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Design + Access Statement

Proposed replacement of shopfront, upper floor window and additional restorative works to front elevation, at 50 Eccleston Street, Prescot, L34 5QJ

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1.0 Background information

1.1 Name of the scheme

Proposed replacement of shopfront, upper floor window and additional restorative works to front elevation, at 50 Eccleston Street, Prescott, L34 5QJ

1.2 Applicant

Yates property investments ltd
45 Longview Road
L35 8LN
Rainhill
Prescot

1.3 Architect.

Smith Young Architecture Ltd
23 Roscoe Street
Liverpool
L1 2SX

1.4 Introduction

The design and Access Statement has been prepared to satisfy the requirements under PPS 1 and PPS3 as a description of the design process to accompany the proposed drawings submitted for planning consent.

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2.0 Site details

2.1 Site plan



Existing Site Plan

2.2 Description

The site is currently occupied by a 3-storey terrace, which is currently occupied for commercial purposes.

The proposed development site is located at 50 Eccleston street, Prescott. The site is bounded by Eccleston Street to the North, existing commercial units to the West and East and service yard to the South.

The site has a rectangular shape and is approximately 112 sqm in area. There is no vegetation of arboricultural merit within the site boundary.

Access to the site is provided by Eccleston Street, which permits pedestrian access and vehicular access.

The site is located within the Prescott conservation area.

Site area: 112 sqm

2.3 Ownership

Yates property investments ltd
45 Longview Road
L35 8LN
Rainhill
Prescot

Site and area appraisals

3.1 Planning history

Refer to item 4.0 for further details.

3.2 Adjacent land uses, and relevant planning proposals

The site is located within Prescot town centre, with immediate adjacent buildings utilised for C3 residential use, A1/3/4/5 use as shops, cafes, drinking establishments and takeaway food units, with some B1 use in the form of small converted offices.

3.3 Heritage conservation - listed buildings

Research has determined that the site is located within the Prescot Conservation Area, as shown in Map 1 of the Townscape Appraisal Document. The building on the site along with its immediate neighbours are not classified as positive un-listed buildings. The building was constructed as early as the 1850's.

3.4 Focal points / Landmarks / Listed Buildings

There are no Focal, Landmark or Listed buildings within the immediate area, but the site is located within the Prescot Conservation Area.

3.5 Topography - contours on the site

There are no significant changes in level across the site.

3.6 Services

In reference to Public utilities, along Eccleston street, the street is pedestrianised and is also capable of servicing light goods vehicles. There exist the usual services e.g., underground services, drainage systems, electric, gas and water, there are no

overhead power lines near the site. There is no need for new connections to the development site, as the site is connected.

3.7 Identity

The development site is located in an area of primarily two storey buildings, with a mixture of A/B class units and some C3 residential buildings, within the surrounding terraces and urban blocks.

3.8 Surrounding buildings

- Building lines - groupings, rhythms and plot sizes

As indicated above, there is an established building line along Ecclestone street, which will be unaffected.

- **Scale** - height and massing is primarily two/ three storey buildings, there is a constant height and massing within the local context.
- **Appearance** - details and materials, is primarily facing brick and render elements and timber / UPVC windows, with concrete/ slate roof plain tiles.

3.9 Hard landscaping

The present hard landscaping to the area is concrete/stone paving and asphalt; there is little street furniture or Public art.

3.10 Soft landscaping

There is little to no soft landscaping present within the site proximity, with the exception of a few small deciduous trees located along the adjacent Leyland Street.

3.11 Vehicular movement

Surrounding road and street layout as indicated above (2.1); the development site is currently accessed along Ecclestone Street. The area is very permeable; the majority of the parking is facilitated on surrounding streets. The development site has no provision for off street parking within this proposed scheme so as not to affect the existing context.

There are good road links, with the A58 and M57 located within a 5-minute drive.

3.12 Pedestrian access

The area is very permeable. There are no specific times or huge influx of pedestrian movement for the area. What there is a steady flow of children people going and coming from their homes, usual times of 8.00 – 9.00 am and 3.00 – 3.30pm.

There are no issues where people are restricted from access due to any current aspects of design.

3.13 Public transport

There is a comprehensive range of Public services available that serve the site and the area.

3.0 Planning history

In regard to the development site, research has found that there is no relevant planning history for no.50 Eccleston St.

4.0 Design Principles and Concepts

4.1 Use

The proposal is to replace the existing shopfront, refurbish upper floor windows and conduct additional restorative works to the front elevation, to restore the façade in a sensitive manner with similar aesthetics in line with similar funded projects within the area.

