

HB Villages Ltd  
**Proposed Supported Independent Living  
Accommodation, Cobblestone Corner,  
Grassendale**  
Planning, Design & Access Statement

Unless alternative contractual arrangements have been made, this report remains the property of Roger Tym & Partners until fees have been paid in full.

Copyright and other intellectual property laws protect this information. Reproduction or retransmission of the information, in whole or in part, in any manner, without the prior written consent of the copyright holder, is a violation of copyright law.

# CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	Application Documents .....	1
	Background and Description of Proposal .....	1
	Structure of the Statement .....	3
2	LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA .....	5
	Location of the Application Site .....	5
	Urban Design Audit .....	5
3	DESIGN PROCESS AND SCHEME CONCEPT .....	7
	The Brief .....	7
	Design Process .....	8
4	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT .....	11
	Introduction .....	11
	National Planning Policy .....	11
	Local Planning Policy .....	12
5	DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS .....	15
	Proposed Use .....	15
	Proposed Amount of Development .....	15
	Layout of Development .....	16
	Scale of Development .....	16
	Landscaping .....	17
	Appearance .....	17
6	‘ACCESS’ ISSUES .....	19
	Vehicular, Pedestrian and Cycle Access .....	19
	Car Parking .....	19
	Public Transport .....	19
	Access for All .....	19
7	OVERALL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	19
	Introduction .....	19
	Conformity with National Planning Policy Objectives .....	19
	Conformity with Local Planning Policy .....	19

Design & Access ..... 19

Conclusion ..... 21



# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement<sup>1</sup> has been prepared by Roger Tym & Partners (RTP) on behalf of HB Villages Ltd, to support the proposed refurbishment, sub division, external alterations and extension of existing residential dwellings at Cobblestone Corner in Grassendale<sup>2</sup>, together with new parking, access realignment and landscaping.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to describe our client's proposals to develop the site for supported independent living accommodation, and to explain why this is an appropriate use for the site and how it accords with relevant planning policy.

## Application Documents

- 1.3 The planning application is accompanied by the following documents:

### Supporting Document

### Produced By

▪ Planning, Design & Access Statement	Roger Tym & Partners
▪ Planning Application Form/Certificates	Roger Tym & Partners
▪ Site Location Plan	C.C. Gladding Architects
▪ Existing and Proposed Layout Plans	C.C. Gladding Architects
▪ Existing and Proposed Elevations	C.C. Gladding Architects
▪ Existing and Proposed Block Plans	C.C. Gladding Architects

## Background and Description of Proposal

- 1.4 The site currently comprises 8 residential dwellings, some of which are vacant. HB Villages proposes to convert and extend these existing dwellings to provide a total of 12 assisted living units for people with learning and physical disabilities, together with one additional unit for on-site staff accommodation. The application does not seek to change the Use Class of the existing dwellings, and will result in a net increase of 5 units at the site.
- 1.5 The proposed development will be managed by Inclusion Housing, a Registered Provider who specialise in the management of supported independent living facilities. The on-site care support will be provided by Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD), the largest voluntary sector providers of services and care for individuals with learning and physical disabilities in the UK. Leonard Cheshire provides comprehensive support for people with disabilities, constantly helping to raise the profile of disability and combating discrimination. At the heart of their work they aim meet the needs and aspirations of disabled people, fighting to remove the barriers that can stop people with disabilities from pursuing their goals and living their lives to the full. An integral part of this work, which they undertake in partnership with Inclusion Housing, is the management of much needed residential accommodation such as that proposed at the application site, and the provision of an important support network to enable users to live their lives as they wish.

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'the Statement'

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'the site'

- 1.6 There is currently a shortage of such accommodation across the country, and specifically in relation to bespoke accommodation for physically disabled individuals. The lack of suitable accommodation in Liverpool reflects the national position, to the point where Leonard Cheshire's voids historically run at only 2 per cent. LCD has identified a need for this type of accommodation in Liverpool, and has already delivered 6 units in Liverpool City Centre, in King's Dock Mill (which is for people with learning disabilities). The application scheme at Cobblestone Court will cater for people with both learning and physical disabilities. Negotiations have been successfully concluded with the care commissioners at Liverpool City Council, and Inclusion Housing has also successfully obtained sign-off on housing benefit levels with the Housing Benefit Department.
- 1.7 This proposal is vital to relieve families of the stress and pressures of caring for disabled family members, whilst giving end users the opportunity to live independently, backed by a strong support network. Each person will have their own living space, comprising a bathroom, bedroom and kitchen/living area. 11 units are for single occupiers with one bedroom; and 2 units are capable of providing two bedrooms.
- 1.8 The development proposal will be at the heart of the community within a primarily residential area, and will integrate into the surrounding residential development. The only discernible difference will be the provision of on-site support. At any one time there will be a maximum of 4 support staff, based on-site on a 24-hour basis. A staff room, WC and bedroom will be provided for staff.
- 1.9 As mentioned above, the application proposal falls under Use Class C3, as all the units are standard apartments, some of which are adapted for individuals with physical disabilities. One of the apartments will be provided as staff accommodation, with support provider for individuals who perhaps would like some help with their shopping, or who want to go out with a staff member for the day. The apartments will be subject to a 60-year lease to Inclusion Housing, with no breaks and backed by LCD through a generic 20-year voids agreement. There are a number of such schemes currently in planning or under construction across the North-West. These supported residential schemes are designed in this way so as not to show any perceptible discriminatory difference in the way these particular individuals successfully live independently. The long lease and void agreement will ensure that the proposed building will be used for supported independent living accommodation for the foreseeable future.
- 1.10 Given the specialised nature of the development, none of the occupants will hold a driving license and so there will be no highway impacts or additional demand for parking (except for staff). The site is in a highly sustainable location, close to public transport links, shops and other local services. We have therefore agreed with the Council that the usual parking standards for C3 development do not apply in this instance.
- 1.11 Residents will have a varied range level of disabilities, from learning difficulties to more complex physical disabilities. Each service user will be assessed, and according to their ability to live independently, will receive support on an ad-hoc basis.

