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SITE OF THE FORMER WATERGATE SCHOOL,
SPEKE ROAD, WOOLTON, LIVERPOOL

PLANNING STATEMENT

on behalf of  **REDROW**

DRAFT

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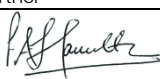
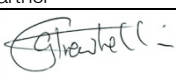
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Document Control

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1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports a full planning application for a residential development comprising of 22 no. dwellings, access road and landscaping by Redrow Homes Ltd Lancashire Division.
- 1.2 This proposed development is the first to be progressed as part of the Strategic Housing Delivery Partnership. This is a joint venture between Liverpool City Council, Redrow Homes Ltd and Liverpool Mutual Homes.
- 1.3 The Partnership is part of the Mayor's initiative to boost both the quality and delivery of housing in the City was conceived in 2014. It will run for an initial five year period (2015 – 2020) with the expectation that 1,500 new homes will be built. The Partner's roles are as follows:
 - Redrow Homes will develop housing for sale bringing executive homes to Liverpool and will identify land to enhance the Council's own development sites.

Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) will develop affordable housing by investing their own funding and by attracting grant funding. Wilmott Dixon will work on behalf of LMH to build new homes.
 - Liverpool City Council will provide strategic planning and housing need information as well as selling surplus land to the Partnership for development.
- 1.4 The Partnership will provide a wide range of house types from executive to affordable homes. It will also prioritise employing local people, providing training and supporting the local supply chain, as well as developing and delivering complementary economic development projects.
- 1.5 The initiative supports the Mayor's target of delivering 5,000 new homes in the City by 2016.
- 1.6 This proposal, as the first private sector development under the Partnership, is an important milestone for this initiative and a key element in continuing the delivery of high quality housing within the City. It has the support of the Council leadership and forms part of the Council's strategy for housing provision in the City.

2 Structure of the Application

2.1 The proposal is summarised as follows: Residential development of 22 no. dwellings – 8 no. semi-detached and 14 no. detached – and new vehicular accesses onto Speke Road along with internal access road and landscape works.

2.2 The application consists of:

- Statutory application form and Ownership Certificate
- Notice No. 1
- Red line boundary location plan
- Planning application fee
- Planning Statement by Cass Associates
- Statement of Community Involvement by Cass Associates
- Design and Access Statement by Redrow Homes Ltd
- Ecology Survey and Assessment by Ribble Ecology Ltd
- Tree Survey by Trevor Bridge Associates
- Transport Statement by SCP
- Accessibility Assessment by SCP
- Adopted Highways layout by SCP
- Site layout, house type plans and elevations and site cross-sections by Redrow Homes Ltd
- Boundary Treatment Plan by Redrow Homes Ltd
- Ground Investigation Report by Bett Associates
- Lifetime Homes Checklist by Redrow Homes Ltd.

