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Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning

St Chads Drive, Kirkby

**Planning & Affordable Housing
Statement**

26/06/2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cassidy + Ashton have been instructed by Grosvenor Hart Homes Limited (GHH) to oversee the preparation and submission of a Minor-Material Amendment (MMA) application pursuant to Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relating to planning permission Ref **23/02815/FUL / 23/02815/NMA1**.

1.2 The application site relates to:

Car Park, St Chads Drive, Kirkby Town Centre, Knowsley, L32 8RE

1.3 Planning permission (Ref: 23/02815/FUL, now 23/02815/NMA1) was granted for:

“Erection of a 53no. apartment development (Use Class C3), landscaping, carparking and all associated works”

1.4 The approved scheme comprises a four-storey residential development containing 53 self-contained homes, associated communal facilities, landscaping and parking provision.

1.5 Following discussions with Knowsley Council, Homes England and McCarthy Stone, GHH have agreed to acquire the completed development to deliver the approved scheme as 100% Social Rent homes which they will manage directly themselves.

1.6 This application seeks two minor-material amendments to permission Ref 28/02815/FUL / 28/02815/NMA1:

1. Remove condition 1 (NMA1)
2. Vary Condition 2 (FUL) (Schedule 1 list of approved plans & documents), specifically replace the document referenced 7076 – Planning & Affordable Housing Statement. Replace with this Statement, which reflects GHH’s operational model and the proposed use of the development as non-age restricted Social Rent housing.

- 1.7 The proposed amendment relates solely to occupancy arrangements and does not involve any material alterations to the approved development.
- 1.8 The development would continue to operate as self-contained Use Class C3 residential accommodation and would not involve 24-hour onsite staffing, public facing services, increased noise or disturbance or any change to the external operation of the site beyond that already approved.

2.0 PROPOSED AMENDMENT

- 2.1 This application seeks minor-material amendments, pursuant to Section 73 of the Town and Planning Act 1990, to vary planning permission 23/02815/FUL / 23/02815/NMA1, relating to the approved development at St Chad's Drive, Kirkby.
- 2.2 A minor material amendment is one whose scale and nature result in a development which is not substantially different from the one which has been approved. The local planning authority must be satisfied that the amendment sought is minor-material in order to grant an application under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.3 In each case, whether a change is material is a judgment based on fact and degree, as well as an assessment of the impact of the change on the local environment. The judgment on materiality is always based on the original planning permission. It is noted that the Knowsley Council have accepted the principle of an application pursuant to Section 96A for this particular site and associated planning permission, having granted two non-material amendments (ref: 23/02815/NMA & NMA1), following the grant of planning permission 23/02815/FUL.
- 2.4 The proposed amendments relate **solely to the nature of the proposed occupancy** and associated planning documentation. GHH have agreed to acquire the part-completed development from McCarthy Stone, who had secured funding to deliver Older Persons Shared Ownership (OPSO) housing, and propose to deliver the scheme as 100% Social Rent affordable housing.
- 2.5 To highlight the minor-materiality of the proposed amendments, we set out the following points of clarification:
- Layout and site arrangement remain unchanged
 - Scale, height and massing of the building remain unchanged
 - External appearance and architectural detailing remain unchanged

- Access and parking arrangements remain unchanged. For clarification, the approved scheme provides 22no. parking spaces. Whilst falling below the Council's SPD standards, previously the Council's Highways advisor was satisfied with this level of provision and that the proposal would not have a severe impact on the local highway network. Aligned with the GHH proposal, occupancy demographics will result in a position of betterment, in consideration of the fact that the associated levels of car ownership would in fact be lower than the approved proposal.
- Landscaping and boundary treatments remain unchanged
- All approved technical assessments and mitigation measures remain unchanged
- The principal basis of viability and associated elements remain unchanged, the approved proposal was supplemented by a viability assessment, based on which, it was agreed that there was not the ability to seek developer contributions, namely for social value and open space triggers. The key constituents of the viability assessment, namely construction costs, sales costs, developer profit and the sensitivities of the market are equally applicable to the GHH proposal. This is further compounded by the switch from OPSO to 100% Social Rent housing delivery, a less valuable tenure which will be more affordable to tenants. **An updated viability assessment is submitted in support of this application.**

2.6 The approved scheme comprises a four-storey residential development containing 53 self-contained apartments with associated communal facilities, landscaping and parking. The mix comprises 37 one-bedroom apartments and 16 two-bedroom apartments.