---

## Structure of the Statement

1.12 The Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the location and characteristics of the application site and surrounding area;
- Section 3 sets out details of the design principles and scheme concept;
- Section 4 explains why the scheme satisfies the relevant planning policy requirements;
- Section 5 considers the development parameters in relation to the following headings:
  - 'use'
  - 'amount'
  - 'layout'
  - 'scale'
  - 'landscaping'
  - 'appearance';
- Section 6 addresses the issue of access to the site; and
- Section 7 then provides our overall summary.



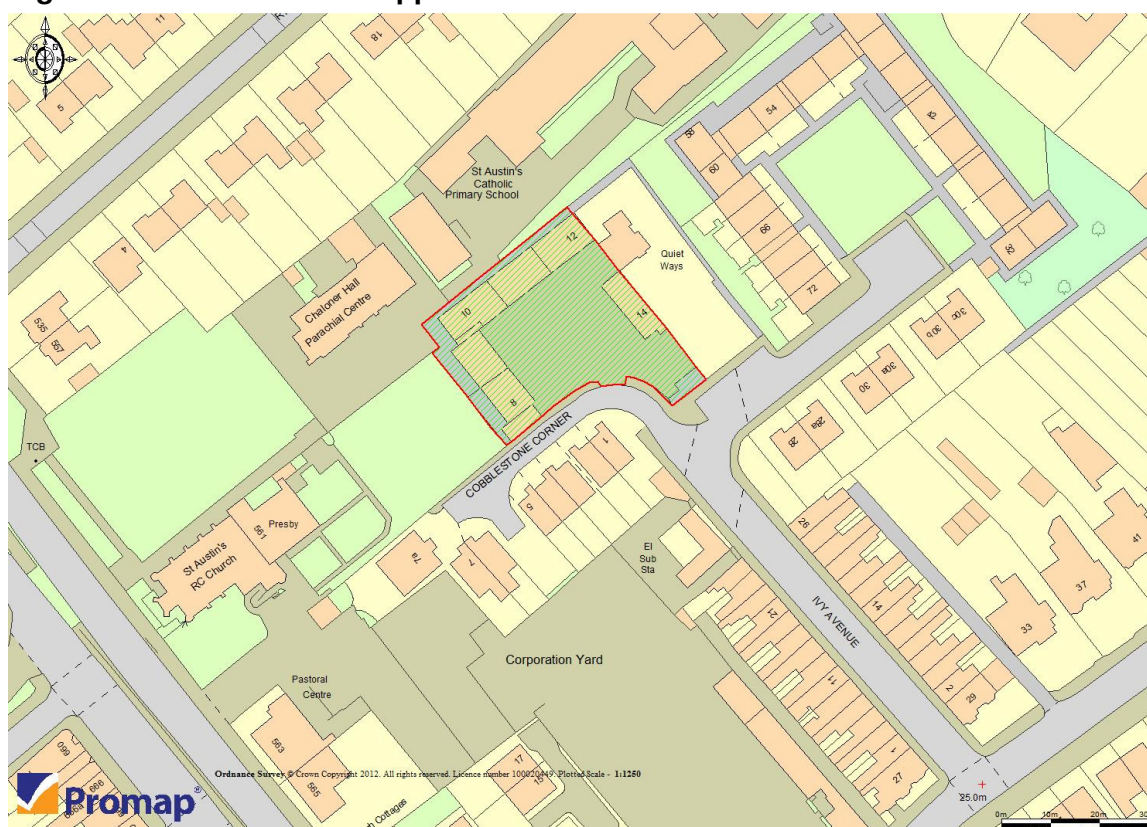


## 2 LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

### Location of the Application Site

- 2.1 The application site extends to 0.15ha and comprises 8 dwellings arranged around a courtyard, fronting Cobblestone Corner in Garston.
- 2.2 Opposite the site on the south side of the road is a row of relatively modern semi-detached and terraced properties. There is also a small two story dwelling with a blank white gable wall facing the site at the eastern boundary.
- 2.3 Other residential uses in the immediately vicinity are located at Ivy Avenue, including a four storey block of flats (circa 1960-70s), a row of bungalows, and red brick terraced houses. The western side of the site is bounded by the rear walled garden of the Church of St. Austin's. Directly behind the site is St. Austin's Catholic Primary School.

