

Regeneration and Economic Development Department

APPLICATION NO: 21/00970/FUL

APPLICANT: Mrs Suzanne Scott

WARD AFFECTED: Whiston & Cronton

DEVELOPMENT: DISMANTLING AND REBUILDING OF SANDSTONE WALLS AND
ERECTION OF AN OUTBUILDING

LOCATION OF SITE: Sandfield Natural Play Centre , Lickers Lane, Whiston, L35 3SR

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION –

Site of Biological or Geological Interest - Site Of Biological Or Local Geological Interest

Sustainable Urban Extension - Sustainable Urban Extension

TPO - Areas, Groups, Woods - TPO - Areas, Groups, Woods: 64/00001/TPO

RELEVANT POLICIES

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

CS20 - Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS:

Conservation & Design Officer - No objections but requests conditions.

Merseyside Fire And Rescue Authority - No objections in principle.

Whiston Town Council - No comments received.

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION:

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 6 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice and a Press Notice. No representations have been received.

ARTICLE 35

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT:

Relevant Planning History

K/3435 - Use of part of dwelling for play group. Granted - November 1978.

K/4434 - Renewal of temporary permission for use of part of dwelling for play group. Granted - November 1979.

06/00881/CLU - Application for certificate of lawfulness for an existing use as a day nursery. Granted - November 2006.

18/00156/FUL - Retention of timber structure to rear elevation to provide boot/coat store, changing area and covered outdoor seating area (permission sought for 5 year period). Refused - June 2018.

18/00158/LBC - Retention of timber structure to rear elevation to provide boot/coat store, changing area and covered outdoor seating area. Refused - June 2018.

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18/00161/COU - Change of use of first and second floors from mixed used D1/C3 to D1 (day nursery) only, to facilitate increase of provision of up to 70 children. Granted - December 2018.

19/00652/FUL - Conversion of disused coach house including addition of timber frame lean-to, resiting of timber outbuilding and rebuilding of 3.6m high sandstone boundary wall to Lickers Lane. Granted - November 2020.

19/00653/FUL - Conversion of disused coach house including addition of timber frame lean-to, resiting of timber outbuilding and rebuilding of 3.6m high sandstone boundary wall to Lickers Lane. Granted - November 2020.

21/00971/LBC - Dismantling and rebuilding of sandstone walls and erection of an outbuilding. Current - under consideration.

PROPOSAL

The application relates to Sandfield Natural Play Centre, a Grade II listed Georgian building on Lickers Lane in lawful use as a children's nursery. The wall and outbuilding to be rebuilt are ancillary to and fall within the curtilage of Sandfield House and therefore form part of the listed building. They were demolished without permission and this application and the accompanying application for listed building consent seeks to remedy the breach of listed building controls without recourse to formal enforcement action. The previous (demolished) outbuilding was a lean-to structure attached to the rear of the tall stone wall and is considered likely to have been originally built as a laundry, it may also have housed other ancillary domestic uses. The rebuilt outbuilding would be a W.C., store and an open-sided garden room. There is a current planning application for the same under consideration (21/00970/FUL).

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The application complies with the above noted planning policies.

In addition to the development plan the proposals must be considered in light of the duty within s16 and s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. This states:-

"In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority ... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

It is considered that the terms of the relevant sections of the Act are met.

HERITAGE / LISTED BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS PLUS AMENITY

As required by the NPPF, the application includes a Heritage Statement which assesses the significance of the heritage asset, the Heritage Statement sets out that

"Sandfield House, formerly known as Sandfield Cottage, is an 18th Century brick building fronting Lickers Lane on the southern edge of Whiston. It is double-fronted and of two stories, with a distinctive Tuscan style porch. Two later wings, one either side, are in the same style and almost double the width of the façade."

The building was Grade II Listed in 1971. The full Listing citation can be found in Appendix 1. Neither the grounds, the boundary walls nor any ancillary structures, including the Coach House, are cited in the official Listing. However, they can be considered to contribute to the setting of the house and its historic character."

it is considered that this is an acceptable appraisal of the asset's significance.

The NPPF identifies that when determining applications affecting a heritage asset, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

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- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

As set out above, there has been unauthorised partial demolition of a wall and structure within the curtilage of the listed building. The remaining section of the front boundary wall abuts a perpendicular length of wall extending onto the nursery grounds. These sections of wall are displaying signs of structural movement and weather-related damage. The structural movement almost certainly has its causes in movement of the ground beneath the wall over the passage of time. The foundation is shallower and comprised of weaker material than required by modern standards. Facing Lickers Lane, the wall exhibits a marked lean outwards which requires correction, with the wall needing to be taken down to close to ground level. Further into the site, the perpendicular wall is in better condition but dismantling is required close to the abutment with the new boundary wall where a large crack has developed. The stability of the remaining wall is paramount and it may be necessary to remove parts that appear in good condition in order to access damaged sections or to ensure that narrow lengths are not left unsupported. The rebuilt sections of wall require a new foundation and retaining some sections of the existing wall on the existing foundation which may reasonably be expected to continue to deteriorate, tied in to newly rebuilt sections on a modern foundation risks creating lines of stress due to differential settlement and the opening up of new structural cracks. Where possible the retention of undamaged sections of wall on sound foundations, but site inspection is required to determine the state of the foundations. This dismantling of the remaining wall prior to rebuild would have, by its nature, a negative impact on the listed building and its setting albeit of a temporary nature until the rebuild.

