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Knolle Park

Statement of Community Engagement



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Introduction

St Gabriel's Liverpool Ltd and their design and planning team conducted a thorough programme of engagement with local stakeholders and residents. The purpose of the exercise was to provide local people, community groups and organisations with specific expertise / interest in planning and heritage with an opportunity to comment on the proposed development prior to submission of planning.

Initially we focussed on creating a strong brand and consistent visual style that would help us engage people effectively and communicate the core aspirations of the project.

The title Knolle Park was chosen as it was the original name of the main house and estate. It helped to signify the team's commitment to sensitive restoration of the site's key buildings and protected trees, as well as the core integrity of the site and its unique landscape character. The branding reflected a respectful attitude to the site's history but also an aspiration to create a high quality contemporary residential community within a green and sustainable environment.



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The engagement methods and media utilised included:

- Proactive e-mailing to civic and conservation interests
- Face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders
- Early proactive dialogue with local elected representatives
- Presentations to key design and heritage organisations
- Eight-page consultation brochure distributed to local homes and key public buildings, cafes and community meeting spaces in the Woolton area
- Staffed Public Exhibition



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Key stakeholders meeting and responses

The process of engagement with local stakeholders began with the creation of a database of local community and heritage groups. An emailing was sent out to The Woolton Society and The Woolton Village Residents' Association along with other more recently established groups with a focus on green space conservation. We wanted to ensure that the project's essentially green / low density ethos was understood and appreciated by those groups directly engaged in recent planning issues in the area.

A direct face to face meeting with officers of The Woolton Society resulted in the group feeding back an initial response. Specifically they liked:

- The low density nature of the proposed development
- The retention of mature trees and landscaping proposals
- The traffic access and management arrangements
- The restoration of Knolle Park House and the Grecian Lodge
- The design and layout of the new residential element of the scheme



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Key stakeholders meeting and responses

A site meeting was held with Woolton Ward Cllrs and Jonathan Brown from Merseyside Civic Society / Save Britain's Heritage prior to the public consultation exhibition. Again the feedback and response was overwhelmingly positive with a number of key points raised including:

- Traffic management and parking
- Retention of mature trees and the estate's perimeter sandstone wall
- Design of new build element and support for modern / non-pastiche design
- Support for the restoration of the two key listed buildings

Additional face to face meeting were held with local architect and Heritage Campaigner Sue Carmichael and Jan Pell from Save Our Green Spaces and members of the Gateacre Society. The feedback from these meetings was also largely positive with some additional issues and comments raised including:

- The long-term management and maintenance of the landscaped parkland
- The potential need for more visitor parking
- The feasibility of achieving Passivhaus standard for the new-build housing



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Presentations to heritage and urban design organisations

In addition to targeting Woolton-based organisations the team also set out to engage organisations and interests with a wider brief and perspective.

In August at the early stages of the scheme's evolution a presentation was made to the Places Matter Design Review Panel. A detailed and largely positive report from the presentation session has already been shared with the Planning Authority and is attached to this report as an appendix.

One of the key principles underpinning the design philosophy was the desire to create an exceptional quality landscape and sense of place. The scheme's landscape consultant Neil Swanson suggested early dialogue with the Landlife organisation to get their response to an emerging landscape plan. Following a site meeting with Richard Scott from Landlife it was agreed that the organisation become formally involved in the project, helping to manage and maintain the parkland and conserve its ecology. We view this as an important future relationship with a key local organisation playing a strategic role across and beyond the Liverpool City Region. Knolle Park in this sense becomes part of a network of ecological assets for the area rather than a self-contained private estate.

Following the initial contact with Jonathan Brown arrangements were made for a full presentation to the Council of the Merseyside Civic Society. The meeting is scheduled for November 3rd and the organisation will communicate its views directly to the Planning Authority.



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Public Consultation Exhibition and 8-page brochure

The in-depth dialogue with key organisations and individuals was an important and positive initiative and largely validated the design and conservation approach being taken by the team.

From the outset the team were equally committed to inclusive engagement with residents both in the immediate neighbourhood and the wider Woolton area.

The main means of engagement were through the distribution of 800 consultation brochures circulated to circa 400 homes in the immediate vicinity of the site and through public buildings and community meeting spaces to the wider community.

In addition, an article about the project and the public consultation exhibition was included in the Woolton Society newsletter distributed across Woolton in the two weeks before the event.

Finally the exhibition was also publicised via the media with a news item and interview with Cllr Colin McAlley on BBC Radio Merseyside.



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Public Consultation Exhibition and 8-page brochure

64 local residents attended the public exhibition at The Woolton Village Social Club on October 13. The exhibition was open from 12 noon to 8pm and was staffed by Russell Bridge from Bridge Architects and Jon Egan and Paul Cook from communication consultancy Archetype.

The exhibition featured large-scale boards outlining plans, architectural sketches, elevations and CGI's of the new scheme, along with a narrative explanation of design philosophy and key impacts / features.

Most of those attending came from the nearest residential areas on Church Rd, Baroncroft Rd, Woolton Hill Rd and Beaconsfield Rd, with a smaller number from areas further from the site.

