

Design and Access Statement

Our job no.
242-001

Address
18 Livingston Drive
Liverpool, L18

Date
January 2016



Proposed Residential Apartments



Proposed Mews Houses

Introduction

Nugent own the site at 18 Livingston Drive. It was used as a residential children's home, but has remained empty for a number of years. The site is located in the South-East of the city, close to Sefton Park, in a conservation area comprising mainly large late-Victorian villas.

The existing buildings on the site date circa 1970s are of little architectural or historical interest and consequently there are no objections in principle for their demolition and the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes.

This application is for the demolition of the children's home and its replacement of 2No apartment blocks comprising 28No 2-bedroom apartments and 4No mews 2-bedroom homes.

Site History

The 1970s buff-brick children's residential home comprises two buildings. A cruciform two storey building with a single storey office extension to the road side. Adjacent this is a detached three storey apartment block. The buildings are not sympathetic with the qualities of the Victorian Villas that surround it. There is also a garage and electrical substation on the site by the roadside. The area of the site is 1.17 Acres.

There are two gated vehicular entrances to the site, with ancillary pedestrian gated access, that lead to two car parks. A low level brick wall with metal railings forms the road side boundary and travels part way alongside apartment block No20 on the East. Fences continue down the rest of the East side and around the rear South side of the site. A brick wall approx. 1.8m high to the South of the site is obscured by the fence and over-grown flora.

The landscaping is tired and over-run with weeds and Ivy. A tarmacked playground and basketball court cage are to the rear of the site. There are patches of grass, but no noteworthy ground cover planting. Mature Sycamore, London Plane and Ash trees grow around the site perimeter.

18 Livingston Drive is currently unoccupied and is need of complete overhaul and refurbishment before it reasonably could be offered on the market for sale. It is a large building with spacious accommodation, however, its layout is impractical and it does not lend itself to refurbishment without a capital investment which far outweighs any likely return in terms of sale price. There is no aspect or feature of the dwelling internally or externally which makes its retention either necessary or desirable in Lark Lane Conservation Area.

Site Location

The site lies within the Lark Lane Conservation Area (CA). This CA was designated in 1976 and derives from the development of large Victorian villas. The predominant materials are sandstone, red brick, dark slate and some stucco. A significant element of the CA is the mature trees which line the street frontages and property side boundaries.

The application site lies within a Primarily Residential Area and the Lark Lane Conservation Area within the City's UDP. As such, Policy H4 (Primarily Residential Areas) stipulates a general presumption in favour of residential development.

Pre-Application Advice

Prior to submission of the formal application, a pre-application enquiry was submitted, (Enquiry ref: 0320/15) This included site plans and massing elevations. On receiving the initial response, a more detailed proposal based on two blocks of apartments and one block of mews; comprising 32 units was submitted based on the recommendations.

We have been meeting with Planning Officer Caroline Maher and Conservation Officer Lorraine Ward. Our initial design sketches were similar in composition to the adjacent new build apartment on 20 Livingston Drive. Both officers, said they would prefer a more contemporary interpretation of the Victorian Villa, which along with further correspondence during the design process has guided the final design.

Planning Constraints

The site constraints below are relevant to the development under consideration.

The site is designated in the adopted UDP as within in a Primarily Residential Area, is covered by a Tree Preservation Order and is located within the Lark Lane Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policies

The NPPF must be taken into account as a material consideration in planning decisions.

Liverpool Unitary Development Plan Policies

HD8 — Preservation & Enhancement of Conservation Areas

HD1 1 — New Development in Conservation Areas

HDI8 — General Design Requirements

HDI9 — Access for All

HD22 — Existing Trees & Landscaping

HD23 — New Trees and Landscaping

H5 — New Residential Development

T12 — Car Parking Provision in New Developments

T13 — Car Parking for the Disabled

Design for Access for All SPD

Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD

Trees & Development SPG 6

Proposed Site Layout

The proposal consists of 2No apartment blocks comprising 28No 2-bedroom apartments and 4No mews 2-bedroom houses. The apartment blocks follow the building line. The mews houses are to the rear of the site, with their own car park, separate access and individual gardens.

