



Hillcrest House

Thingwall Lane

Liverpool

Proposed Change of Use to C2 Residential Institution
with Minor External Alterations

May 2025
AS877 / DMR / E
Revision A

Prepared on behalf of
Brothers of Charity Services

**Planning, Design and
Access Statement**

01 / Introduction.

This statement is submitted in support of a Change of use of the existing building known as Hillcrest House from an assumed Use Class F1 - Learning and non-residential institutions to Use Class C2 - Residential Institutions with minor external alterations to facilitate the proposed use, including new tiled roof finish, alterations to the existing window and door opening and renovation of the existing external brickwork.

The application is submitted on behalf of the Brothers of Charity Services, who own Hillcrest House in conjunction with their wider operations across the Thingwall Hall site which is also within their ownership.

The proposals form part of the charity's programme to re-purpose underused buildings within the estate as part of their commitment to provide accommodation and services to support some of the most marginalised individuals in society, including adults with learning disabilities and elderly people.

This application seeks approval to re-purpose this vacant derelict building to provide supported residential accommodation on a non-permanent basis for individuals recently discharged from hospital who require short-term care before returning to their usual place of residence. This proposed use falls within Planning Use Class C2 – Residential Institutions.

02 / Existing Site & Context.

Hillcrest House is located within the broader Thingwall Hall Estate and accessed via Thingwall Lane, in the Broadgreen area of Liverpool.

The estate includes a number of buildings in mixed use under the same ownership and management of the applicant, Brothers of Charity Services. These various buildings provide a range of care-related facilities, including a nursing home, day services for adults with learning disabilities, respite accommodation, and administration functions to support the charities day-to-day operations. One of these buildings, Thingwall Hall, is Grade II listed. Hillcrest House itself is not statutorily listed

Hillcrest House is an existing standalone building. formerly used for educational and activity-based purposes, and is currently vacant and derelict. While specific information about Hillcrest House is limited, specifically in relation to it's exact former use, a site walkover and visual internal inspection of the building would suggest its most recent use was as a serious as classrooms and ancillary accommodation likely providing classroom based sessions / workshops fall within Planning Use Class F1 - Learning and non-residential.

Vehicular access to the estate is provided via Thingwall Lane, with established on-site access roads and parking areas which serve the various building across the site.

03 / Proposed Use.

The proposed change of use will enable Hillcrest House to provide supported residential accommodation for individuals who have been discharged from hospital but are not yet ready to return to their permanent residence, this can arise from a multitude of individual circumstances, including mobility issues and/or social exclusion.

This short-term care provision will support recovery and improve outcomes for service users. In addition, by providing a safe and supportive intermediate accommodation pathway, the proposals will help relieve pressure on the NHS by facilitating timely hospital discharges. It will offer transitional care for some of the most vulnerable individuals in society, enabling them to move from a hospital setting to a supportive residential environment before returning to their homes on a permanent, thereby helping to free up much-needed hospital bed capacity.

The proposed use falls within Use Class C2 - Residential Institutions, consistent with other buildings and services operated on the wider estate and aligned with the predominant residential use of the immediate surrounding area.

The re-use of Hillcrest House aligns with the core values and objectives of the Brothers of Charity Services which is to support vulnerable members of the community through flexible, high-quality accommodation and the provision of much needed care services.

Context

Hillcrest House is a single-storey brick-built building with no significant architectural features. The building is currently long term vacant in a derelict state but its scale and layout make it suitable for conversion to C2 use by undertaking a full internal refurbishment with only minor external works required.

Amount

The works proposed in this application are limited to:

- Change of use to C2 providing 6 bedrooms with ancillary staff accommodation;
- Installation of new windows and door openings to suit internal layout;
- Replacement of existing roof finishes with new roof finishes, including replacing roof windows;
- Renovation of existing brick façades to reinvigorate the buildings appearance.

Layout

The internal layout will be adapted to provide suitable supported accommodation comprising 6no. bedrooms with staff accommodation and break out kitchen and day lounge facilities occupants. All internal works will be carried out under separate Building Regulations approval. Both the external footprint and internal areas of the building will remain unchanged.

Scale

No change is proposed to the scale or overall height or massing of the building.

Appearance

The minor external alterations will improve the visual appearance of Hillcrest House while respecting the character of the surrounding estate.

Materials will be carefully selected to match or complement the existing building and wider site.

Landscaping

No significant new landscaping is proposed. Existing landscaping within the immediate setting of the building will be retained.

05 / Heritage Considerations

Heritage Significance and Design Response

Hillcrest House lies within the grounds of the Thingwall Hall estate, which contains Thingwall Hall, a Grade II listed building. Hillcrest House itself is not statutorily listed, but lies within the curtilage of a listed asset and forms part of the wider historic setting.