3 The Site and its Surroundings

- 3.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Speke Road approximately 250m south of Woolton District Centre. It is rectangular in shape with an east-west axis length of 170m and a north-south axis measuring between 44 – 68m. It is approximately 0.93ha (2.3 acres) in area. The land falls from west to east by approximately 8 to 9m.
- 3.2 The first portion of the site consists of surface car parking along with small areas of open grassland and trees. Vehicular access is located off Speke Road to the north of its frontage on to the highway (see Figure 3.1).
- 3.3 The buildings are set some 45m back from the road and are laid on in an irregular pattern. The buildings are a mix of single and two storey in height. They have a total floor area of 1,778 sq m (19,136 sq ft). The buildings are generally of flat-roofed or shallow pitched roof profiles.
- 3.4 Immediately behind the buildings is a hard-surfaced play area along with grassland and a small clump of trees. A fence running on a north-south axis forms the eastern boundary of the site.
- 3.5 Adjoining this eastern boundary is a playing field which according to aerial photos includes a marked out football pitch. This playing field belongs to the City Council and was used jointly by Watergate School and the nearby Much Woolton Catholic Primary School located on Watergate Lane. This latter school will continue to use the playing field which remains unaffected by the proposed development.
- 3.6 The site is located within an area which consists predominantly of residential dwellings. Watergate Lane to the south consists of two storey semi-detached dwellings. The Hayes to the north-east of the site includes similar style houses. Immediately to the north of the site is the Marie Curie Hospice which consists of two octagon-shaped two storey buildings joined together to form a figure of eight. The southern elevations of the Hospice is within close proximity of the northern boundary of the site. The Hospice has planning permission for a small conservatory ref. 13F/2746 (granted 7.01.14) in the location of existing walls and steps on its southern elevation adjacent to the site boundary.
- 3.7 To the west of the site on Speke Road is a short terrace of 4 no. 2 storey dwellings and a detached two storey dwelling known as Inglenook House.
- 3.8 The boundaries to the site are a mix of type and materials. The boundary to Speke Road consists of a 1.4 – 1.6m high sandstone wall. The eastern boundary consists of a metal palisade fence with unmanaged shrub planting on the playing field side of the fence.
- 3.9 The northern boundary consists of a combination of brickwall and fencing, much of which is in a state of disrepair. The southern boundary is predominantly vertical timber plank fencing.
- 3.10 There are a number of trees along the southern and northern boundaries – some within the site and others outwith. There are also trees around the frontage car park areas. Further information on trees is included within the Tree Survey.
- 3.11 As stated previously the site is within close proximity and walking distance to Woolton District Centre which includes a number of shops, facilities and amenities. There is also a Tesco located to the west of the District Centre and within walking distance to the site.
- 3.12 St Julies Catholic High School is located to the west of the site and Much Woolton Catholic Primary School is located to the south-east of the site. Both are within walking distance of the site. Woolton Primary School is located to the north-east of the site.
- 3.13 St Julies Catholic High School is located on a large area of urban greenspace, as designated on the Liverpool UDP Proposals Map, which also includes Woolton Woods and Camp Hill. These areas provide public open space and significant opportunities for formal and informal recreation in the area (see Figure 3.2).

- 3.14 To the south of the site on Speke Road are bus stops. On the eastern carriageway the stop provides services to Widnes, Halewood and Hunts Cross. On the western carriageway the stop provided services to Bootle, Speke, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and St Helens.
- 3.15 From the above it is considered that the site is in a sustainable location close to amenities and facilities and is appropriate for residential development.

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4 The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The proposed development comprises 22 no. dwellings – 8 semi-detached and 14 detached dwellings – along with access road and landscape works.
- 4.2 The proposed dwellings are 3 – 4 bed and range from 1,020sq ft (c. 95sq m) to 1,382sq ft (c. 128sq m) in floor area. Each dwelling has a generous garden area and includes either integral or detached garages. Seven different house types are proposed providing a range of styles. However, aesthetic elements on the house types will ensure an integrated design.
- 4.3 The proposed vehicular access is located centre to the Speke Road frontage. The existing vehicular access is removed with a new footway proposed across part of it. The access road runs along the length of the site ending in a hammerhead at its eastern end. The road includes a footpath on both sides of the carriageway.
- 4.4 The four dwellings fronting onto Speke Road are proposed to have 2 no. shared driveways off the highway.
- 4.5 The proposed access points will necessitate the removal of the existing sandstone wall. It is proposed that the wall will be rebuilt utilising the existing stone to accommodate the three new access openings. The rebuilt wall will be 1.2m, thus reducing the existing height. However, this is similar to the height of the retained wall to the south of the application site.
- 4.6 The majority of dwellings front directly onto the internal access road. The exception to this is where the width of the site increases towards the middle of its east-west axis. Here a small close of 6 dwellings is formed around a cul-de-sac off the access road.
- 4.7 Alongside the retention of some of the existing trees the proposal includes planting in areas of semi-private space including along the northern boundary adjacent to the close and the access road.