**Figure 2.1 Location of the Application Site**



### Urban Design Audit

#### *Movement and Access*

- 2.4 The site is positioned on Cobblestone Corner, a quiet residential cul-de-sac that branches off from Ivy Avenue. The site can be accessed by vehicles and pedestrian from Ivy

Avenue, to Garston Old Road, which connects to the A561, Aigburth Road, which is the main arterial route into the City Centre from South Liverpool.

- 2.5 Whilst there are some cul-de-sacs locally, there is a more defined street grid pattern, characteristic of a Victorian urban grain which is very permeable.
- 2.6 Within walking distance of the site is Cressington train station, providing a service along the Northern Line, with connections to the Wirral Line, Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool City Centre. Bus services are available along Aigburth Road (A561).
- 2.7 The site is within walking distance of a variety shops and services (including a pharmacy, convenience stores, fast food outlets, bakeries and hairdressers) at Darby Road, Garston Old Road, and Aigburth Road.
- 2.8 Vehicular access onto the site is currently off Cobblestone Corner into an existing cobbled courtyard, which is used as the car park, although spaces are not demarcated. Pedestrian movement is restricted by narrow footways between the building and courtyard.

### ***Land Use and Activities***

- 2.9 The site is a converted stable block, which formed part of the historic and larger Corporation Yard. It is currently a C3 land use, with some properties currently vacant. The landowner owns all properties and lets those that are currently in use.
- 2.10 The site is set within a predominantly residential community, well served by local shops and services. Grassendale Medical Practice, Garston Family Health Centre, The Village Surgery, Mather Avenue Surgery, Garston Dental Clinic, TAK Wilson and Associates, Mr DKY Lee, Morris and Partners are all less than a mile from the site.
- 2.11 The site is also close to recreational open space, including Long Lane Recreation Ground (less than 0.5 miles), Otterspool Park and Promenade (less than 1 mile), and Clarke Gardens (less than 2 miles).

### ***Buildings and Townscape***

- 2.12 There is a mix of building types locally, with references to Georgian, Victorian and modern architecture. Directly within the field of view of the site is a block of four storey flats (circa 1960s-1970s), a small row of bungalows (circa 1980s), small red brick terraces, and small detached and semi-detached properties. The area appears to be evolving, with new styles and qualities added over time.
- 2.13 The existing development has an intimate mews character, not too dissimilar from its original use as a stable. Whilst visually the site appears a bit tired, it has the potential to be high quality scheme. We consider that the courtyard entrance can be modernised and enhanced to provide a focal point and greater sense of arrival.

## 3 DESIGN PROCESS AND SCHEME CONCEPT

### The Brief

- 3.1 HB Villages intend to refurbish and extend the existing residential accommodation at Cobblestone Corner, bringing it back to full occupancy while providing accommodation and support services for residents with learning and physical disabilities. The financial investment model dictates that the scheme is secured for Use Class C3.
- 3.2 The development should maximise the number of residential units to ensure the scheme's viability, and deliver this type of accommodation which is so desperately required within south Liverpool.
- 3.3 The proposed design should marry context with opportunity and need, and must reference and maintain its existing mews style, informed by local context, whilst delivering key design features necessary to ensure a fit for purpose development that will raise the design quality locally, helping to improve the character and appearance of the area.
- 3.4 The scheme has evolved through discussions with the applicant, Leonard Cheshire, and Liverpool City Council, the outcome of which is the proposed design.
- 3.5 Below, we summarise the opportunities and constraints that have helped to shape the application proposal and our client's response to the site:

### Opportunities

- Deliver a scheme that promotes access for all.
- Provide clearly demarcated parking bays with adequate provision for disabled spaces.
- Improve movement routes, including the provision of sufficiently wide walkways and lifts to be able to access all parts of the site and the first floor veranda/units.
- Improve the built environment – refurbish the internal and external building, uplifting and mending tired and worn elements of the site.
- Design a scheme that is sensitive to the contextual integrity of the building, but which adds a new and enhanced design dimension to the existing through external alterations and extensions. The development offers scope to raise design quality locally.
- Design fit for purpose special needs accommodation, meeting specific Equality and Building Regulations guidance.
- Provide much needed residential accommodation at the heart of the community.
- Reuse a partly vacant brownfield site within an existing residential area.
- A new residential development fits with existing uses and repairs the street scene, vastly improving the environment and appearance of the local area.
- The site is in a sustainable location, served by public transport and within walking distance of the shops, services and open space.