2.7 The proposed amendments will not result in any intensification of use of material change to the physical operation of the site.

2.8 The proposal will not involve:

- 24-hour onsite staffing
- Increased comings and goings beyond typical residential occupation
- Increased noise or disturbance
- Any alterations to the external appearance or layout of the development

2.9 GHH's proposed development would operate as a high-quality affordable housing community. The homes would be delivered as Social Rent accommodation in accordance with Homes England funding requirements.

2.10 Residents would occupy self-contained independent homes within Use Class C3 accommodation.

2.11 GHH's operational model includes the provision of onsite housing management and coordinated support during standard business hours only.

2.12 The approved residents lounge and communal areas would support the creation of a community focussed environment and facilitate resident led activities aimed at promoting wellbeing, social connection and tenant engagement.

2.13 The proposed amendment would facilitate the delivery of 53 Social Rent Homes representing a substantial affordable housing benefit within the Knowsley Borough.

2.14 The delivery of this non-age restricted Social Rent housing tenants will be supported by the grant funding already secured against the site from Homes England.

2.15 Given the proposal would deliver 100% affordable housing and does not alter the approved built form or create additional impacts, it is not anticipated that any additional planning obligations would be required beyond those already associated with the extant planning permission.

3.0 BUSINESS OPERATOR MODEL

GROSVENOR HART HOMES

- 3.1 Grosvenor Hart Homes (GHH) (The Applicant) is a Chester based Social Enterprise and Registered Provider of Affordable Housing, initiated and funded by the Duke of Westminster. GHH provide high quality affordable housing and for up to 25% of tenants, tailored support services designed to improve the life chances of children, young people and families.
- 3.2 GHH's operational model is founded on the principle that stable housing, access to support and pathways into employment are critical to enabling individuals to overcome disadvantage and achieve improved long-term outcomes. The organisation therefore combines the provision of affordable homes with coordinated housing management, wellbeing support and community-based interventions.
- 3.3 GHH currently owns and successfully operates two affordable housing communities within Cheshire West and Chester. These comprise:
1. 29 mixed family and young person homes in Chester City Centre (operational since 2023) and;
 2. 40 family homes in Ellesmere Port (operational since 2024).

GROSVENOR HART HOMES HOUSING MODEL

- 3.4 GHH's housing model seeks to create balanced and sustainable communities through the delivery of affordable housing primarily for general needs tenants, and including some young people and families who may benefit from additional coordinated support. The model is intentionally community focussed and seeks to promote stability, independence, wellbeing and positive social outcomes for residents.

- 3.5 There is emphasis on the access to mental health and well-being services, supporting tenants in navigating day to day challenges and help engage with education, employment and training opportunities. There seeks to be a high standard of tenancy management and early intervention where support needs arise at GHH.
- 3.6 Within GHH, residents occupy self-contained homes within Use Class C3 residential accommodation and maintain independent tenancies. The housing model does not involve 24-hour intensive onsite support provision. Instead, support is delivered through scheduled and responsive engagement during standard business hours in a manner consistent with ordinary residential occupation.

INTENDED OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AT ST CHADS

- 3.7 At St Chads, GHH anticipates a minimum onsite presence of two housing and support staff members operating during business hours only (09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday).
- 3.8 It is anticipated that a maximum of approximately 12 residents, equating to around 23%, would comprise tenants requiring a level of coordinated support. The remainder of the development would operate as General Needs Social Rent housing.
- 3.9 Tenants of GHH are encouraged and empowered to develop a programme of community led activities that promote social interaction, wellbeing and positive relationships between tenants and the wider local community. The approved residents lounge within the existing development is considered well suited to facilitating such activities and communal engagement.