5 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework has replaced many of the previous planning policy statements and planning policy guidance notes that made up national planning policy.
- 5.2 NPPF starts by explaining that 'planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Paragraph 2). Additionally, the NPPF itself is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.3 NPPF places sustainable development at the core of the planning system. This embraces economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- 5.4 There is a firm emphasis on proactively supporting sustainable economic development to deliver homes and businesses, infrastructure and thriving places (Paragraph 17). Development should only be restricted where other policies of the NPPF might take precedence. These other policies generally relate to environmental considerations and apply to specific designated areas such as Green Belt and identified heritage assets.
- 5.5 The drive towards sustainable patterns of development is founded on important planning principles including:
- The need to secure high quality design
 - Re-use land that has been previously developed and is not of high environmental value
 - Support the transition to a low carbon future
 - Focus development in locations which are sustainable
 - Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 5.6 NPPF sets out to boost significantly the supply of housing through the planning system (Paragraph 47). Local Planning Authorities should identify a supply of specific, deliverable housing sites that is sufficient to provide for housing requirements for five years with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. In addition, where there has been a persistent under-delivery of housing LPAs should increase their buffer to 20%.
- 5.7 Planning applications for housing must be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 49). For decision-taking this means (Paragraph 14):
- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay
 - Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless:
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies within the NPPF taken as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.8 The Government published outline national planning policy guidance in March 2014. The guidance attempts to give clarity and simplicity to the planning system. The web-based resource provides guidance under particular themes that support the NPPF. Additionally, the PPG is updated to reflect Ministerial Statements that clarify existing policy.

Regional Planning Strategy

- 5.9 The Regional Strategy for the North West (Revocation) Order 2013 was laid before Parliament on 24 April 2013. It came into force on 29 May 2013. The RSS is therefore no longer part of the statutory development plan for the area.

Statutory Development Plan

- 5.10 The statutory development plan for the area is the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan adopted November 2002. It is therefore an 'old style' local plan not prepared under the provisions within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 5.11 The NPPF introduced transitional arrangements for development plans and their degree of consistency or otherwise with the Framework. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans, even those adopted prior to 2004, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. Policies within the UDP can only be assigned significant weight if they are consistent with policies in the NPPF.
- 5.12 The NPPF also provides guidance on the weight that can be given to relevant policies of emerging plans. This depends on the stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (Paragraph 216 of the NPPF).
- 5.13 The Liverpool UDP is dated but remains the relevant policy document where it is consistent with the NPPF. The City Council was previously preparing a Core Strategy Development Plan Document. They produced a Submission Draft for consultation in 2012. However, in 2014 the Council made a decision to move forward with a single Local Plan. It is anticipated that a draft Local Plan will be published for Consultation in late Summer 2015. As such there is no emerging Local Plan at present and the previous emerging Core Strategy is not being pursued and therefore has no weight in decision-taking.
- 5.14 According to the Liverpool UDP the site is designated as urban greenspace. The Woolton Conservation Area boundary also transects the front portion of the site on roughly a north-south axis parallel to Speke Road. The adjoining land is designated as primarily residential land. To the west of the site is a large area of urban greenspace including Woolton Hall, Woolton Woods, Camp Hill and St Julies Catholic High School.
- 5.15 In the context of this planning application, the key aspects of the Liverpool UDP (the statutory development plan) that are of relevance are the saved policies, as summarised below, provided that they are consistent with the NPPF:
- Policy OE11: Protection of Green Space
 - Policy OE14: Open Space in New Residential Developments
 - Policy H5: New Residential Development
 - Policy HD9: Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas
 - Policy HD11: New development in Conservation Areas
 - Policy HD12: New development adjacent to Conservation Areas
 - Policy T12: Car Parking in New Developments
 - Policy C5: Schools

6 Consistency with the Development Plan and Other Material Considerations

6.1 The main planning issues relevant to this site and the proposals are:

- Loss of the school site
- Loss of urban greenspace
- Impact on the conservation area
- The design of the residential development.

6.2 The paragraphs below explore these issues in some detail.

Loss of the School Site

6.3 The former Watergate School (also known as the Sunflower Centre) was a Complex Learning Difficulty (CLD) school teaching pupils between the ages of 4 – 16. The City Council closed the school, following the appropriate and necessary consultation, in 2005.

