversion schemes without adequate private external amenity space;
- d. are schemes without satisfactory refuse storage and collection facilities.

3.11 DC5.4 In determining applications of this kind, the Council will give particularly careful consideration to situations in which the conversion of small terraced properties are proposed; and where a scheme is the first in a street of otherwise single family dwellings, the Council will give weight to the desirability of maintaining the character of the street in that respect.

Reasons: Many larger, older properties in the City are suitable for conversion into flats, and this is often a good way of preserving attractive buildings which are no longer economical for use as single family dwellings or as commercial property. Nonetheless, the Council will look at all the factors set out in policy DC5.1I to ensure that the standards of accommodation are satisfactory for the people who would be living in the flats, and also that there is no unacceptable impact on occupiers of neighbouring property, or on the character of the area. A particular issue which the Council will take into account is the effect of providing for the car, especially where local streets are already heavily congested, or where on-site parking can only be achieved by removing trees, gardens, walls etc., with potentially harmful effects on the overall street-scene.

3.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration. This document was revised in July 2021 and therefor supersedes the relevant NPPF policies cited by the Council in their decision taken in 2015.

3.13 The current NPPF states that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development; and for decision taking this means :-

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

where there are no development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

3.14 Paragraph 38 in Chapter 4 (Decision Making) of the revised NPPF states that: -

Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

- 3.15 Whilst not planning policy, decisions taken by the Planning Inspectorate on similar applications should also be given weight by the decision taker when the Inspectorate have allowed appeals against the Councils decisions where the material considerations are comparable.
- 3.16 In this instance it is considered that Planning Appeal reference APP/B4215/W/18/319414 is a relevant material consideration, where the Inspectorate allowed an appeal against the decision of the Council (copy of the appeal decision notice contained within Appendix).
- 3.17 This appeal related to the Councils refusal of planning permission for the conversion of existing basements at 2-4 Athol Road, M16 8QN into 2 No. apartments. The Council had cited similar reasons for refusal to those contained within their decision in 2015 at the application site, namely the effect on living conditions of neighbouring properties and failure to make sufficient provision for off-street parking.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The proposal is to convert the existing basement storey from its current use as ancillary storage to a self contained 1 bedroom apartment.
- 4.1.2 Some minor modifications to the existing fenestration to the rear of the property are proposed to provide natural daylight to the habitable rooms, and together with opening up of the former windows that served the basement on the front elevation with cellar lights to the front of same.
- 4.1.3 An amenity area will be formed immediately adjacent to the rear elevation to be used exclusively by the proposed apartment. This area will be delineated by a balustrade to its perimeter The remainder of the generous rear garden will provide communal amenity space for the other apartments.
- 4.1.4 A Trinity covered, timber clad, bicycle store is proposed adjacent to the existing boundary wall shared with the attached neighbouring property (No.8 Ellesmere Road) to provide secure bicycle storage for the all apartments.
- 4.1.5 The waste / recycling bin storage, which is currently an ad hoc arrangement to the front of the property will be formalised by the introduction of 1.25m timber screens adjacent to the gable elevation to house / screen same.
- 4.1.6 A scheme of soft landscaping is proposed to the front of the property, incorporating planter beds adjacent to the existing bay window, the porch and the boundaries with No.8 and No.12 Ellesmere Road.
- 4.1.7 The existing driveway will be re-laid using Marshalls Drivesett Tegula Priora to introduce a sustainable surface water drainage system. The planter beds will be delineated using Marshalls Tegula Kerbs. The current un-delineated parking arrangement will be formalised by integrating bay markings using contrasting Marshalls Key Kerb.
- 4.1.8 A Pod Point Solo 3, 7 kW Tether EV charging point will be installed in a floor mounted concealed box within the planter bed adjacent to the boundary with No.8 Ellesmere Road to encourage the adoption of sustainable modes of transport.