18 attendees completed survey forms with 3 further forms returned directly from the brochure distribution. To summarise the survey results and face to face comments from the exhibition the main conclusions were:

- Strong support for the balance between green space and development across the site
- Strong support for the conservation of Knolle Park House
- Support for the proposed traffic access arrangements with separate entrances for the apartments and houses



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Public Consultation Exhibition and 8-page brochure

- Support for the aspiration to create Liverpool's first Passivhaus homes
- Majority support for the modern design principles of the new-build homes with a minority concerned about either design or scale of the new-build housing
- Different views from residents on Baroncroft Rd about the desirability of additional planting between their properties and the site boundary





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3. Knolle Park Meadows

HAVE YOUR SAY

These plans propose a less dense development than the proposed Care Village on this site, so we can retain more green space.

Do you agree with the balance between green space and new development on these plans?

Agree / ~~Disagree~~

Comment: Will assurance be given that all the grounds will have the 'scrub trees' - eg elder removed so they stop invading the back wall.

Do you agree with our proposals for the restoration and conversion of Knolle Park House?

Agree / ~~Disagree~~

Comment:

Do you agree with the design and mix of the proposed new-build apartments and houses within the development?

Agree / ~~Disagree~~

Comment:

Do you agree with the sustainability objectives of the development, particularly the proposal to create Liverpool's first Passivhaus homes?

Agree / ~~Disagree~~

Comment:

Do you agree with the proposal to use two car access points to service the different elements of the scheme and balance the impact on Church Rd and Beaconsfield Rd?

Agree / ~~Disagree~~

Comment:

Please return your survey to Archetype, Suite 3, Church House, 1 Hanover St, Liverpool, L1 3DN or bring completed forms to our Public Exhibition on October 13th at noon - 8pm held at Woolton Village Social Club, 23 Allerton Rd, Liverpool L25 7RA.



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Public Consultation Exhibition Collateral





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Appendix 1

PlacesMatter!

Places Matter!
Unit 101
The Tea Factory
82 Wood Street
Liverpool L1 4DQ
T +44 (0)151 733 0135
info@placesmatter.co.uk
www.placesmatter.co.uk


Russell Bridge
Bridge Architects
14 Old Mill St
Manchester
M4 6DZ
2 September 2015
Dear Russell
Re: Knolle Park, Woolton, Liverpool
20 August 2015 Design Review, Manchester

Thank you for sharing this proposal with Places Matter! Design Review. We are very supportive of a sensitive approach to development within a historic landscape and the ambition to create a contemporary design in housing as well.

Masterplan and Landscape

The layout and level changes appear to work together and we are particularly pleased to see that the historic, dramatic approach to the existing house is being maintained in the overall design. It is to be commended that the architect and the landscape architect are working so closely together and collaboration is demonstrated through the quality of the design. It will be equally as important that the client is intending to make a long term maintenance commitment to this project to ensure that the quality of the landscape is ensured throughout the development and into the future.

The many small models you brought to the design review were very helpful in visualising the overall shape and topography of the site and the way the scheme fits into it. We particularly liked the emphasised horseshoe shaped layout of the housing which, although it did not align with Beaconsfield Road on the western side, gave a more coherent structure within itself. It also improved the relationship with Cedarwood, the 20th century listed house at the corner of the site. We initially questioned who would take ownership of the central square around which the new houses will be built as there must be a robust and longterm maintenance and management plan in place for this development. There will be a need to plan for the gradual replacement of trees as and when necessary, as the landscape in this proposal is a critical part of the scheme.

RIBA  **Design Network.**
North West

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Our concern lies with the way you have expressed the roadway at the front of the houses. Although we feel this is the correct location for this, we feel that you are treating it too much like a highway and need to pull back and let it be more of a road within a park, i.e. no hammerhead and less suburban. This would be a place where a gravel solution would look so much more fitting as in the hierarchy of routes this should always appear less important than the drive to the main house.

Architecture of Apartment Block


We feel that this is the least convincing aspect of the whole proposal. The historic landscape leading up to and surrounding the immediate area around the main house is being managed successfully and the individual housing is working well within the wider field adjacent. The drama that was originally designed in the approach to the main house works well but the relationship between the main house and the new wing is not as successful. Where the house sits within the landscape slightly nestled into the bank of the land, the wing appears to hover on top of the landscape and the glazed atrium link between the two structures is unconvincing.

There is a completely different aesthetic between the main house and the wing in that the fenestration essentially forms the structure in the new wing. Where the house has a vertical look about it the wing is far more horizontal in appearance. As the wing appears to sit forward of the house and is taller, it is overly dominating and its relation to the house creates an ambiguity around where the main entrance is. We feel you need to take a more conscious approach to the dialogue between the main house and the wing.

If there were any way the wing could be given more distance from the main house by pushing it further away, it would provide the opportunity to celebrate the space in between the two structures and create a way through. We suggest that a carefully designed fire escape might even work better than a glazed link piece.

Architecture of the Villas and Detached Houses

We are fully supportive of a contemporary approach to the architecture of this development. It is a further iteration of contemporary architecture begun in the latter half of the 20th century and provides another chapter in that vein.

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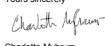
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The Gatehouse

We appreciate the intention to reuse this building by adding a small single storey addition. This will help to give it longevity and a future purpose within the whole development.

Overall we appreciate the quality of contemporary architecture being proposed and support this project as a well-conceived reimagining of the site and a welcome appreciation of the historic landscape.

Yours sincerely

Charlotte Myhrum
Design Review Manager

Cc: Neil Swanson, Landscape Projects
Sam Beilin, St. Gabriels Liverpool Ltd.
Caroline Maher, Liverpool City Council
Rob Burns, Liverpool City Council
Wendy Morgan, Liverpool City Council

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