6.4 The loss of the school meets the requirements of Policy C5. The Council through its consultation process considered the loss of the school site would not mean that provision fell below the statutory minimum. The policy also requires that alternative uses are in accordance with relevant policies in the UDP. The remainder of this section deals with this point.

Loss of Urban Greenspace

6.5 The site, along with the adjoining playing field, is designated as urban greenspace. The playing field will remain and is unaffected by the proposed development.

6.6 Policy OE11 Protection of Green Space lists four key tests where it needs to be demonstrated that the proposed development will not cause material harm.

- 1 Recreational function – the majority of the greenspace that is being lost to development consists of buildings and car parks. It had no recreational function. A small area of hard surface playground area is to be lost. The main recreational asset belonging to the school, the playing field, is to be retained and continues to be used by Much Woolton Catholic Primary School. No material harm to the recreational function of the green space is caused by the proposed development. To the west of the site is an extensive area of greenspace including Woolton Woods and Camp Hill. These remain unaffected by the proposal and provide extensive opportunities for formal and informal recreation and leisure pursuits for occupiers of the proposed dwellings.
- 2 Visual amenity value – there are no important vistas into or across the greenspace as the existing school buildings would shield any views. The Speke Road frontage includes a sandstone wall behind which is an amenity grassland area and car parking. The existing buildings are set some 45m back from the site's frontage. There are a couple of trees and shrubs that are located behind the front boundary wall. However, the key view of the site from the frontage is the sandstone wall.

The Tree Survey identifies and lists the trees on the site. Those that are considered of high value and important to the setting of the site are to be retained or to be replaced as part of the proposed development.

The proposed development provides an opportunity through landscape works and planting to enhance the visual amenity of the site particularly along the Speke Road frontage.

- 3 Relationship to adjoining greenspaces – the site is an isolated greenspace. The playing field is to be retained and could remain designated as greenspace. As it is an isolated site the proposed development has no effect on adjoining greenspace. The retained playing field will remain in use by Much Woolton Catholic Primary School and is therefore still a viable greenspace.
 - 4 Nature Conservation Value – an Ecological Survey and Assessment has been carried out for the site. The assessment identifies that there are only minor ecological considerations on the site that can all be mitigated for and do not require wildlife licensing.
- 6.7 From the above narrative it can be concluded that the proposed development does not cause material harm to the site's greenspace's recreation function, amenity and environmental value.
- 6.8 In addition, the site is not identified within a Park Deficiency Area as shown at Figure 8.9 of the UDP. With the extensive provision of greenspace in the area it is considered that the loss of the greenspace on this site does not create a deficiency in the area.

Impact on the Conservation Area

- 6.9 A small element of the frontage of the site lies within the Woolton Village Conservation Area. This Conservation Area not only encompasses the village but also Woolton Woods, St Julies School and Camp Hill. There is no Conservation Area Appraisal for Woolton Village which would identify the key heritage assets within the Conservation Area. It is assumed that the boundary of the Conservation Area takes its course within the site in order to include the sandstone boundary wall within it. This is therefore the key non designated heritage asset on the site.
- 6.10 The proposed development seeks to retain the existing sandstone wall where possible. A new vehicular access is to be provided necessitating a new opening being created in the wall. The dwellings fronting Speke Road will also include two new access points onto the highway breaching the existing wall. It is proposed to remove the existing wall and utilise the existing stone to rebuild the wall to a height of 1.2m either side of 3 no. vehicular accesses and either side of the internal access road. This proposal will retain the extent of existing sandstone wall albeit in a different configuration. Therefore the impact on the Conservation Area is considered to be neutral.
- 6.11 The setting to the existing Conservation Area boundary within the site consists of surface car parking and a collection of school buildings of various styles and designs. The proposed development will provide a strong building frontage to Speke Road consistent with adjacent housing at nos. 5 and 7 Speke Road. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will protect the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 6.12 The proposed development therefore complies with Policies HD9, HD11 and HD12 of the Liverpool UDP.