4.2 Internal alterations, layout and design

- 4.2.1 The existing hallway to the ground floor of the property is generously proportioned and this proposal provides for the sub-division of same to incorporate a new dedicated staircase providing direct access into the proposed apartment.
- 4.2.2 The proposed new apartment will occupy the whole of the basement floor and will be generously proportioned with an overall habitable floor space in excess of 65m², in addition to enjoying its own dedicated amenity space at the rear of the property.
- 4.2.3 The existing floor to ceiling height within the basement is relatively low, whereas the floor to ceiling heights on the ground floor are very high. It is proposed to raise the existing ground floor level by approx. 320mm (these changes will have no external impact) and thereby achieve an appropriate floor to ceiling height within the new apartment.
- 4.2.4 The proposed apartment will be thermally and acoustically insulated to high standards to comply with the Building Regulations and thereby provide high quality environmentally sustainable accommodation.

4.3 Access

- 4.3.1 The existing communal entrance to the front elevation is to be retained. The new internal staircase and steps within the lobby area have been designed to comply with the Building Regulations for apartment buildings.
- 4.3.2 The balustrade to the perimeter of the amenity space for the proposed apartment will help deter intruders from accessing this area.
- 4.3.3 The colour schemes adopted throughout the proposal will be chosen to accommodate those with visual impairment.

4.4 Height, Scale and Massing

- 4.4.1 Other than the proposed minor changes to the fenestration and landscaping there are no proposals to alter the existing buildings height, scale and mass.

4.5 Amenity

- 4.5.1 The existing property benefits from a generous back garden area, however it is considered that it lacks structure and the introduction of a dedicated amenity area for the sole use of the proposed apartment will make the area more attractive. In addition, it will improve the privacy to the rear of the existing ground floor apartment with the lowered terraced area adjacent to same.

4.6 Crime and Security

- 4.6.1 The introduction of a purpose made Trinity bicycle storage unit will provide convenient secure storage facilities with good natural surveillance and thereby encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.6.2 By maintaining the single entrance and exit door to the apartments at the front of the property this will maintain security whereby unauthorised persons have no reason to access the rear of the property.
- 4.6.3 The utilisation / occupation of un-used space within the property adds to the natural surveillance of the surrounds and thereby improves security.

4.7 Refuse and Recycling

- 4.7.1 The refuse and recycling bins are currently stored on the driveway adjacent to the boundary with No.12 Ellesmere Road.
- 4.7.2 As part of this proposal permission is sought to erect 4 No. close boarded timber screens, 1.25m high by 0.7m deep along the gable elevation of the property to provide segregated / screened areas for the storage of the general waste bins and recycling bins for each apartment.
- 4.7.3 The relocation of the waste / recycling bins will allow the introduction of soft landscaping to the front of the property and thereby enhance the street scene.

4.8 Car Parking

- 4.8.1 The current arrangement for off-street parking provision to the front of the application site is ad-hoc and whilst physically possible is unlikely to be able to accommodate three vehicles given the proximity of the refuse / recycling bins and the lack of direction when positioning cars in the area.
- 4.8.2 It is also accepted that the current driveway area, together with the refuse / recycling bin location does not contribute to the amenity of the street scene and can be significantly improved.
- 4.8.3 By re-locating the waste / recycling bins to a screened location on the gable elevation this will allow the introduction of soft landscaped areas adjacent to each boundary. These landscaped areas will be edged with Marshalls Tegula Kerbs to ensure that cars do not encroach onto the soft landscaped areas.
- 4.8.4 The existing concrete paving slabs will be lifted and the sub-base prepared to receive Marshalls Drivesett Tegula block paving to provide a sustainable drainage system and an attractive durable surface to the off street parking area.
- 4.8.5 Integrated within the Drivesett Tegula will be rows of contrasting Marshalls Keykerb blocks to delineate 3 No. parking spaces, each 2.4m wide by 4.8m in length.
- 4.8.6 The formalisation will ensure that 3 off-street parking spaces are available and together with the soft landscaping scheme and screened refuse storage bins significantly improve the street scene and local amenity.
- 4.8.7 In addition, it will allow the freeholder (the applicant) to agree yearly leases with occupants of the apartments to use the spaces. By granting yearly leases at a given premium it will incentivise any occupants who have not already switched away from personal car ownership to use alternative sustainable modes of transport. Given the application sites "very good" GMAL rating of 6, plus the provision of secure cycle storage this aim is readily achievable.
- 4.8.8 It must also be noted that the type of tenant / occupier that this proposal for a one bedroom apartment is targeting are unlikely to own a car. They would generally be financially active young professional(s) or retirees looking to down-size, and will be fully aware of the parking availability before choosing to live there.

