

Site of Former Sports Hall, The Orchard, Huyton, Liverpool, L36 5UZ

ERECTION OF 40no AFFORDABLE RETIREMENT APARTMENTS WITH ASSOCIATED COMMUNAL FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS; LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING

Design and Access Statement**Application Site**

The application is a brownfield site comprising a former school sports hall (now demolished) and tennis courts now abandoned and overgrown. The land is located within The Orchard and Huyton Conservation Area. The Sports Hall formed part of Huyton College Boarding School owned by Liverpool College, Woolton. The land sits in close proximity to Huyton Village, local shops, post office and within walking distance of Huyton railway station with close bus routes to Liverpool, St. Helens and Warrington. The application site is closely linked to Rydal Park with crown green bowling and extended parkland all within a short walking distance. The conservation area is a tranquil leafy environment enjoyed by residents, care homes, children's nursery and members of the public passing through The Orchard via St. Mary's Road and Blacklow Brow.

The previous land owner originally purchased the whole college campus in 1998 to save the historic buildings; over the proceeding years they set about a sympathetic conversion of the former school buildings to high grade luxury housing.



Location Plan

The application site has been abandoned for many years and presents opportunity for anti-social behaviour and crime to breach surrounding borders. This has become a significant reason for local residents who have concerns and are keen to see the land developed with a secure future. The development will bring strong regeneration benefits and certainly reduce the opportunity for crime whilst enhancing the character and importance of the conservation area in a positive way.



Site View showing remnants of the Sports Hall



Site View showing remnants of the Tennis Courts



View from The Orchard (Site Entrance)



Site View showing overgrown nature

In general, through lack of government funding the conservation area roads and boundary edges have fallen into disrepair, this has required local residents to come together and improve the area through private contribution. The developer offers to work with local residents / neighbours in a proactive and financial capacity to improve this disrepair and further enhance the conservation area generally.

The grandeur of the conservation area can be noted through its impressive architecture with substantial high buildings set within private grounds. The college originated from the Classical Grade II Huyton Hall being built for a wealthy Liverpool merchant, the site was later expanded with a tandem construction of new Italianate Fernwood Hall built as a wedding gift for the marriage of his son. Both buildings are 4 storeys high and stand 13m and 12m respectively to their ridge lines. Later the college was expanded into a boarding school for girls during the Edwardian period whilst the British Empire expanded its influence overseas. During this heyday, further notable buildings were commissioned and designed by Colonel Gee (FRICS) to include The Library, Auditorium and Quadrangle.

Pre-Application Discussion and Consultation

Early engagement and ‘front loading’ are encouraged in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It states that: “Good quality pre application discussion enables better co-ordination between public and private resources and improves outcomes for the community”.

The information and feedback received through previous planning applications which included pre-application advice, have allowed fundamental policy and design issues to be identified. These issues have informed the design revisions and preparation of the planning application now submitted.

Planning History

98/00366/APP | 5 FORMER HUYTON COLLEGE THE ORCHARD ROBY KNOWSLEY MERSEYSIDE - ERECTION OF 1 NO. TWO-STOREY DWELLING | Plot 6 Huyton Girls College The Orchard Huyton Knowsley granted

95/00330/APP | OUTLINE APPLICATION; PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, | Former Huyton College The Orchard Huyton Knowsley granted.

14/00719/OUT | OUTLINE APPLICATION; PROPOSED 66 BED CARE HOME TOGETHER WITH RESIDENTS COMMUNAL FACILITIES.

14/00719/OUT | OUTLINE APPLICATION; PROPOSED 66 BED CARE HOME TOGETHER WITH RESIDENTS COMMUNAL FACILITIES.

19/00199/OUT | OUTLINE APPLICATION; FOR THE ERECTION OF THREE STOREY APARTMENT BLOCK, COMPRISING 20 NO. 1 BED AND 20 NO. 2 BED APARTMENTS WITH COMMUNAL AREA TOGETHER WITH VEHICULAR ACCESS, CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS (LANDSCAPING RESERVED FOR FUTURE APPROVAL).

20/00187/OUT | OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF THREE STOREY RETIREMENT APARTMENT BLOCK, COMPRISING 20 NO. 1 BED AND 20 NO. 2 BED APARTMENTS WITH COMMUNAL AREA TOGETHER WITH VEHICULAR ACCESS, CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS (LANDSCAPING RESERVED FOR FUTURE APPROVAL).

This latest application seeks to vary the latest approval above ref: 20/00187/OUT. The new scheme looks to amend the apartment mix to 30no. 1 Bed Apartments and 10no. 2 Bed Apartments; as well as some internal and external minor amendments in line with the new end-user requirements.