- The special circumstances of this residential development, where residents will not hold a driving licence due to their condition, will minimise dependence on the private car.
- There is scope for homes that are contextually designed, yet reference existing design features, to reinforce the area's character. The development will raise the design quality of the area.

### **Constraints**

- Site levels will need to be altered at the site entrance to provide access for all.
- The existing development footprint is very tight. The proposed development must work within these parameters. New extensions and alterations should be sensitively designed with this in mind.
- Due to the footprint size, there are limited opportunities to provide amenity space. The existing site does not currently have any amenity space, but the site is accessible on foot and by multiple modes of transport to local open recreation spaces.
- An optimum number of units will have to be built on site to ensure the scheme is financially viable.

### **Design Process**

3.6 The application scheme responds to its context, and will create a sense of place. The proposal will utilise the existing building fabric as a basis on which to evolve and improve the development, whilst still ensuring it integrates strongly within its existing urban context. The design process has involved:

- a review of the site context;
- an understanding of the development potential of the site;
- an assessment of planning policy and design guidance; and
- Pre-application consultations with Liverpool City Council.

3.7 This has led to a series of development ideas, with a preferred approach emerging. In response to these various design drivers a range of broad benefits has been identified from the emerging design ideas.

### **Physical Considerations**

3.8 The proposal will mend a tired and partially vacant site which over time could deteriorate and fall into disrepair, adversely affecting the local residential community. It is therefore important to bring back this site back to full occupancy and improve the local street scene.

### **Social Considerations**

3.9 The site will be restored and brought back into full active use. The application scheme will be managed by Inclusion Housing, who will have full responsibility for its maintenance.

3.10 A major benefit of this proposal is that it responds to a direct need locally for such accommodation and support services. Leonard Cheshire has liaised with the Care Commission stakeholders to respond to specific needs identified locally for this type of

accommodation. The proposal will be the second of its type in Liverpool, and its delivery has been agreed with HB Villages, Leonard Cheshire, Inclusion Housing (a Community Interest Company and Registered Provider) and the Housing Benefits Department.

- 3.11 It is important that disabled persons have the opportunity to live their lives as independently and as freely as possible. This also provides an opportunity for family members to gain some respite. These residents will add to and play a part in this local community, strengthening social cohesion.
- 3.12 The Liverpool Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2011, states that *'meeting specific support and special needs remains an important priority for LCC. The analysis identifies that these groups form an important component of the overall market, but that their needs are diverse in their nature'*.
- 3.13 The application proposal recognises this, and delivers specific requirements identified by LCC, the Care Commission and Leonard Cheshire. The scheme also responds to the remarks made in the SHMA that *'the capacity of social rented stock, given the length of waiting lists and the suitability of existing stock, poses a challenge'* and *'the careful management of private stock, and in particular the private rented sector is required if this continues to be used to absorb demand'*.
- 3.14 We would therefore emphasise that private led development such as that proposed is delivered, in partnership with nationally recognised charities such as Leonard Cheshire and council departments, so as to focus on supporting those in greatest specialist need.
- 3.15 The SHMA further recognises the *'importance of ensuring linkages between housing strategy, regeneration and planning function'*, and identifies this as a key recommendation of the strategy. This proposal has been informed by the housing strategy in identifying the specialists need requirements, in formulating the type of units proposed, in partnership with key stakeholders. The proposal will play a part in redeveloping a brownfield site, helping to regenerate the area, and should therefore be supported through the planning process.
- 3.16 Critically, during the evidence gathering of the SHMAA, stakeholders and consultees acknowledged that with regard to housing needs for disabled persons, there were *'concerns that the current development and planning process was not delivering sufficient numbers of dwellings which were going to contribute to meeting long-term needs'*. The application proposal provides a golden opportunity for the City Council to respond to this directly.

### ***Economic Considerations***

- 3.17 A defined need for this type of housing has been identified and agreed between the Care Commissioners and LCD.
- 3.18 New residents will contribute to the local area through use of local services, thereby strengthening the local economy. The applicant will use a locally based building company and would look to construct the scheme using local labour. This would provide jobs and aid to cumulatively stimulate economic growth in the area.
- 3.19 This development can be delivered, but is only viable based on the number of units proposed.

---

### *Sustainability*

- 3.20 The development reuses a previously developed site and existing residential properties, representing an efficient use of resources.
- 3.21 The site is close to shops, services and public transport links, which will encourage sustainable modes of travel. In any case, the future residents of the application proposal are unlikely to hold a driving license.