SITE STRATEGY

Conservation Area

The guidance from the initial pre-app and on-going correspondence with Planning Officer Caroline Maher and Conservation Officer Lorraine Ward has been to design contemporary residential buildings that respond sensitively to the existing built environment and landscape in Lark Lane Conservation Area. We believe this is reflected in our proposal.

Contextual character

Research of the area shows The Conservation Area contains buildings dating from the early nineteenth century to the present day, with a majority of development taking place between 1860 and 1910.

The site layout has taken reference from the local area. Large residential homes sit within substantial plots with a strong frontage, set back from the road. Our proposals respond to the character of the Victorian dwellings in the area, in terms of size, scale and materiality and follow the building line. The bay window frontages of our proposed apartment blocks echo the urban grain seen along Livingston Drive. Contemporary design will be used as a counterpoint to this, to enhance and complement the development.

Urban grain

The urban grain of Livingston Drive is generally 3 ½ storey detached buildings with tall bay windows, on substantial plots of land. The existing primary children's home by contrast is a long two storey building unlike the stature or form of the Victorian Villa.

Our proposal seeks to echo the existing urban grain by introducing similar sized plots and density of built form to the surrounding Victoria Villas. Modern bay windows, gable roofs and pronounced entrances carve out a similar footprint.

Proposed building forms

The apartment building designs have taken a variety of design cues from the neighbouring Victorian properties, including pitched roofs, large bay windows and brick detailed facades. Our proposal represent a 21st century interpretation of the large detached Victorian Villa, whilst meeting modern accommodation, services, technology and accessibility requirements.

*Advice given by the pre-application report 05.08.15 by Caroline Maher -
'In design terms the Lark Lane Conservation area:*

- Pastiche should be avoided and instead a strong contemporary building design is recommended that complements the existing built form within the immediate area which is typified by Victorian villa development.*
- Attention should be given to the solid to void ratio of principle elevations.*
- Properties within the area are typically two storeys with attic and basement (half basement) and the impression of a similar configuration should be incorporated into the design.*
- Materials play an important role in providing a visual cohesiveness to this mix of styles*

and any new development should utilise the local palette of materials in order to ensure that the 'identity' of the local area is referenced.'

The apartment blocks front onto Livingston Drive, utilising the existing vehicular access. The location of the blocks follows the building line of the adjacent properties. The proposed siting of both blocks has the aim of replicating the established rhythms of this frontage along Livingston Drive. The building height takes reference from No 20 Livingston Drive and the other Villas.

The windows are tall, creating a good void to solid ratio. The window sizes reduce in size further up the facade, echoing the Victorian aesthetic. The front of each apartment has two full height glazed bay windows, making the most of the attractive leafy streets and natural light in the living spaces. The top ½ storey uses a large dormer window to create a pleasant ceiling height in the living room and opens out onto a balcony over the bay window.

Apartment block A will consist of 12 units and block B will consist of 16 units. Each apartment has 2 bedrooms (the master bedroom has en-suite), bathroom, store, kitchen and combined living and dining room. Balconies to the rear apartments benefit from views over the gardens. The building materials of red brick walls, sandstone plinth and pitched roofs are in-keeping with the vernacular architecture. Projecting brick stretchers on the front facade are a contemporary expression of the detailed brickwork found on the more historic buildings on Livingston Drive. Zinc clad porch and dormer windows, as well as aluminium windows give a more contemporary style.

The mews houses are located behind the apartments. They are 1 ½ storeys with individual gardens. Each house has 2 bedrooms, bathroom, combined kitchen-diner, lounge and store. They take cues from the apartment blocks, but executed in a more discrete manner as befitting a mews house. They have the same palette of materials as the blocks. The windows on the entrance side of the building are small and obscured due to site interface distances, so the primary living spaces all face out over the rear South and West facing gardens, with large windows to benefit the natural light and leafy views.

All the buildings have been carefully designed to sit within the Council's interface distances, whilst maintaining the links with the surrounding gardens for all the residents.

Visual Permeability of the site

The arrangement and massing of the plots has been carefully considered, supplemented by new tree planting to give as green an aspect as possible around the site.