Design of the Residential Development

- 6.13 The proposed development provides a range and style of housing that is in keeping with the local area. The dwelling sizes and plot sizes reflect those of surrounding dwellings.
- 6.14 The properties are laid out to ensure appropriate interface distances between existing and proposed dwellings are met. Sufficient garden and amenity space is provided for future occupiers.
- 6.15 The proposed development provides a strong and coherent frontage to Speke Road reflecting the properties to the south and west. It creates a strong frontage to the Conservation Area with the retention of the sandstone wall through rebuilding and reconfiguring the existing stone.
- 6.16 The vehicular access provision is considered acceptable by the Highways Authority. The road is a simple linear design with good visibility. Driveways access the road providing access to garages and off-street parking areas.

- 6.17 The proposed development does not include provision for public open space on the basis of the size of the site and the existing provision within the area. It is proposed, by way of a S106 Agreement, to make a commuted sum payment for off-site public open space provision in line with Policy OE14 'Open Space in New Developments'.
- 6.18 It is proposed to make the required tree planting within the site as part of the landscape works. Therefore there is no requirement for a commuted sum for off-site tree planting.
- 6.19 Further detail on the design of the proposed development is included within the Design and Access Statement.
- 6.20 It is considered that the proposed development satisfies the requirements of UDP Policies H5, OE14 and T12.

Access and Accessibility

- 6.21 The site is in an accessible and sustainable location. It is close to local services and amenities and Speke Road is a key bus corridor.
- 6.22 The application is supported by a Transport Statement, Highways Layout and Accessibility Assessment that demonstrate the proposal is acceptable from a transport and travel perspective.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.23 The site has been identified by the Strategic Housing Delivery Partnership as the first private sector site to contribute to the overall target of delivering 1,500 new houses in the City by 2020. The Partnership is a joint venture with the City Council contributing land and properties for its private and social sector partners to help deliver housing.
- 6.24 The site is identified in the Council's 2012 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA Ref: 2808) as contributing 33 no. dwellings within Years 1 – 5. It is therefore considered as part of the Council's five year housing land supply.
- 6.25 The site is an important element of both the Council's five year land supply and test case for the Council's housing delivery programme. The delivery of housing and the type of housing on the site are material considerations that weight in favour of the proposed development.
- 6.26 The proposed development will also provide financial and economic benefits through the New Homes Bonus, jobs during the construction process and spending by new occupiers following their moving into their new properties. These are material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal.

7 The S106 Agreement

Head of Terms

- 7.1 It is proposed that a S106 Agreement will be submitted during the planning application process. This will deal with the need for public open space provision. It is proposed to provide this through a commuted sum contribution towards off-site provision and/or enhancement in the local area. The requirement is £1,000 per dwelling therefore equating to a commuted sum of £23,000.
- 7.2 The proposed development will include the required tree planting on site. Therefore there is no need for off-site tree planting and a commuted sum towards this.
- 7.3 There is no affordable housing requirement in Liverpool. Any off-site highway works can be provided through a S278 Agreement or S38 Highways Act Agreement. It is anticipated that the requirement for a Travel Plan will be a condition of any planning permission.