## 4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### Introduction

- 4.1 As we explained in Section 3, the proposed assisted living units are essentially self-contained and whilst 24-hour on-site support will be available, the scheme has been designed to ensure that the residents will be able to live as independent a life as possible.
- 4.2 The development is therefore not a residential institution and so for the purpose of the application it falls within Use Class C3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (SI 1987/764) (as amended), which covers '*Dwellings for individuals, families or not more than six people living together as a single household.*' Nevertheless, given the specific nature of the proposed accommodation and the funding mechanism it uses, the development is effectively an affordable housing scheme.
- 4.3 We consider the proposals against the framework of national and local planning policy in this section of our Statement.

### National Planning Policy

#### *The National Planning Policy Framework*

- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012, replacing all previous national planning policy guidance.
- 4.5 Paragraph 6 of the NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment. Amongst other things, this includes replacing poor design with better design, and widening the choice of high quality homes.
- 4.6 Paragraph 14 makes clear that at the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is the 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision-taking. This means: (i) local planning authorities (LPAs) should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; (ii) Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change; (iii) approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and (iv) where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 4.7 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out 12 core planning principles, stating that amongst other things planning should:
  - proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
  - always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;



- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed; and
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

4.8 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF makes clear that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 50 goes on to state that LPAs should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership, and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

4.9 To this end, LPAs should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as older people and people with disabilities), and identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand.

#### *Summary of Conformity with National Planning Policy Objectives*

4.10 The proposed development is entirely consistent with the aims, objectives and requirements of the NPPF. The application scheme embodies sustainable development principles by reusing a previously developed site, and widening the choice of housing options for the local community. The application site is in a sustainable location within an existing residential area, thereby promoting social inclusion.

4.11 The application scheme is therefore exactly the type of development advocated by the NPPF, and will assist in the delivery of the Government's objectives to increase the supply of new homes and to cater for the needs of all groups in the community, including people with disabilities.

### **Local Planning Policy**

#### *Liverpool Unitary Development Plan*

4.12 The 2002 UDP provides the local planning policy context against which the application will be determined. Below we consider some of the key UDP policies against which the application proposal will be assessed.

4.13 The site is within a primarily residential area on the UDP proposals map. Policy H4 states that residential development is acceptable in primarily residential areas where it satisfies other plan policies. The application proposal is for a residential scheme in the same Use Class as the existing development at the site, and therefore accords with this policy. The proposal also reuses an existing, partly vacant building as advocated by UDP Policy EP1.

4.14 The application proposal is also consistent with UDP Policies H5 and HD18, in that the density, design and layout respects the character of the surrounding area, and maintains levels of privacy and amenity for existing and future residents. The proposal maintains the building's existing architectural qualities. New additions and external alterations compliment and emphasise these further, with the use of matching materials and design features that define this site's distinctive character.

- 
- 4.15 The scheme also conforms with UDP Policy H5, in that the highway and parking provision ensures a safe, attractive, convenient and nuisance-free highway environment for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.
  - 4.16 The application proposal also accords with the 'Ensuring a Choice of Travel' SPD and UDP Policies T6, T7, T12 and T13. The 13 parking spaces provided are adequate for this proposal as residents will not hold a driving licence due to their disability. Only staff and visitors will use the car park.
  - 4.17 A cycling store is provided on site to accommodate up to 5 bicycles. Due to the disabilities of residents, they will not be able to ride a bicycle, hence why provision is less than 1 secure space for every 1 flat, plus 1 visitor cycle stand per 10 units.
  - 4.18 The site has been designed to promote access for all, with shared surfaces and level access, wide footways, permeable access from the car park, disabled parking spaces, adequate wheel chair turning circles and a lift. This is in line with UDP Policy HD19 and the 'Design for Access for All' SPD.
  - 4.19 The surrounding area has dropped kerbs and wide footways, for safe and easy movement to the surrounding residential areas, shops and services, and local public transport. Residents will safely and independently be able to travel from the site. There is only a nominal increase in footprint of the development, so it does not dominate the townscape and is fitting with local densities.
  - 4.20 The footprint and alignment of the application proposal follows the existing buildings. The footways are wider than the existing to improve privacy of residents at the site. This is however constrained by the existing car park. Overlooking of existing properties has been negated by the removal of windows where interface distances are close.
  - 4.21 The proposal responds to Secured by Design principles, in line with UDP Policy HD20, being secured at the rear boundaries by fencing, with good natural surveillance to the front of the site. The site will be properly managed and regulated with at least one member of staff available on site at any one time. It is hoped that that a close knit community will be created where all residents know each other and can raise the alarm to any crime and safety related concerns.
  - 4.22 The proposal presents a high quality development proposal, carefully designed following detailed discussions with Liverpool City Council. All design comments received from the Council have been responded to and addressed at the pre-application stage.
  - 4.23 The site includes an adequate refuse store area, enclosed on three sides by a brick wall. Refuse vehicles can gain access to this from just outside the site entrance. This area will be properly managed by Cheshire Leonard staff.