Materials (Landscape)

The landscape design will look to compliment the contemporary new architecture. The paved areas in parking bays and patios will be permeable to retain rainwater. This will increase rainwater retention on site and reduce water run off into the drainage system. The proposed footprint of the new residential accommodation and paving on the site will be less than the existing.

Existing and Proposed Trees and other Planting

The existing mature will mostly be retained to maintain the privacy and natural boundaries of the site. Careful analysis of the existing trees has been done in accordance with BS5837 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction-Recommendations (see *specialist tree report Tree Health Consulting Ltd*) to assess the various retention categories that have then dictated the layout on the site.

2No. trees are proposed to be removed, including; 1No. category B trees (T9 Sycamore) and 1No. category C trees (T10 Sycamore). New semi-mature trees will be planted to compensate for their removal

Very careful consideration has been given to building massing and orientation to minimise the impact on adjacent buildings and their enjoyment of their current aspect and prospect remains largely unchanged. New semi-mature trees will be planted around the car park to the roadside in keeping with the landscaping of the surrounding properties.

Consideration has also been given to the impact of new dwellings on the retained trees in terms of them potentially leading to pruning works. New main garden areas have been positioned on the South side of the proposed houses to gain the maximum benefit from sunlight paths in relation to the proposed built form. All three proposed buildings have south and west facing garden areas so they have some choice as to where to put patio areas to benefit from the sun path at different times of the day.

Proposed shrub planting is concentrated around the perimeter of the apartments and the front gardens to the mews houses. New lawns will be laid to the level perimeter of each building, with the communal gardens comprising some of the existing green areas and some new.

Topography

The gently sloping site has been utilised to create a series of simple terraces with changes in level carefully controlled and limited to the areas immediately around each building to minimise the potential impact on ground water and tree roots. All new building and landscape construction including hard and soft surfaces have been shown where possible over the site of existing hard surfacing to minimise disturbance to tree roots.

Bat Conservation

From the evidence gained during the dusk survey, the use of the building by bats is considered to be of low level conservation value and the proposed mitigation is proportionate to that. A licence will be requested from EPS Licensing Team of Natural England. Works will be undertaken in accordance with Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010. The survey advises that during the demolition of the existing building and construction of the new apartments, one 2F bat box will be erected on a suitable tree within the site boundaries. Roost provision will be incorporated within the new buildings with the guidance of an ecologist for its location and type.

Sustainability

Approximately two-thirds of the proposed hard paving on the site will be fully permeable, draining into the sandstone substrate. A combination of permeable block paving and small element slabs such as Hanson Formpave 'Aquapave' will be used for all new hard surfacing with aluminium edging systems which are 100% recyclable.

Boundaries

Two new pedestrian entrances will be formed along the existing roadside perimeter wall, that lead directly to the apartment entrances. The boundary between apartments will be high quality solid timber fences. Between the apartments and mews houses a 1.8m evergreen hedge will form the boundary. A 1.8m evergreen hedge will also be used to give some privacy to the ground floor apartments from the communal garden. All hedges and fences are carefully positioned to avoid damage to existing retained trees where possible.

Bike and Bin Stores

Small enclosures with solid timber fencing to match the plot boundary fences with solid timber gates will be used to house the bikes and wheelie bins required for each building. These enclosures will be planted with evergreen climbers and positioned on permeable paving areas.

Design for access

The scheme will be designed to lifetime homes standard. All the buildings will have level access and each block has a lift to provide access for those with mobility impairments. In the apartments, the master bedroom has an en-suite shower room and toilet for easy access at night time. All corridors are at least a minimum of 900mm wide and entrance lobbies and hallways have sufficient room for wheelchairs to pass and turn.

Concluding Summary

The proposals have been designed in line with Council guidance and policies, following the pre-application enquiry process. The site has now been disused for a number of years and the redevelopment into modern apartments will be a positive contribution to the area.

The proposed buildings site within a primarily residential area, in a sustainable location. The scheme reflects the character and style of the Lark Lane Conservation area. The material palette sits comfortably within the locality, whilst the building's form and scale reflect the adjacent properties.

The positioning of the buildings ensures that the green boundaries and brick walls are retained, whilst also maintaining the green space between the structures. The majority of the tree works proposed is for good tree management of the site, and the addition of new planting will be a positive addition to the locality.

We look forward to progressing the application.