ENGAGEMENT WITH KNOWSLEY COUNCIL

- 3.10 The Applicant has been engaging proactively with Knowsley Council since February 2026 regarding opportunities to bring GHH into the Borough and assist in meeting identified affordable housing and support needs, including accommodation for young people leaving care.
- 3.11 This engagement has included visits by Senior Officers and Members to GHH's operational project in Chester. Through this process, the Council identified specific local need for affordable housing with coordinated support for certain young people transitioning from the care system.
- 3.12 Following consultation with Knowsley Council and Homes England, this development has been identified as particularly well suited to its operational requirements due to:
1. Its sustainable and central location within Kirkby Town Centre
 2. Excellent access to local amenities and public transport connections
 3. The mix of apartment sizes
 4. The self-contained and low amenity design of the approved scheme, which aligns well with GHH's affordable, well managed and community focussed housing model.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

- 3.13 The approved development currently benefits from planning permission for 53 apartments under 23/02815/FUL with no affordable housing provision secured due to viability considerations. Notwithstanding that no affordable housing is secured against the site, McCarthy Stone had secured funding to deliver OPSO housing.
- 3.14 In accordance with Government objectives to increase the affordability of housing, GHH are now proposing to deliver 100% of the homes as Social Rent

accommodation. This would provide a significant affordable housing benefit within Knowsley Borough and assist in addressing identified local housing needs.

- 3.15 The proposal would retain the approved built form, scale, layout, landscaping, parking arrangements and technical design of the consented development.
- 3.16 No changes are proposed to the external appearance of the scheme or the operation of the site that would give rise to increased activity, noise or disturbance beyond that associated with the approved residential use.
- 3.17 The Applicant therefore considers the proposal represents an opportunity to deliver a high quality and sustainable affordable housing community in a highly accessible town centre location, while also supporting wider social and housing objectives within the Borough.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The application seeks a minor-material amendment to planning permission Ref: 23/02815/FUL / 23/02815/NMA1 relating solely to occupancy arrangements. The principle of residential development on the site has already been established through the extant planning permission.
- 4.3 The proposed amendments would facilitate the delivery of 53 Social Rent apartments within a sustainable and accessible town centre location. The proposal therefore remains consistent with the overarching objectives of national and local planning policy relating to sustainable development and housing delivery.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 4.4 It is acknowledged that the site lies within Kirkby Town Centre and forms part of the Principal Regeneration Area (Policy CS1). Policy CS10 specifically supports comprehensive regeneration of Kirkby Town Centre to enhance its vitality and viability.
- 4.5 The proposal would still contribute positively towards regeneration objectives and sustainable development objectives given changes are only to do with occupation and not to do with the design of the site.
- 4.6 The following Knowsley Local Plan policies are considered particularly relevant to the proposed amendment:
- SD1 Sustainable Development
 - CS1 Spatial Strategy for Knowsley

- CS2 Development Principals
- CS3 Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution
- CS10 Principal Regeneration Area: Kirkby Town Centre
- CS15 Delivering Affordable Housing
- CS16 Specialist and Supported Accommodation
- CS17 Housing Sizes and Design Standards
- CS19 Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

4.7 ***The proposed amendments are considered to remain consistent with the relevant Development Plan Policies, as established through the assessment and conclusions set out within the Officer's Report accompanying approved planning permission Ref: 23/02815/FUL. Given that the current application relates solely to a change in occupancy arrangements and does not propose any physical alterations to the approved development, including its layout, scale, appearance, access, landscaping or technical design, the proposal continues to accord with the relevant local planning policy.***

NATIONAL POLICY

- 4.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Governments planning policies for England and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.9 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies the three objectives of sustainable development as economic, social and environmental. The proposal would contribute positively towards these objectives through the delivery of affordable housing on a sustainable brownfield site within Kirkby Town Centre.