### ***Submission Draft Core Strategy***

- 4.24 The Submission Draft Core Strategy was published for consultation in March 2012, and sets out the key planning policies which will determine how Liverpool develops over the next 15 years. One of the eight strategic objectives set out in the draft submission Core Strategy is the creation of residential neighbourhoods that meet housing needs, which includes seeking an improvement in the quality and diversity of the City's housing offer.

4.25 Proposed Strategic Policy 1 sets out a number of criteria that new development should meet, including:

- Prioritising the use of previously developed land;
- Improving accessibility, reducing the need to travel by motorised transport and where travel is necessary, enable convenient and safe access by sustainable transport modes;
- Contributing to the delivery of sustainable communities, including through the promotion of social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- Delivering high quality design, including efficiency in the use of resources, using sustainable materials and minimising waste; and
- Protecting and enhancing environmental and heritage assets

4.26 The application proposal will reuse previously developed land/buildings, improve existing access arrangements, and is in a sustainable location close to shops, services and public transport. The scheme will promote inclusive communities by providing local people with specialist accommodation at the heart of the residential community, and will deliver high design quality, reusing much of the existing built fabric.

4.27 Proposed Strategic Policy 9 states that the housing delivery should make the best use of the existing stock and reduce vacancy rates in the existing dwelling stock through the increased re-use of suitable vacant housing. As a target 90 per cent of new housing should be met from previously-developed sources. The application proposal clearly accords with this policy as it will improve existing housing stock, reduce levels of vacancy, and provide new dwellings on previously developed land.

#### *Summary of Conformity with Local Policy*

4.28 The proposed development accords with the strategic objectives and relevant policies of the adopted UDP. The application site is clearly suitable for residential use, and the proposed scheme will maximise the use of a previously developed site. The nature of the proposed development means that it will directly contribute towards meeting specialist housing needs in Liverpool. The design and layout of the scheme has been carefully considered in consultation with the Council, and the proposal raises no highways or transport issues.

4.29 For the reasons provided above and in the remainder of this Statement, we therefore consider that there is strong local policy support for the application proposal.

## 5 DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

- 5.1 The Design and Access Statement reflects the advice contained in the CLG 'Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation' document (March 2010), which replaced Circular 01/2006 on 6 April 2010, together with the CABE Guidance 'Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them' (2006).

### Proposed Use

- 5.2 The CABE Guidance requires that, as well as saying what the proposed development will be used for – and justifying the use in terms of land use policies – the Design & Access Statement should explain how the proposed use has been informed by and will fit in with existing uses in the area. The Statement reflects the advice contained in the CLG 'Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation' document (March 2010), which replaced Circular 01/2006 on 6 April 2010.
- 5.3 The site is immediately adjacent to other residential properties, and accordingly we consider that the proposed use is appropriate in this context. In any case, the principle of residential use at the site has already been established given its current use.
- 5.4 Our client intends to develop 12 'assisted living' residential units at the application site with on-site support facilities and associated car parking/landscaping. However, the scheme is not a residential institution and so the units fall within Class C3 of the Use Classes Order. There is an identified need for assisted living units in Liverpool and so we consider this to be an appropriate use of the application site in a suitable location.

### Proposed Amount of Development

- 5.5 The CABE Guidance requires the Design & Access Statement to explain why the quantum of development that is being applied for is appropriate, and why it is suitable for the application site, taking account of any site-specific restrictions that have been identified.
- 5.6 Matters to be considered when assessing design quality include the extent to which developments are well integrated and complementary to neighbouring buildings in terms of scale, density, layout and access. Also, the efficient use of land remains a key consideration in planning for housing.
- 5.7 The proposal seeks permission for 12 one-bedroom assisted living units, with an additional unit for on-site support facilities, together with associated car parking/landscaping. This will result in net increase in 5 units at the site.
- 5.8 The proposal has been subject to consultation with Council officers, who have confirmed that the amount of development proposed is acceptable, and that there is a need for this type of facility in Liverpool.
- 5.9 We therefore consider that the amount of development being sought is appropriate and justified, particularly given the acute need for this type of specialist supported accommodation in the area.

## Layout of Development

- 5.10 The guidance by CABI requires the Design & Access Statement to explain how the proposed buildings and spaces would work together. Of relevance to the current application is the advice on page 13 that: *‘For small developments this may be very simple, for example, just saying that the building faces an existing road.’*
- 5.11 The proposed layout has been determined by the footprint and configuration of the existing residential properties at the site, which are arranged around a courtyard. This layout has been maintained and therefore the application proposal will not result in any material change to how the site currently functions in its wider context.
- 5.12 The detailed design addresses a number of features:
- The proposal adapts the existing building fabric with some external alterations and relatively minor extensions, providing the fundamental context that has informed the new design.
  - The design retains features of architectural merit, and maintains the site's stable/mews style. In doing so the footprint, scale and massing have been sensitively designed so as to be not too dissimilar from the existing development. Furthermore, new materials will match the existing materials palette and colours.
  - The proposed development is of an appropriate scale to the existing street scene, and is congruous with the cul-de-sac arrangement.
  - The layout provides strong natural surveillance, with rooms overlooking the internal courtyard.
  - Trees and shrubs will enhance and soften the physical environment.
  - Materials and design cues are taken from the existing building character.
  - The central courtyard is a shared surface area – providing a more intimate and pedestrian oriented environment.