5.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE PLANNING ISSUES AND CONCLUSION

5.1 This application distinguishes itself from that in 2015; when the Council refused a “similar” scheme; on the following grounds :-

5.2 No side dormer / roof extensions are proposed in this application and therefore two of the four reasons for the previous refusal would not apply to this proposal, specifically reason 2 and 4 of the 2015 decision which related to overly dominant and incongruous aspects of that scheme.

5.3 This application is evidence based with:-

- Independent expert analysis of the on street car parking levels in the area (CTS Parking Survey and Transport Statement contained within appendix), which concludes that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate any visitor / resident overnight on street parking that may be generated by this proposal.
- Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authorities Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) rating of 6, which independently deems the application site as having very good access to sustainable modes of transport.
- GDPR data obtained from the Councils Environmental Health which lists the incidences of reported noise nuisance / disturbances in Ellesmere Road between the period of 2005 and 2020.

These Council records clearly show that in the 15 years the data covers a significant percentage (8 of the 23 reported incidences) of noise nuisance issues experienced on Ellesmere Road relate to activities at South West Manchester Cricket Club and not residents / visitors in Ellesmere Road.

It is accepted that any noise / disturbance events are undesirable, however the Council have acknowledged in their email dated 4th August 2020 that they have **no records** of any noise / disturbance related incidents at 10 Ellesmere Road.

- 5.4 The material considerations of this application are strikingly similar to that which the Planning Inspectorate chose to cite when they allowed an appeal against the decision of the Council to refuse a similar basement conversion at 2-4 Athol Road (Appeal Decision Ref APP/B4215/W/18/319514 contained within appendices). Importantly the GMAL rating of that site is 5 (see appendix, site post code M16 8QN), which means it has less access to sustainable modes of transport than the site of this application.
- 5.5 In that decision by the Planning Inspectorate the Inspector stated that they thought that the Council "*might usefully have considered whether there have been past complaints of noise and disturbance from the use of the existing apartments*" (paragraph 5). It must be noted and given significant weight by the decision maker in this application that the Council hold no records of any noise / disturbance complaints at No. 10 Ellesmere Road.
- 5.6 The Inspector went on to dismiss the Council's assertion that the increase in the number of apartments within the application site could unreasonably impact upon the amenity of those occupiers, particularly given the fact that the proposed apartments would be accessed directly from within the building by their own dedicated staircase. It must be noted that this application is identical to that allowed by the Inspector in that regard.
- 5.7 Furthermore, the Inspector dismissed the Council's justification for refusing the application on the grounds that the additional pedestrian movements along the street would cause unreasonable harm to the existing occupants stating that the increase in those movements would be "*inconsequential given the number of dwellings on Athol Road*" .
- 5.8 This application seeks planning permission for the addition of a single one bedroom apartment onto a road that contains 45 apartments, 21 houses and is the sole vehicle access point to South West Manchester Cricket Club. Given the above it would be unreasonable to assert anything other than a potential impact of the occupants of the proposed apartment walking up and down Ellesmere Road as "*inconsequential*" upon the amenity of the existing residents.

