



# **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

for

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
GREENHILL NURSERY, GREENHILL ROAD, LIVERPOOL**

submitted by

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared for Morris Homes Limited to accompany a Full Planning application for the proposed residential development of 83 No. dwellings, consisting of 3 and 4 bedroom mews and detached style two storey dwellings at Greenhill Nursery, Greenhill Road, Liverpool.

As recommended in circular 01/2006 by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) the Design & Access principles of the proposals have been based on a four stage assessment which can be briefly summarised as follows:-

- **Assessment**  
The context of the site and surroundings including physical, social and economic characteristics of the site as well as any existing relevant planning policies.
- **Involvement**  
The consultation carried out to date and the anticipated further consultation.
- **Evaluation**  
How the information gathered from the Assessment and Involvement Stages provides options and opportunities for the proposals.
- **Design**  
How the design has been guided and developed following the Evaluation Stages, in particular the core issues to be addressed include:-
  - **Use** – what the development will be used for and how it is justified
  - **Amount** – the amount and density of development applied for and how this fits with it's surroundings
  - **Layout** – the location of buildings and their built form
  - **Scale** – the size of buildings and spaces
  - **Landscaping** – how both hard and soft features will inform the development
  - **Appearance** – how the buildings will appear in terms of materials
  - **Access** – why the vehicular access points and routes have been chosen and how the proposals respond to road layout. Also how everyone regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping can move through the place.

## 2. ASSESSMENT

### Site History

The Greenhill Nursery site had previously operated as a City Council nursery for nearly 50 years and has housed part of Liverpool's Botanical Collection for the past 25 years.

Operations ceased at Greenhill Nursery in April 2012 and plant collections were rationalised and relocated to Croxteth Park and Sefton Park Palm House.

The Greenhill Nursery site is now surplus to operational requirements and is currently lying vacant and vulnerable.

## 2. ASSESSMENT

### The Site and Surroundings

- The site is approximately 2.63 Hectares in size and is accessed from Greenhill Road on the western boundary of the site. There is also a gated vehicular & pedestrian access point at Nursery Lane at the eastern boundary.
- The site is in the main rectangular & is mainly level with a slight incline from Nursery Lane to Greenhill Road. The main part of the site contains a number of empty greenhouses & ancillary buildings. A number of the greenhouses to the north western part of the site have been demolished & large parts of the site are overgrown with grass, scrubland & areas of hard standing. There is also an existing ditch/drain running across a portion of the site from north west to the south east, this has become overgrown but will need diverting to allow development.
- The north east boundary of the site is defined by a metal fence running along the boundary with an operational railway line beyond. There are a number of trees in the corner of the site abutting the boundary with Greenhill Road.
- The south east boundary is formed by the rear garden of the existing houses along Nursery Lane & a number of trees & hedgerow separate the site & the rear gardens. There is an existing access point into the site located between the houses from Nursery Lane.
- The south western boundary is formed by hedgerow & a wall with the rear gardens of the existing houses running along Long Lane with Long Lane Recreation Ground adjacent to Long Lane.
- The site to the north west is bounded by Greenhill Road & a run of trees. To the west corner of the site trees provide separation from the site boundary & rear gardens of properties to Greenhill Road.

## 2. ASSESSMENT



Ariel View



## 2. ASSESSMENT



View from site entrance looking back to Greenhill Road.



View to the rear gardens of properties along Long Lane.



View Looking into the site from the existing entrance off Nursery Lane.



View across site looking to the North West boundary



## 2. ASSESSMENT



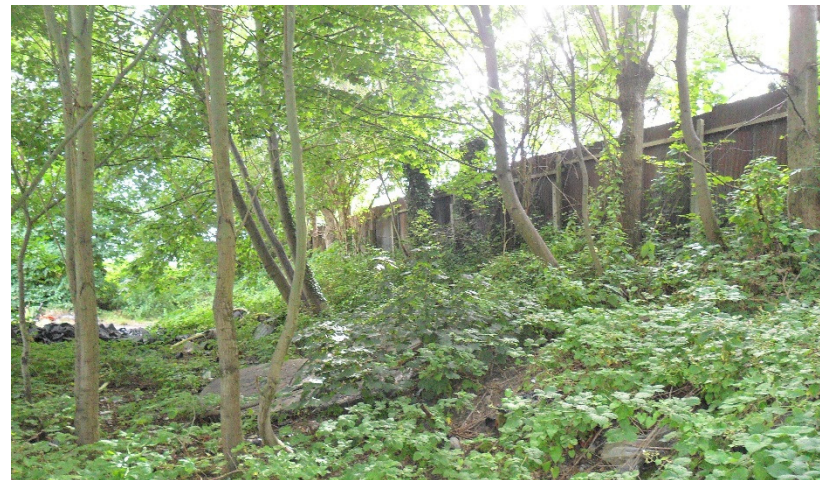
View across site looking back towards Nursery Lane.