## Scale of Development

- 5.13 The CABI Guidance requires the Design & Access Statement to justify why the proposed size of buildings is right for the site, and how the buildings relate to existing neighbouring buildings. On page 26 of the guidance, CABI advises that:
- ‘Good design does not mean copying what is already there or necessarily keeping to the same scale, but it does mean understanding and respecting it.’*
- 5.14 The application proposal will match the existing development at the site and in the surrounding area in terms of scale. With the exception of the block of flats at Ivy Avenue, the existing and surrounding residential buildings are predominantly a two storeys in height. The height of the proposed new residential units, and the overall bulk and massing of the application scheme, will therefore be in-keeping with the general scale of the surrounding area. The proposed external alterations and extensions only increase the footprint by a small proportion of the overall existing building footprint.

- 5.15 The scheme architect has liaised closely with the Council to ensure that the building is acceptable in terms of scale and its relationship to the surrounding area, and it was been confirmed through discussions with Council officers that there are no issues in this regard.

### Landscaping

- 5.16 Page 17 of the CABE Guidance requires the Design & Access Statement to '*explain the principles that will be used to draw up the landscape details*', so that decisions on landscaping can be taken in tandem with all other design issues.
- 5.17 The existing landscape value of the site is low, and the majority of the site is covered by buildings and hardstanding. There is also minimal landscaping along Cobblestones Corner and Ivy Avenue.
- 5.18 The proposed landscape strategy uses the existing courtyard as a dual function space, providing sufficient parking for the proposed development whilst creating a pleasant setting and arrival point. The landscape proposal softens and 'breaks up' the hardstanding where possible.

### Appearance

- 5.19 The CABE Guidance requires the Design & Access Statement to explain how a good appearance will be achieved and maintained. Applicants are advised that, if the development is meant to create a new landmark, its appearance, scale and use should reflect this.
- 5.20 The scheme architect has ensured that the proposal achieves a high quality design solution for the site. The application proposal is similar in appearance to the existing buildings at the site. The application scheme creates a sense of enclosure for residents, but is congruous with the local residential character. The main differences to the building elevation is the variation of a hipped roof and eaves, a veranda to the first floor, two small extensions and a new enclosed lift and bicycle store.
- 5.21 Proposed architectural details and materials mirror and match the existing building vernacular. Features of merit have been emphasised and strengthened further, for example curved lintels over windows have been added above new doors and windows, and some doors have stable like qualities resonating the historic use of the site.



## 6 'ACCESS' ISSUES

- 6.1 The CABE Guidance requires the Design & Access Statement to cover two access-related issues, namely vehicular and transport links, and inclusive access. Particular emphasis is placed on making appropriate provision for disabled people.

### Vehicular, Pedestrian and Cycle Access

- 6.2 Vehicular and pedestrian access to site will be off Cobblestones Corner, from Garston Old Road. Acceptable visibility splays exist at the site entrance.
- 6.3 The shared surface at the internal courtyard provides a pedestrian-priority area, and promotes safe movement for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.
- 6.4 Adequate secure and sheltered cycle parking will be provided on site, which will benefit from natural surveillance. The site will be open and clearly visible, and the shared surface at the courtyard will promote access for all, including cyclists. Bicycles can be taken direct to the cycle store via the footways.

### Car Parking

- 6.5 13 car parking spaces will be provided, together with 1 large space for a minibus. There will be 3 disabled parking spaces. The future residents of the proposed scheme will be unable to drive, and so the number of car parking spaces is therefore more than adequate for this development, to will accommodate visitors and staff (no more than 4 during the day), and will not result in any parking pressures within the local area.

### Public Transport

- 6.6 The site is highly accessible by public transport. The site is within 400m of Cressington train station providing a service along the Northern Line, with connections to the Wirral Line, Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool City Centre.
- 6.7 Bus services are available along Aigburth Road (A561) 200m from the site. Here there are bus stops northbound and southbound, with services every half an hour to the City Centre, Liverpool South Parkway and the surrounding suburbs.

### Access for All

- 6.8 The proposal has been informed by Liverpool's Access for All SPD and the Equality Act 2010 (in place of DDA 1995). Leonard Cheshire as the operator and disability charity have reviewed the proposals to ensure it complies with relevant guidance and regulations, and meets the specific requirements of their residents.
- 6.9 The site is flat although the access currently slopes. The development proposes to re-grade the access so that it is suitable for wheelchair access.
- 6.10 The internal footway network will be wide enough to cater for wheelchair users. A lift is provided on site to transport residents to the first floor properties. Stairs are provided, but these will likely play a secondary role for most residents.