The boundary wall would be rebuilt in its original form - with two leaves of sandstone blocks bound together with header stones visible from both faces and infilled with a rubble core. The sandstone blocks and coping from the dismantled wall have been retained on site but some would need to be replaced and / or new stone needed as part of the reconstruction. Ideally locally reclaimed stone would be sourced but, following heritage advice, St Bees or Corsehill sandstones would be used should this be unavailable. The rebuilt wall would be 450mm thick, the same as the original, ensuring that the original coping stones can be reinstated. A soft and slow-setting lime mortar would be used and pointing would be flush or slightly recessed. The wall would be built on an asymmetrical foundation to enable its outer face to lie within/on the site boundary without encroachment of wall or foundation onto the public highway. The reconstruction of the boundary wall would help to restore the external appearance of the site, rebuilt using a structurally safe design but have the outward appearance of the original wall. This element of the proposal is considered to have a positive impact upon the setting of the Grade II Listed building.

From the evidence available, the previous (now demolished) outbuilding had been altered, front walls were partly modern brick/block, the building had a continuous band of stone which also doubled as gutters, some sections of which had been replaced in concrete. One section of the roof had collapsed. Key features such as a chimney breast and over/boiler - though degraded - offered clues about the building's original use as a wash house/laundry. The remnants of the building and those features are now lost. Replacement of the building is welcomed in principle. While it cannot make up for the loss, the replacement building can partially reinstate the appearance of this part of the site. The replacement outbuilding is not intended as a faithful reconstruction of that lost, as that is not possible given that details of some of the key features are not known. However it does echo the previous through its

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general size, form and brick construction. The arrangement differs in several ways from the previous such as not extending right up to the dividing wall with the car park but leaving a space for bin storage, having the garden room open sided rather than enclosed and not extending the full depth of the perpendicular wall and tie in with the stone quoins. The arrangement of doors is also different whilst no windows are proposed, and there is a more standard approach to rainwater goods. The replacement building will also fulfil an important role - as did the previous building - bracing the rebuilt frontage wall. Nursery children or members of the public would have no access to the building with the garden room . available for staff on breaks.

The external walls of the building would be built from facing brick, matched to those used for the rebuild of an adjacent wall separating the bin storage area from the front car park. Internal-faces and the non-buttressing WC / storeroom wall would be built with common brick. Walls would be left unlined and uninsulated in keeping with the former outdoor store's role as a functional space rather than a habitable one. The roof would be a conventional softwood rafter roof laid with slates to closely match the main Sandfield House building. A wall plate would be required to be bolted to the sandstone walls to the rear, with the tie of the roof structure providing additional stability for these walls. The guttering would be a half-round Victorian cast aluminium system, approx. 125mm in diameter. The downpipes would be approx. 76mm diameter round cast collared aluminium in design. Both are styled to give the appearance of cast iron.

The current design and functions envisaged mean that the building will be a useful addition to the site, strengthen the wall and will have a positive impact on the listed building and its setting over the current state.

Overall the proposals would have a positive impact on the listed building and the Conservation Officer supports the proposals.

HIGHWAYS

No highways issues are raised by the reinstatement of previous structures.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The proposals are for reinstatements of previous structures demolished and raise no residential amenity issues with regard neighbouring properties.

CONCLUSION

The proposals will rebuild and reinstate a partly demolished wall and erect an outbuilding to replace the demolished outbuilding on the site of the proposed. The proposals would benefit the heritage asset within the grounds of a Grade 2 listed building; the curtilage structures of the wall and the former outbuilding should be regarded as being 'listed' and the proposals would repair/reinstate those structures. The proposals are considered to have a beneficial impact by such repair/reinstatement of structures forming part of the history and design of the Grade II listed building. The works will benefit the heritage asset and setting, and the visual amenity of the site within the locality, and as such the proposals comply with planning policies and the NPPF. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

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- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) Notwithstanding any submitted materials details the roof covering of the outbuilding hereby permitted shall be natural slate to match Sandfield House.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic character of a Grade II Listed Building, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4) Notwithstanding any submitted materials details prior to any above ground works for the construction of the outbuilding hereby permitted, a sample panel of the facing brickwork and mortar (1m x 1m) shall be constructed on site and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The outbuilding shall only be completed using the agreed brick and mortar with the agreed details submitted for records.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic character of a Grade II Listed Building, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5) Notwithstanding any submitted materials details prior to the construction of any of the stone walling, the specification of mortar and a full width sample panel (1m x 1m) showing the front and rear faces of the stonework, and the pointing style and appearance, shall be constructed on site and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority with the agreed details submitted for records. The wall shall only be completed in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic character of a Grade II Listed Building, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6) Notwithstanding any submitted details doors and fascias shall be timber with a black or white painted finish.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic character of a Grade II Listed Building, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7) Notwithstanding any submitted details the existing flat and curved coping stones to the stone wall shall be reclaimed, and re-instated with supplementary St Bees or Corsehill stone, sized and finished to match the pre-existing design and arrangement, to replace any which are missing or damaged.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic character of a Grade II Listed Building, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 8) Notwithstanding any submitted details prior to any landscaping works to/within the yard, details of proposals shall be submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority, including a works timetable. Any such works shall involve retention of any existing cobbled and flagged surfaces. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

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Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic character of a Grade II Listed Building, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
07/01/2022	-	-	Location Plan
07/01/2022	-	-	Proposed Site Plan
07/01/2022	21-2227-100	P2	Foundation Detail
11/07/2022	5558-4	A	Sections
11/07/2022	5558-3	A	Proposed Elevations
11/07/2022	5558	A	Planning, Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Informatives

- 1 The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

- 2 Merseyside Fire Service

Lee Osborne
 22 August 2022

Alan Kilroe
 23 August 2022

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