4.2 Proposed Area

The proposal is focused on restoring and refitting the existing shop front with aesthetics and proportions of the building as found historically. No amendments to built form other than restorative works will take place.

4.3 Layout

Access is provided off Eccleston Street, which permits pedestrian and limited vehicular use. The internal layout will be altered minorly in line with the shop front restorative works.

4.4 Scale

The proposal aims to restore features of the main elevation to those more appropriate for the historic form of the building. Insensitive fixtures will be removed, and a sensitive refit of the shop front will take place aiming to restore the façade.

4.5 Landscaping

The proposal focuses on façade restoration and will integrate a small recessed entrance way within the site curtilage.

4.6 Access & Parking

Access to the site remains unchanged, with existing pedestrian and limited vehicular means providing access to the site along Eccleston Street.

5.0 Heritage Statement & Planning Policy

6.1 Overview of Building Heritage

The building is located within the Prescot Conservation area boundary. The Historic Environment Record (HER) has been consulted, and the building is not currently listed. The building is typical of early 1900's town centre architecture, with brick walls, slate roof and facing brick. The existing shopfront however, is a much later addition that is insensitive to the historic building and adds little value to street frontage along Eccleston Street.

The building has no heritage significance and the proposals will not cause harm to the building or their immediate environment. The newly proposed shopfront fit out will use materials that are specified to be sensitive and reflective of other historic and well-maintained local shopfronts. The proposed works have been designed in consultation with the local regeneration officer, who has had an input on the design outcome presented along with this document.

6.2 National Policy

Planning permission is required for the restoration of the façade, inclusive of refitting out the existing shopfront, restoring an upper floor window, restoring of rainwater good and general restorative works to a historic unlisted façade. These are to be considered within the context of Para 134 of NPPF.¹³⁴ Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

6.3 National Guidance

I. The national planning practice guide explains the meaning of public benefits;

What is meant by the term public benefits?

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the Notional Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the Proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the Public at Large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits. Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset

This replaces the rather longer explanation contained in the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide 2010, which is due to be withdrawn quite soon.

6.4 Local Policy

Knowsley Replacement UDP contains saved policies which can be applied pending the completion of consultations on the Local Plan.

Saved policy DQ5 deals with development in conservation areas:

1. New development within or close to a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Area, having regard to the following:
 - A) The scale, form, massing, height, materials and architectural detail of existing buildings in the Conservation Area;
 - B) Existing plot layouts and the street scene;
 - C) Important views into, within and out of the Conservation Area;
 - D) The need to preserve existing open spaces, structures and landscape features (Such as trees and hedges, walls, and traditional paving);
 - E) Likely levels of noise, pollution, traffic, parking or disturbance that may be caused by the development; and the visual impact of any vehicular access, parking or servicing/delivery areas that are needed to serve the development.
2. Conditions may be imposed restricting Permitted Development rights where this is necessary to prevent future minor alterations to a development which could adversely affect the character or appearance of the Area.
3. The Council will prepare Conservation Area Appraisals for each Conservation Area which shall be treated as material considerations in determining planning applications for development which may affect these Areas.

This links to the other relevant policy, which is about design quality for new development (policy DQ I):

New development should be of a high-quality design which will:

- A) Respond to and, where appropriate, enhance the characteristics of the Immediately surrounding area through the use of appropriate scale, density, massing, Height and building lines;
- B) Preserve or enhance views of important landscape features/buildings in surrounding areas;
- C) Protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers; Site characteristics
- D) Preserve any existing buildings, walls or structures which (whilst not necessarily statutorily listed), are of intrinsic architectural or historic interest, or which contribute to the character of the area.

- E) Preserve and manage any existing important natural features such as trees, hedgerows, greenspace, ponds, slopes and streams and where possible make use of these as design features;
- F) Include measures to accommodate protected species and their habitats where these are seen to be relevant on nature conservation grounds.