Current Proposal

The proposal is for a Full Planning application to construct a 40-unit affordable retirement scheme across 3 linked blocks. The proposal follows a similar design approach adopted previous permissions which were supported by the council and permission granted on the site. The proposed ground floor area is 1,335 sqm set within a site area of 5,400 sqm providing a 25% built form to land ratio.

The proposal includes the use of a historic access leading off The Orchard into an immediate parking court with provision for 22no parking bays which includes 3 no. disabled spaces, cycle storage and concealed bin storage.

Mature trees have been shown as retained on the submitted drawings and will be complimented with new semi-mature trees to be planted at the head of the access road and continued along the northern boundary to soften the inward views from The Orchard.

Planning Context and Planning Guidance

There is a plentiful provision of public open space within the locality particularly Rydal Park identified earlier. The site has no access to the public and therefore development of this site would not impact on the provision of public open space within the surrounding area by virtue of loss of public open space. The land to which the application relates has no significant visual amenity nor does it provide important or recorded views from within the area.

All trees would be preserved and further enhanced as part of the development proposal. The existing copse is mature and fully protected by a TPO, such foliage is an important feature for the development. The proposal building has been positioned to respect / retain the trees under TPO and respond further with extended tree planting to the north and southern boundary. The proposal responds well in in shape and context of the site constraints. The application provides extended 'open landscape' provision with lawned gardens, a terrace area for resident seating focusing on the southern daylight path for resident enjoyment and well-being.

The emerging Core Strategy does not change the allocation of the land since the previous approvals. Residential development is considered appropriate for the site and affordable retirement apartments are considered an appropriate use.

The application site is not located within a flood risk area having regard to the Environment Agency's latest flood risk database and consequently no flood risk assessment will be required. The former sports hall and tennis courts benefit from existing foul and surface water outfall drainage. The applicant has prepared a SUDS Strategy Statement to restrict surface water outflow to 5 litres/second in accordance to government standards.

Proposed Use

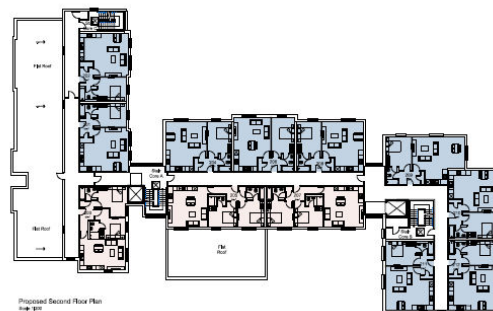
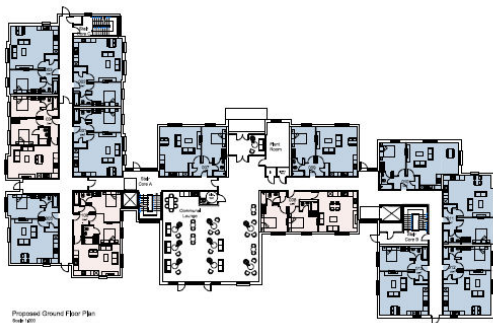
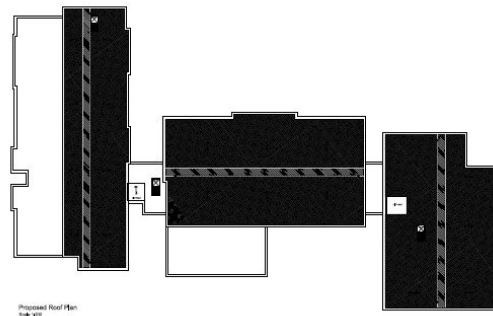
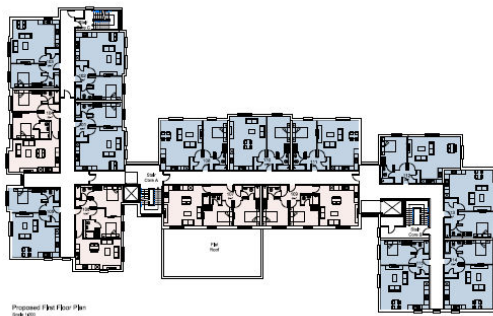
The application site is situated in an area which is allocated for residential purposes and is within a conservation area. In the Unitary Development Plan residential development and any other form of development should be compatible with the character and appearance of the area. It goes on to suggest other criteria should be satisfied such as scale and massing, the layout elevational treatment and materials should have regard to those in the surrounding area.

The proposed building would comprise high-grade residential accommodation over three floors. The floor space proposed is set out within the submitted Accommodation Schedule. The proposal is for a 40-unit apartment scheme over 3 linked blocks, with additional space for a communal lounge and reception/lobby/coffee areas. This scheme looks to amend the previously approved mix to 30no. 1 Bed Apartments and 10no. 2 Bed Apartments.