View of Railway Line running along the North East boundary.



View looking to the North corner of the site.



View along the North West boundary of the site. Greenhill Road runs behind the timber fence.



## 2. ASSESSMENT (cont'd)

### The Surroundings

The surrounding area of Allerton is primarily residential in character with a number of commercial facilities and former Merchants houses. Allerton itself is typical of an industrial town which saw a massive post war drive for new housing and settlements, with the introduction of the necessary economies of scale into the architecture. Typically, beyond the original central core and the historic terraces associated with the mills of the industrial revolution are estates mainly semi-detached homes which make an attempt to incorporate references of the English Garden Suburb Movement.

Typical details include:-

- Red brick
- Red & grey tiled hipped or simple gable roofs with roof pitches of 30-35 degrees
- No decoration around windows heads or cills & simple brick detailing
- Low eaves at window head height with timber barge boards and fascias
- Deep front gardens with brick walls and hedging used as boundary treatment
- Bay windows with featurettes of tile hanging or render
- Shared central brick chimneys
- Within curtilage parking with long drives way.



Existing housing stock – Semi detached houses

## 2. ASSESSMENT (cont'd)

### The Surroundings cont'd

The more historic and clearly the original buildings around Allerton town centre before its post war expansion can be found in small pockets of pre Victorian terraces. Undoubtedly these are the surviving elements of housing associated with historical settlement.

Typical details include:-

- Red brick
- Grey tiled roofs with low roof pitches of between 30 -35 degrees & plain gables
- Decorative stone heads and cills often painted for weather protection
- Large narrow windows with emphasis on vertically
- Ornate brick eaves
- Black gutter boards and rainwater goods
- Brick chimneys
- Narrow frontages with on street parking



Pre War Terraces



## 2. ASSESSMENT (cont'd)

### The Surroundings – cont'd.

Interspersed amongst the Post War settlement areas are pockets of new housing developments built over the last 30 years. Mainly in an open plan estate form these developments consist mainly of 2 storey semi detached & detached brick built 2 storey dwellings which utilise the developers preferred pallet of details to create picturesque frontages but maintaining economies of scale in a bid to attract home buyers and maintain viability.

Typical details include:-

- Red and yellow bricks with the occasional use of render
- Plain and profiled grey and brown concrete tiles with roof pitches between 35-45 degrees
- Barge boards and fascias at window head height
- Decorative brick heads and window cills
- Feature bays and canopies
- Integral and detached garages
- Front gardens associated with parking depths



Examples of more recently constructed dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site



## 2. ASSESSMENT

More recent housing of the last decade can be seen in both the periphery of the proposed site and within the surrounding area of Allerton. For the most part the density requirement of the central government Planning Policy Statement 3 can be seen as a driving influence for a more cramped approach, but there is more emphasis on design, space and place creation, and people places and movement. Architectural detailing has stronger references to the historic detail of the original settlements and for the most part this is robust and of good quality rather than the 'stick on' approach of the 1990's. It can be seen that these developments have had varying degrees of success. Some appear too dense and there is a lack of family housing private space and parking resulting in a harsh environment with inerrant problems, but others do create a good environment.

### **Examples of Housing of the Last Decade Typical Features Include:-**

- Red and yellow plain and rustic brick with occasional full render
- A mixture of brick or stone heads
- Stone cills
- Order and symmetry to elevations
- A mixture of 2 , 2.5 and full 3 storey
- Multi aspect dwellings to turn corners
- 40 to 45 degree roof pitch
- Brick eaves or white UPVC barge boards and fascias
- Plain grey or red roof tiles
- Brick built chimneys
- Shallow frontages designed by railings and hedgerows
- Remote parking in shared courtyards or detached garages