- 4.10 Paragraph 11 established a presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that proposals which accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.11 Further, Section 5 of the NPPF places significant emphasis on delivering a sufficient supply of homes and meeting the needs of different groups within the community. Paragraph 63 specifically requires planning policies and decisions to reflect the need for affordable housing and to address the housing requirements of groups with particular needs.
- 4.12 Paragraphs 124 and 129 support the efficient use of land and the creation of well designed, attractive and sustainable place. The proposal would continue to make effective use of a sustainable brownfield site while retaining the high-quality design and layout already approved under the extant planning permission.
- 4.13 Through the determination of planning permission Ref: 23/02815/FUL, the principle, scale, design and overall policy compliance of the development has already been assessed and accepted by Knowsley Council. The Officer's Report concluded that the development accorded with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan along with national policy.
- 4.14 ***As the current application seeks only a minor-material amendment, relating to occupancy arrangements and affordable housing tenure, with no changes proposed to the approved built form, layout, appearance, landscaping, access arrangements or technical assessments, the policy conclusions reached under the extant permission remain applicable and are unaffected by the proposed occupational amendment.***

5.0 AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED

- 5.1 The proposed amendment responds directly to an identified and evidenced affordable housing need within Knowsley Borough. The approved planning permission currently secures no affordable housing provision (as defined in Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF (Dec'24)). Whilst expressed as retirement living, meeting a specialist housing need in the locality, a viability assessment precluded recognised occupancy / price controls aligned with affordability through a planning obligation.
- 5.2 The current amendment seeks to deliver 100% affordable housing in the form of Social Rent accommodation managed by Registered Provider GHH.
- 5.3 The Knowsley Housing Need Assessment (2021) identifies a number of significant housing pressures within the Borough, including:
- A limited choice of affordable new homes;
 - A shortage of one- and two- bedroom affordable homes;
 - A net annual affordable housing shortfall of 243 dwellings; and
 - An imbalance in affordable housing provision across Knowsley
- 5.4 The Housing Need Assessment further states:
- “Given the level of affordable need identified, it is recommended that the minimum affordable target is 25% and the Council should seek a higher proportion of affordable housing delivery on sites, where possible.”*
- 5.5 ***The proposed amendment would therefore exceed the Council’s affordable housing policy expectations by delivering 53 affordable Social Rent homes on the site. The development would provide a meaningful contribution towards meeting identified local housing needs, particularly for smaller one- and two-bedroom affordable homes in an accessible and sustainable location.***

- 5.6 The proposal would also support wider social and housing objectives through GHH, where they combine affordable housing delivery with coordinated housing management and wellbeing support aimed at promoting stable and sustainable communities.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This application seeks a minor-material amendment pursuant to Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relating to planning permission ref: 23/02815/FUL / 23/02815/NMA1, at St Chads Drive, Kirkby Town Centre.
- 6.2 The proposed amendments relate solely to occupancy arrangements and associated planning documentation to facilitate the delivery of the approved development as 100% Social Rent affordable housing managed by Grosvenor Hart Homes, a Registered Provider of Affordable Housing (RP).
- 6.3 No physical alterations are proposed to the approved development. The approved layout, scale, appearance, landscaping, access, parking arrangements and technical design would remain unchanged, and the site would continue to operate as self-contained Use Class C3 residential accommodation.
- 6.4 The principle of residential development and the acceptability of the approved scheme have already been established through planning permission Ref: 23/02815/FUL. As the current application proposes no physical changes to the approved development, the policy conclusions reached under the extant permission remain applicable.
- 6.5 The proposal would deliver significant benefits through the provision of 53 Social Rent homes within a sustainable town centre location, helping to address identified affordable housing need within Knowsley Borough. The development would also support wider social and community objectives through GHH's affordable housing and wellbeing support model.
- 6.6 The proposed amendment is therefore considered to accord with the Development Plan and the NPPF and given the limited nature of the changes proposed, it is requested that the Minor-Material Amendment be approved.

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