Access

- G) Provide safe and convenient access for all by a choice of transport, including attractive secure and safe defined pedestrian links to any community, employment, public transport and shopping facilities in the area;

Site layout and landscaping

- H) Achieve an efficient use of land;
- I) Provide an appropriate form of landscape treatment;
- J) Provide high quality open spaces, designed to be well used and appreciated;
- K) Provide good levels of amenity for occupiers of the development; Create a clear distinction between the public and private realm;
- M) Include any necessary noise attenuation and road abatement measures as an integral part of design; Buildings and structures
- N) Achieve good design quality in all new buildings and structures in terms of their scale, style, materials, detailing and their relationship with each other;
- O) Maximise environmental efficiency through efficient use of materials and resources, re-use of materials wherever practicable, and the promotion of energy efficiency;

Links to other approved strategies

Schemes for new development should take account of other relevant strategies and guidance drawn up by the local planning authority. In particular, regard should be had to the aims and objectives of any regeneration strategy which has been Approved by the Council for the area concerned. Developers should also have regard to the Knowsley Council Design Guide which sets out appropriate design principles.

6.5 Local SPD's and Guidance

The conservation area appraisal for Prescot Town Centre is a material planning consideration. The detail of this document was reviewed by the Conservation Studio when the townscape heritage initiative was being developed and the key observations of that exercise have been included within the action plan for the Heritage Lottery Fund and I KMBC grant-aided works.

Knowsley MBC has developed guidance for applicants about shopfront design for buildings in conservation areas, which enhances the borough-wide policy S9.

English Heritage helpfully published a guide 'Retail Development in Historic Areas' in 2005 which gives the following advice in the checklist:

Encourage a mix of uses to sustain the vitality of the area

Heritage Works, published by English Heritage with partners RICS, Deloitte and the British Property Federation is a tool kit for regeneration in Historic Areas and contains the following key message:

The outdated perception of Victorian terraces or the factories and warehouses that sow the birth of the industrial revolution as obstacles to economic growth and urban renewal no longer holds.

Historic buildings create a focal point that people can relate to and are familiar with - giving a sense of place.

They may be well loved local landmarks which the community identify with and will rally around to support or save.

The fabric and design can add a distinctive identity to the new build part of a regeneration scheme - enhancing townscape and lifting the overall quality of the built environment.

They may have interesting historical and cultural associations which can be interpreted and developed through the wider regeneration area.

They can assist in achieving sustainable development objectives.

They may attract tenants/occupiers who would not be interested in a less distinctive building.

They feed people's interest in the past.

The key advice for this type of scheme is:

For area-based projects it is important to create the right partnership with a strong shared vision, a clear set of objectives and realistic expectations. Working with the grain of the building is key. That should involve trying to find occupiers and uses that suit the type and style of the accommodation in the building.

6.6 Pre-application & Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the THI grants officer throughout the initial design process.

6.7 Other Consultations for Consideration

The application includes a heritage statement sufficient to meet the requirements of N PPF Para 1 28.

6.8 Summary

The proposals are generally in line with policy and provide the following public benefits:

- I. The building as a non-designated heritage asset will be returned to the optimum Viable use by restoring the shop front with a design of high quality and sensitivity to local heritage architecture. Restoration of the façade and incorporation of new fixtures will also ensure the building is better protected and will increase its potential lifespan.

The public benefits of local amenities such as bars and restaurants in conservation areas are set out in the non-statutory guidance from English Heritage, RICS and British Property Federation.

6.9 Significance of Heritage Asset(s)

50 Eccleston Street is an unlisted building within Prescott Conservation Area. The building itself is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its historic and architectural interest. Upon viewing historic maps and photographs, it is clear that the building has been present on site since at least the mid-seventeenth century, but has been altered over time to reach its current state.

6.10 Historic Interest

50 Eccleston Street was constructed as early as the mid-seventeenth century, with a timber-framed structure and facing brickwork. Historic photographs have shown the building with different forms of external signage and fixtures present at different points in history.

6.11 Architectural Interest

The main façade on Eccleston Street is an aluminium shop front at ground level with yellow facing brick to the upper two storey level. The upper two storeys comprises of traditional timber sash windows. In contrast to the surrounding two storey buildings along Eccleston St, no.50 has an apex gable front with a traditional decorative barge board and traditional slate roof. At ground level, there is also some later addition granite facing which seems to be added around the same period as the aluminium shop front. There is evidence of historic frontage details behind boxed sections, but it is unclear whether these are in any way salvageable due to their visible conditions, and the manner in which the current shop front has been constructed.

The current shopfront is considered to be of no particular interest. The upper floor and roof retain their traditional character, though this has been undermined by the lack of maintenance works and some external fixtures.

The building and its current occupants contribute actively to a lively street frontage along Eccleston street, but it is clear that restorative works to the front façade and a sensitive refit of the existing shop front could add wider value to the heritage fabric of the town centre.