Physical Features and Setting

Hillcrest House is a modest, single-storey brick-built structure of limited architectural interest. It does not contribute directly to the architectural significance of Thingwall Hall, and no features of special historic or architectural interest are affected by the proposed works.

Consultation

A specialist heritage consultant, Heritage Potential, was appointed to assess the significance of the site and its relationship to the listed building. Their assessment concludes that the proposed works result in no harm to the listed asset or its setting and are likely to offer modest heritage benefit by reinstating and securing the long-term use of Hillcrest House. The findings of the Heritage Statement have directly informed the development proposals.

Design

The design of the proposed works has been informed by a clear understanding of the building's context within the Thingwall Hall estate. The external alterations are minimal, limited to the replacement of roof finishes, installation of new windows and doors in existing or slightly adjusted openings, and brickwork repairs and renovation. These changes are intended to sensitively refurbish the building, reinstate its appearance, and improve its long-term viability, all without adversely affecting the setting or significance of the nearby Grade II listed Thingwall Hall.

External Materials

The materials selected have been chosen to either match or complement the existing finishes to ensure that the appearance of Hillcrest House remains sympathetic to the character of the surrounding site. The proposals have been developed to ensure that the architectural character and integrity of the wider estate are respected. In particular, the new roof finishes to the existing pitched roof will align the material appearance of Hillcrest House with other buildings on the estate, including Thingwall Hall. This represents a modest but positive contribution to the site's overall coherence and character, enhancing the setting of the designated heritage asset.

The existing external brickwork to Hillcrest House is of no architectural or historic significance, as confirmed in the submitted Heritage Statement. The building has undergone later extensions, resulting in the use of two distinct and poorly matched brick types. In addition, proposed alterations include the removal and infill of some window openings, where matching existing brick and mortar is likely result in further imperfections due to sourcing constraints and weathering.

To address this and ensure a coherent and harmonious visual appearance, it is proposed to apply a masonry paint finish in an off-white heritage tone across all elevations. From a heritage perspective, this approach will visually unify the differing brickwork types, whilst retaining the brickwork detailing, creating a more consistent and restrained external character. The light, neutral tone will help the building sit comfortably within its landscaped setting and avoid visual competition with the nearby Grade II listed Thingwall Hall. As such, the proposed painted finish represents a modest yet positive enhancement to the building's external appearance, with no adverse impact on the setting or significance of the heritage asset.

Access and Policy Context

The proposed development supports inclusive access and sustainable travel principles, consistent with local planning policy and Knowsley Council guidance, specifically saved policy T10 from the 2006 UDP.

The proposed change of use is subject to Building Control approval, with compliance required under Part M of the Building Regulations. As such, adequate access provision for the less mobile and those with sensory impairments is secured through separate legislation, and planning policy should not be used to duplicate these requirements, consistent with the explanatory guidance accompanying Saved Policy T10.

Notwithstanding this, and in accordance with the expectations of Policy T10, the proposed access arrangements have been reviewed. An alternative means of access was not explored, as the existing entrance arrangement can facilitate fully compliant with access. The addition of two designated disabled parking bays adjacent to the building further enhances the accessibility of the site for users with limited mobility. These improvements are achieved without any adverse effect on the setting of the nearby listed building.

Site Connectivity

The site is well connected via Thingwall Lane to the local road network. Pedestrian access is provided via existing footpaths. Cycle access is available via the local road network.

Public Transport

Regular bus services operate along Thingwall Lane, providing good connectivity to Liverpool city centre and surrounding areas.

Internal Access

The proposed internal layout will ensure full accessibility for service users and staff. Level access will be provided at all principal entrances, internal corridor and door opening widths will be in accordance with Building Regulations and best practice guidance.

Parking

The wider Thingwall Hall estate provides a substantial level of on-site parking. Parking demand for the proposed C2 use is expected to be low with existing on-site parking provision considered more than adequate to meet the required need. The proposed external alterations include the provision of 2 no. dedicated disabled parking spaces in line with Local Policy parking standards.

Emergency Access

Existing site circulation routes are suitable for emergency vehicle access.

Internal fire evacuation arrangements will be addressed through the Building Regulations process.

07 / Conclusion

The proposals represent a positive and sustainable re-use of an underused existing building within the Thingwall Hall estate.

The change of use to provide supported residential accommodation will:

- Support the Brothers of Charity Services' wider mission;
- Provide a much-needed health and social care resource for the local community;
- Promote efficient use of land and buildings in line with planning policy objectives.

The proposed external works are minor in scope and will enhance the appearance of the building without any adverse impacts.

The proposals are in accordance with relevant local planning policies and associated guidance.



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