There is provision for 22 car parking spaces 3 of which would be disabled spaces. Vehicular access to the site would be off The Orchard via an historic thoroughfare.

Proposed layout

The footprint of the scheme takes the form of three blocks connected by glazed links to reduce the overall scale and mass. Each of the proposed blocks comprises accommodation on the Ground, First and Second floors with 2no. passenger lifts serving all floors. The layout results in a floor plan that replicates on each upper floor which provides economy and deliverability. The Ground Floor will have a Reception Area which leads onto a large residents Communal Lounge. This area then opens onto a large external patio with views to the existing mature tree copse and new landscaped gardens and lawns.



Proposed Scale and Landscaping

The proposal has maintained a suitable scale with adjacent 3 and 4 storey surrounding property, the buildings are well set back from The Orchard Road and will be largely concealed by nature of the site position. The application site enjoys a strong landscaped backdrop which will be further enhanced with more tree planting proposed, the development will preserve / protect the historic high easterly stone wall within the right-hand side of the grounds on entry.

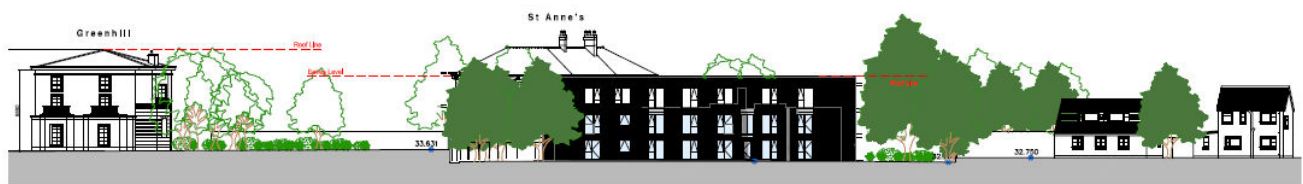
The new buildings as discussed would be set back from the main highway, further semi-mature trees introduced at the head of the parking area and along the northern boundary will further soften the inward views from The Orchard thoroughfare. This will result in no adverse visual impact on the current street scene. The buildings are been designed to a high architectural standard with interconnected and articulated landscaping / gardens for the benefit of future residents and visitors.

The proposal will not result in any overlooking or privacy issues with neighbours, as the interface distances to surrounding property accords to the local housing policy and has been agreed with the planning authority.

The development and plans submitted illustrate how the proposal respects the height of adjacent residential properties to the College Campus Huyton Hall, Fernwood, Artrooms including Greenhill House, St Anne's and new Dwelling constructed alongside the main entrance.

The roof height of the new development will be 7.950m reducing to 5.350m

- Greenhill House (3 storey dwelling) @ 8.690m to eaves and 10.970 to ridge.
- St. Anne's (2.5 storey dwelling) @ 6.168m to eaves and 9,348m to ridge.
- Huyton Hall (4 storey dwelling) @ 10.310m to eaves and 13.030m to ridge.
- Fernwood Hall (4 storey dwelling) @ 9.100m to eaves and 11.730m to ridge.
- The Artroom (3 storey dwelling) @ 8.100 to eaves and 12.150m to ridge.



Appearance

The importance of design for a site of this nature is paramount. The applicant and their architect are committed to delivering a high-quality development which meets its operational requirements and sustainability objectives, whilst adding to the natural character of this part of Knowsley and the Conservation Area.

Within the context of the design approach it is proposed that the submitted layout seeks to develop on the following design elements:

- Focal points, reinforcing legibility and the entrance to the site
- Key elevations/ building lines, reinforced structures- particular emphasis in terms of design is taken to develop strong, well considered elevations to the scheme and the facing of all boundaries.

The current proposal is a detailed scheme in conjunction with the client's brief and end-user requirements.

Precedence for linking the primary blocks can be seen between the Grade II Huyton Hall which by the use of lighter structures connects to Fernwood Hall, The Classroom Wing, Auditoria and the Art Rooms. The linkage of the primary college architecture reinforces the scheme proposal using precedence established within the college and wider conservation area.

The buildings proportion and fenestration arrangement has been designed to respect a prevalent classical proportion reflective of the Victorian area and the modernist Arts & Crafts movement during the turn of the century.

The principle of a linked apartment scheme with a frontage parking court vehicular and associated landscaping has previously been established on the site within the previous planning history. The proposed primary material of red/brown facing brick is compatible with the surrounding area.