## 2. ASSESSMENT (cont'd)



Examples of more recently constructed designed in the advent of PPG 3



### 3. INVOLVEMENT

- a. A visit to site and the surrounding area was undertaken to inform setting, layout and design of the proposals and to inform an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)
- b. Detailed pre-application discussions have been held with the Local Planning Authority and the form of the development has evolved reflecting the changing policies and comments of various bodies within the Council.
- c. Consultations have been undertaken with the Local Authority Highways Department and an independent traffic consultant, so as to determine the most suitable form of access to the site and to assess the existing and new highway network and what impact the proposals will have.
- d. Consultations have been undertaken with statutory undertakers to determine the restraints of main cables, sewers, gas mains and any other services on the site.
- e. Consultations have been undertaken with drainage engineers with regards to the existing ditch/drain on the site and to ascertain the most suitable form of draining the site.
- f. An independent ecologist prepared a Greater Crested Newt Survey, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a Protected Species Survey as part of the Outline planning application.
- g. A Noise Consultant has been appointed at assess the noise generated by the existing adjacent railway line.
- h. An Energy Consultant has been appointed to assess the specification of the proposed dwellings.
- i. Local Estate Agents and a marketing consultant were consulted to assess the local housing need and the demographics of the local population.
- j. The proposals have been assessed to determine the level of sustainable community provided.
- k. An independent Architect was appointed and their proposals assessed against the Council's adopted standards, national guidance and the evaluation of the development site within this document.



# 3. INVOLVEMENT

A. The site visit and study of the local area resulted in the following SWOT Analysis

## STRENGTHS

- Good sustainable location within Allerton town centre and 3 miles from Liverpool City Centre.
- Good links to the motorway network, via the A562 to the M62.
- There are good transport links with bus stops on Brodie avenue with routes to Liverpool, Warrington & Manchester.
- Large areas of open space with recreational & sports centres e.g. Long Lane Recreational Ground opposite the site, Garston Lifestyle Centre, Allerton Golf Club & Allerton Tower Park are within 2 miles of the site.
- Existing community facilities such as pubs, social clubs & schools within walking distance of the site.
- Mature trees & established hedgerows to the site boundaries provide an attractive 'green' backdrop to the proposed development.
- Established community surrounding the development.

## WEAKNESSES

- The site is adjacent to the operational Weaver Junction to Liverpool railway which will generate noise disturbance.
- Close proximity to commercial business adjacent to the north west corner of the site.
- Existing ditch/drain running through the northern part of the site.
- Existing hedgerows & trees along the boundaries will need to be trimmed back where possible to allow greater amenity space to rear gardens.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Character of the development with it's own sense of place.
- Opportunity to integrate with the surroundings and extend the established community.
- To link to the adjoining housing infrastructure & it's amenities.
- Interesting & active frontages to street scene.
- The removal of the current unsightly commercial building.
- Opportunity to improve the landscaping across the development with the current site being predominately hard standing.
- To create a more attractive development with natural surveillance to the existing roads and public footpaths.

## THREATS

- Residents perceived overlooking from the proposed dwellings in the new development.
- Loss of commercial units.



### 3. INVOLEMENT (cont'd)



## 4. EVALUATION

From the site visit and the local area assessment it was established that there is no overriding architectural details to inform the proposals. However the more historic terrace housing represents a more robust and high quality level of appearance and detailing and can be used as a reference.

It is possible to select the most successful elements of the mix of local housing and the best of the local and central government guidance to inform the new proposals. Hence, the following main principles should inform the new proposals:

- Maintain a good separation distance between the habitable room windows of the new and existing dwellings.
- Roofs should be between 35-45 degrees in pitch and in the main should be simple 'up & over' and finished in a grey tile.
- Occasional feature gables and changes in roof pattern should vary the street scene and roofs cape.
- Windows and doors should place emphasis on verticality.
- Stone cills and heads should be provided over doors and windows.
- Doors should be accentuated with a stone surrounds and fan lights.
- Brick detailing at eaves and corbels should be provided with a simple gutter board painted black. Barge boards and fascias should be avoided.
- The layout should be permeable but the roads should have a hierarchy for ease of navigation through the development.
- The layout should utilise typology of building form to help provide a sense of arrival and place.
- Parking, where possible, should be provided within the curtilage of the dwelling.
- Frontages should be substantial enough to contain landscaping & parking where necessary but maintain room for private amenity space and landscaping.
- Adequate parking for residents and visitors should be provided.
- Retention of the existing ditch crossing the site.