- 5.9 In addition, whilst acknowledging the potential harmful effect on neighbours enjoyment of their property from noise / disturbance it must be noted that the Councils own records for the period from 2005 to 2020 show 15 reported incidents over 15 years, ie 1 complaint a year, for a total of 66 dwellings (45 apartments and 21 houses). Whilst no figures are published for noise / disturbance events to benchmark these incidences against it can only be reasonably assumed to be a "low" occurrence rate. Furthermore, the data provided shows that of those 15 complaints 7 related to construction activity / mechanical failure, with 8 complaints relating to loud music / parties etc. , which over a 15 year period would equate to approximately 1 complaint every 2 years.
- 5.10 When the Inspector addressed the second reason for refusal of planning consent cited by the Council in the Athol Road appeal case, that "*the failure to include for off-street parking would cause unacceptable pressure on the availability of on-street parking within the vicinity...*" the Inspector noted that the appeal site was deemed to be accessible by sustainable modes of transport. The appeal site has a GMAL rating of 5 (see appendix). The GMAL rating for this application site is 6, which is significantly better than that which the Inspector deemed acceptable when they allowed the appeal.
- 5.11 This application is supported by a robust independent parking survey that concludes that there is available on-street parking in the vicinity should such be a demand be generated by this proposal. The Inspector placed significant weight on the parking stress survey, particularly in light of the fact that the Council had no evidence to support their inference that on-street parking levels were at saturation point.
- 5.12 This application includes the provision of an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point and secure bicycle storage facility to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.13 This application includes the provision of a soft landscaping scheme to the front of the property, relocation of the refuse / recycling bins and introducing parking bay delineation within newly surfaced driveway incorporating sustainable drainage principles will enhance the street scene.
- 5.14 In addition, the formalisation of the off street parking provision will ensure that three off-street vehicle parking spaces are available and easily identifiable so that the freeholder (applicant) can prepare annual leases for the use of the spaces. Such a scheme will encourage occupants / tenants to switch to sustainable modes of transport given the direct annual incentive for doing so.

- 5.15 Another important consideration that will influence any prospective occupiers' decisions on car ownership is the proximity to shopping / leisure facilities. These factors are not assessed as part of the GMAL rating, however convenience for food shopping etc. should be given significant weight in this matter.
- 5.16 The application site is located some 400m from a major supermarket and 600m from the heart of the Chorlton shopping district with all the associated leisure venues. This aspect, in conjunction with the high level of access to sustainable modes of transport (GMAL rating 6), the availability of on-street parking (as clearly demonstrated by the parking survey) the provision of secure bicycle storage, the enhanced off-street parking provision with EV charging point within the application site; and the demographics of potential occupiers for a one bedroom apartment in this location must be given significant weight when determining the potential impact of on-street parking that may be generated by the proposal.
- 5.17 The proposed conversion of the existing basement to form a one bedroom apartment in a location that has very good links to sustainable modes of transport represents one of the most environmentally sustainable ways to achieve the Councils stated aims published within the "Manchester Housing Strategy 2022 -2032".
- 5.18 The applicants representative undertook pre-application consultation with the local community. The applicants representative met with the Ellesmere Road Residents Committee to discuss this current proposal on the 16th May 2022 and explained the rationale behind the submission. The applicants representative shared details of the parking survey, GDPR data and drawings with the committee. No objections were raised by those present during or following that meeting.
- 5.19 The applicant has distinguished this proposal from the "similar" proposal that the Council refused in 2015. Furthermore, this application is supported by robust independent evidence that must be given significant weight by the decision maker when considering the planning balance for the current proposal. In addition the conclusions made by the Planning Inspectorate when they allowed an appeal against the Councils refusal of a similar development (where virtually identical reasons for refusal were cited) must also be given significant weight by the decision maker.

5.20 For the aforementioned reasons and noting the independent evidence submitted with this proposal it is considered that the planning balance is now tilted in favour of the development and we trust that the application will be approved.

APPENDICES