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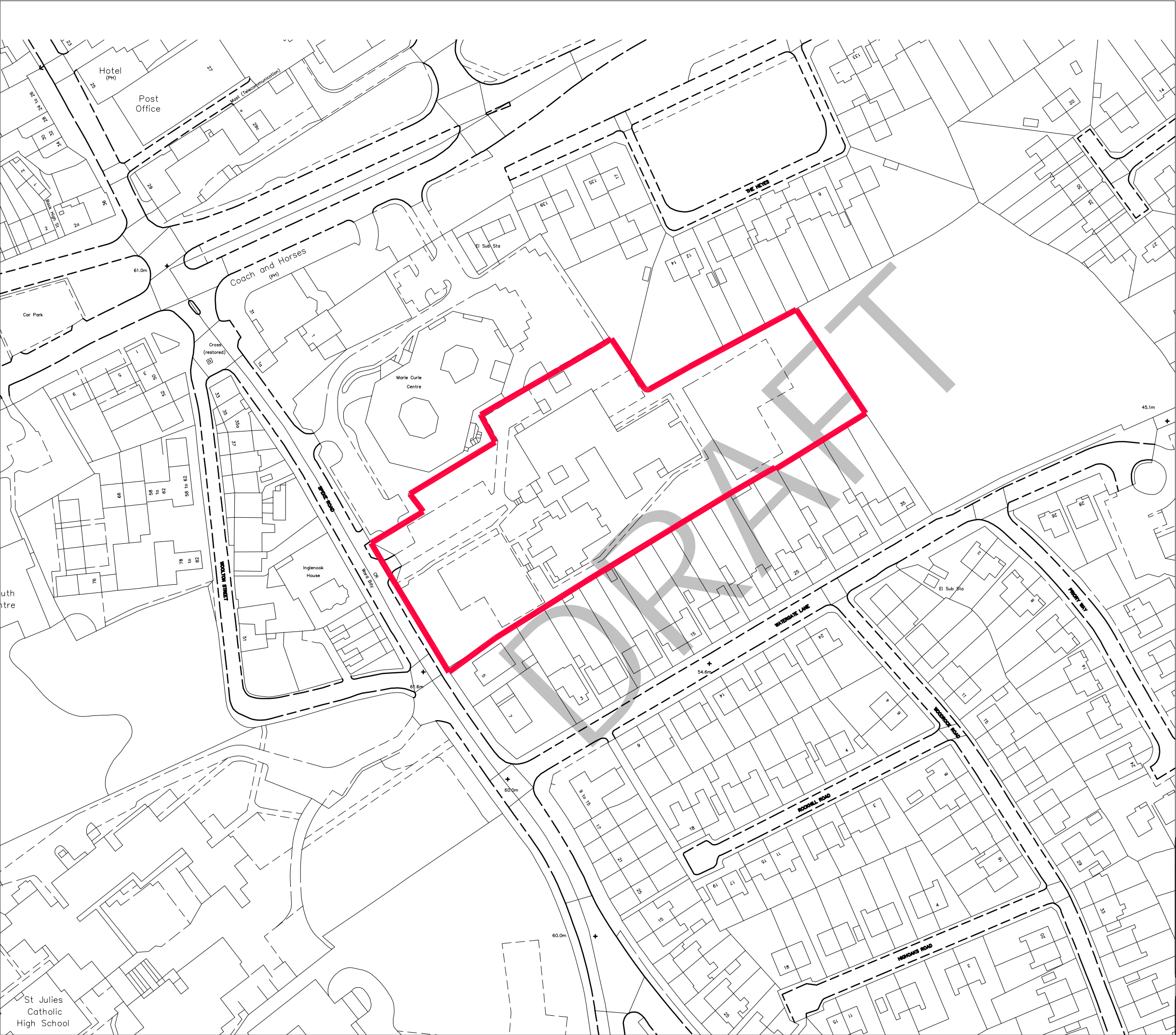
8 Concluding Comments

- 8.1 It has been demonstrated through this Statement that the proposed development is consistent with up to date saved policies of the Liverpool UDP. As such the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to the proposal. There are no national or local planning policies or other material considerations which would lead to the decision-taker making a decision other than to grant planning permission.
- 8.2 The contribution of the site towards the delivery of the Council's five year housing requirement along with the financial and economic benefits brought about by the development are material considerations that also weigh in favour of the application.
- 8.3 Overall, it has been demonstrated that the proposal is a sustainable form of development and is appropriate to the site's context adjacent to a primarily residential area and the Woolton Village Conservation Area. It is consistent with the relevant policies set out in the NPPF and the up to date saved policies of the statutory development plan. It is a development that should be approved without delay.

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FIGURE 3.1
SITE PLAN

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Revision	Date	Amendment	Initials

STAGE	Development	WATERGATE SCHOOL
Location	WOOLTON	
Marketing Name		
Drawing Title	LOCATION PLAN.	
Drawing Num	STA	LOC-01
Revision	Scale @ A3	1:1250
Drawn By	MJC	Date Started 29.01.15
Checked by		Date



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This layout has been designed after due consideration of our Context & Constraints Plan

FIGURE 3.2
CONTEXT PLAN

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