## 4. EVALUATION (cont'd)

B. Following discussions with Local Planning Authority, the following points of consideration and minimum criteria were established:-

- The siting of the dwellings within the new proposals needs to consider the Council's minimum criteria for separation distances and ensure that the amenity of existing and future residents is not adversely affected. A topographical survey was undertaken that included the neighbouring properties to accurately calculate the distances between the proposed dwellings and the existing dwellings.
- Detailing of the proposed dwellings should be in keeping with the surrounding area using grey tiles to roofs with black gutter boards, red and buff facing bricks, stone cills and stone or brick heads to windows and brick chimneys. Details should be robust and represent good quality design.
- A varied street scene in terms of building lines, heights and roof scapes to dwellings should be provided within the development but uniformed and symmetrical where it needs to be.
- The proposed development needs to flow into the existing housing that surrounds the site and careful consideration needs to be given to the neighbouring dwellings with proposed site levels being carefully designed. Dwellings fronting Nursery Lane should be set back within the site to respect the existing building line.
- Blank walls and gables should be avoided and buildings should articulate and turn corners.
- Detached garages should be positioned so that they are not dominant in the public realm, do not result in poor outlook from adjacent properties, contribute to enclosure and should respect the retrospective building lines.
- Opportunities for focal points, visual stops and capitol buildings should be explored.
- A varied mix of housing types is preferred so as to promote sustainable communities by providing a good mix of housing for local needs and remain in keeping with the original development brief.
- The Council's adopted policies on parking levels need to be incorporated; the scheme is currently providing a minimum of 2 spaces per dwelling.
- Remote parking should be avoided and parking within the curtilage or overlooked communal parking should be provided.
- The proposed road layout needs to meet the Council's minimum criteria for vehicle and pedestrian movements in a safe manner.
- In order to promote permeability and connectivity a pedestrian link from the development on to Nursery Lane should be provided.
- There is no requirement for on site Public Open Space.
- The existing trees on the perimeter of the site are to be retained where possible.

## 4. EVALUATION (cont'd)

- C. Through consultation with the Local Authority Highway Officer the following points of consideration and minimum criteria were established:
- Parking provision within the proposals needs to relate well to associated dwellings and incorporate natural surveillance.
  - The council's adopted policies on parking levels need to be incorporated. A minimum of two spaces/dwelling should be provided so as to reduce the prospect of on street parking within the development and the surrounding neighbourhood.
  - The proposed road configuration needs to match the Council's minimum criteria for vehicle and pedestrian movements in a safe manner and junction arrangements should be in accordance with the standards in Manual for Streets.
  - Access to the development will be directly off Greenhill Road with an emergency access provided off Nursery Lane.
  - Refuse vehicles
  - Road dimensions (5.5m) and footpaths (2.0m).
  - Street lighting
- D. From the consultation with statutory undertakers it was established that there are no underground mains, sewers, drains or gas pipes restraining the site.
- E. From the consultations with the drainage engineers it has been established that the site can drain into the existing local systems which have sufficient capacity.
- F. An independent ecologist prepared a Phase 1 report of the proposed development site. It concluded that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on any protected species.
- G. The acoustic report concluded
- H. Our independent energy assessor has completed the Energy Assessment for the development to demonstrate how we will meet the necessary requirements of Planning Policy which is included as part of the planning submission. SAP calculations have been provided which conclude that the high build specification of Morris Homes will meet and exceed current building regulations.
- I. The local estate agents and our marketing consultants have confirmed that the highest need and demand is for 3 and 4 bed detached family housing with ample gardens and parking and 2 bed semi/mews dwellings . They go further to say that the local new housing of the last decade relies too heavily on high densities with 3 storey living, and it lacks parking and space for the average family life. It is therefore concluded that the mix of accommodation and house types provided across the development will provide a sustainable mix of housing that will meet local needs.

## 4. EVALUATION (cont'd)

- J. It has been established that a very sustainable community can be provided for this development through the following means:
- Excellent local facilities in terms of shopping, banking, post office, primary & secondary schools and leisure.
  - Good links to main public transport routes which in turn link well to larger settlements and business districts. Good links via public transport to other larger settlements, business districts and main shopping centres i.e. Liverpool, Warrington & Manchester.
  - Opportunities for links and integration into existing community.
- K. The appointed Architect has produced one early iteration of their proposals which has been put before the Planning Department and assessed against the Council's adopted standards, national guidance and the evaluation within this document. Their early sketches and their critique follow and the comments can be summarised as follows:
- The site plans should be based on a topographical survey that includes neighbouring properties, as it would be necessary to accurately calculate the distances between the proposed dwellings and the existing dwellings bounding the site.
  - The overall density of the scheme is too high.
  - No respect of existing building lines on Nursery Lane.
  - Detached garages should not be positioned so they are not dominant in the public realm.
  - Overhanging of existing trees had not been taken into account.
  - Inadequate turning facilities have been provided for refuse vehicles.
  - Adequate visibility splays are required at the site access off Greenhill Road.