Orchard Lifestyle Retirement Apartments

Third Age Living provides an important opportunity for people to downsize from larger family homes into more affordable / manageable accommodation. This releases much needed family accommodation onto the market for sale / rental.

It is important that occupants feel safe, connected and secure within their new surroundings, an environment must provide a tranquil lifestyle within a friendly community who seek similar aspirations.

The type and mix of retirement accommodation should be manageable and conveniently located to transport, train station, shops, post office and recreational parkland for well-being. Such facilities should be positioned within a secure community with a mix of residential diversity nearby.

People are seeking more and more options for lifestyle and retirement living, particularly within well-appointed luxury accommodation that allows continued independence to meet with friends / family, enjoy communal facilities, gardens and invite guests back into their home.

An internal secure entrance hall will be provided leading to a generous communal lounge for guests to meet with residents for coffee, celebration or simply relaxation within the community hub they reside. This area will facilitate mobile hairdressing facility, coffee lounge and secure entrance lobby. The building will be managed to ensure cleaning and upkeep of communal corridors, gardens and entrance pathways.

Accessibility

The application site is situated within a well-established and mature residential area which is readily accessible by various means of transport without there being a reliance on the private motor car. The immediately surrounding highways are all public transport corridors with frequent bus services to neighbouring local centres.

Vehicular access and pedestrian access to the site will be similar as to the previous approval in that the new development will ensure that there is provision for safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists alike.

Access to the site is direct from The Orchard and will encompass 22 car parking spaces including 3 accessible spaces. The parking area have been located to the immediate area adjacent to the site entrance, to the north of the site, to give easy access for visitors, residents and emergency vehicles. This also allows generous landscaped areas, including retention of the existing trees to the southern parts of the site.

A designated area has also been provided for bin refuse allowing sensible provision for weekly collection. The bin store has been concealed within high planting to soft screen.

The cycle racks are situated along the building frontage / return links with improved tree screening provided along the front car parking abutment.

Inclusive Design

The proposal has been designed in accordance with the guidance given in the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), and Part M of the Building Regulations approved documents.

This includes;

- Accessible parking bays
- Access to the main entrance
- Access to the building
- Vertical and horizontal circulation throughout the building
- Accessible stairways.

The external works will be designed to provide easy access to the buildings with falls of no greater than 1 in 20 and 1 in 40 wherever possible to the entrances. The design of the reception counter will include a drop counter for wheelchair access and an induction loop for those with hearing impairments.

The project architects, in conjunction with the developer and end-user, will work to ensure that throughout the proposed building there is provision for wheelchair access. There will be visual colour contrast between surfaces and around door openings to assist the visually impaired. Glass will be safety rated at critical locations as defined by Building Regulations Part M. Light switches, control systems, fire alarm points etc will all be set at heights to comply with BS8300/Building Regulations Part M. The proposed building will deliver a fully Disability Discrimination Act compliant building.

Designing out Crime

It is considered that the erection of a retirement apartment block in this area of Knowsley will help to help reduce crime to this locality through natural surveillance with people visiting and using the premises. The fact that the site has been vacant for some time can be seen as an invitation for petty crime in the area. The proposed scheme will ensure that the premises and the associated facilities are as secure as possible and the problem of unauthorized access is reduced to a minimum. There will be a 1.8m high fence to the rear and side perimeter and access will be controlled between the lobby and communal corridor, and between the corridor and stair core/lifts. All flat entrance door sets will be to security standards (PAS24:2016 or similar) and where fire resistance is required dual certification shall be obtained. The security aspect will be discussed with the local crime prevention officer to ensure that the safety and well-being of all existing and future residents is fully covered.

Conclusion

It is the applicant's view that the proposal fully complies with both National Policy and Knowsley's local policy plan and would form an important part within the local community.

The application brings the site back into an economic and beneficial use which is wholly appropriate to the surrounding area and which complies with both Council and national planning guidance. The mix and number of apartments is designed to achieve the necessary commercial balance for the inward investment required to construct the project. Keen interest has been expressed by the social housing sector due to the location of the site and the proposed for a high-grade apartment scheme.

The proposal would be in keeping with the surrounding area and in particular the current uses without resulting in any adverse effect on the amenity of adjoining residents. The principle of the use is well established in that it is a residential use within a predominantly residential / care area would have no impact as a result of the use, activity or the design upon the surrounding area.

The proposal makes efficient and beneficial use of the land, providing much needed bespoke residential accommodation within a sustainable location.

All ancillary facilities, including car parking, bin storage and amenity space are provided for on-site, making the scheme fully self-contained including for external terraced seating and landscaped gardens.

In its entirety, the proposal would enhance the overall visual appearance of the area. It is, therefore submitted that planning permission should be supported and granted.