## 7 OVERALL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Introduction

- 7.1 We have explained how the proposed development of 12 assisted living units at the Cobblestones Corner site accords with the relevant framework of national and local planning policies. In this section we summarise the conformity of the scheme with strategic planning policy objectives and with the development plan, and we also summarise the significant benefits that the scheme will deliver.
- 7.2 At the outset, it is important to emphasise that the site is already in residential use and therefore the principle of residential development has already been established.

### Conformity with National Planning Policy Objectives

- 7.3 The application scheme embodies sustainable development principles by reusing a previously developed site, and widening the choice of housing options for the local community. The application site is in a sustainable location within an existing residential area, promoting social inclusion.
- 7.4 The application scheme is therefore exactly the type of development supported by the NPPF, and will assist in the delivery of the Government's objectives to increase the supply of new homes and to cater for the needs of all groups in the community, including people with disabilities.

### Conformity with Local Planning Policy

- 7.5 The proposed development accords with the strategic objectives and relevant policies of the adopted UDP. The application site is clearly suitable for residential use, and the proposed scheme will maximise the use of a previously developed site. The nature of the proposed development means that it will directly contribute towards meeting specialist housing needs in Liverpool. The design and layout of the scheme has been carefully considered in consultation with the Council, and the proposal raises no highways or transport issues.

### Design & Access

- 7.6 This Design and Access sections of this Statement set out the design and development principles that have influenced and shaped our proposals for the site, using the same headings as those in the CABE Guidance.

### Use

- 7.7 Taking account the existing residential use at the site, and the surrounding area which is primarily residential in character, we consider the application proposal is an appropriate use for the application site.

### **Amount**

- 7.8 The proposal seeks permission for 12 one-bedroom assisted living units, with an additional unit for on-site support facilities, together with associated car parking/landscaping. This will result in net increase in 5 units at the site.
- 7.9 The proposal has been subject to consultation with Council officers, who have confirmed that the amount of development proposed is acceptable, and that there is a need for this type of facility in Liverpool. The site is currently underutilised, and so the proposed scheme will make more efficient use of this previously developed land.
- 7.10 We therefore consider that the amount of development being sought is appropriate and justified, particularly given the acute need for this type of specialist supported accommodation in the area.

### **Layout**

- 7.11 The proposed layout has been determined by the footprint and configuration of the existing residential properties at the site, which are arranged around a courtyard. This layout has been maintained and therefore the application proposal will not result in any material change to how the site currently functions in its wider context.
- 7.12 The layout of the proposed scheme has been subject to consultation with the Council, and we have received confirmation that this is acceptable.

### **Scale**

- 7.13 The application proposal will match the existing development at the site and in the surrounding area in terms of scale. With the exception of the block of flats at Ivy Avenue, the existing and surrounding residential buildings are predominantly a two storeys in height. The height of the proposed new residential units, and the overall bulk and massing of the application scheme, will therefore be in-keeping with the general scale of the surrounding area.
- 7.14 The applicant has liaised closely with the Council to ensure that the building is acceptable in terms of scale and its relationship to the surrounding area, and it was been confirmed that there are no issues in this regard.

### **Landscaping**

- 7.15 The proposed landscape strategy uses the existing courtyard as a dual function space, providing sufficient parking for the proposed development whilst creating a pleasant setting and arrival point. The landscape proposal softens and 'breaks up' the hardstanding where possible.

### **Appearance**

- 7.16 The scheme architect has ensured that the proposal achieves a high quality design solution for the site. The application proposal is similar in appearance to the existing buildings at the site. The application scheme creates a sense of enclosure for residents, but is congruous with the local residential character. The main differences to the building elevation is the variation of a hipped roof and eaves, a veranda to the first floor, two small extensions and a new enclosed lift and bicycle store.

- 7.17 Proposed architectural details and materials mirror and match the existing building vernacular. Features of merit have been emphasised and strengthened further, for example curved lintels over windows have been added above new doors and windows, and some doors have stable like qualities resonating the historic use of the site.

### Access

- 7.18 Vehicular and pedestrian access to site will be off Cobblestones Corner. The shared surface at the internal courtyard provides a pedestrian-priority area, and promotes safe movement for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The application proposal provides 13 car parking spaces, together with 1 large space for a minibus. The site is highly accessible by public transport, and is within 400m of Cressington train station and a range of bus services.
- 7.19 The building as a whole will be designed to be fully accessible by disabled people, but four units have also been specifically designed to meet the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations in terms of access and facilities for the disabled, and the landscaping and paved areas will be constructed to facilitate disabled access to all parts of the site.
- 7.20 The properties will be designed to meet the design criteria set out in the Lifetime Homes standards to ensure maximum flexibility and independence for future occupiers.

### Conclusion

- 7.21 Our client has established that there is an acute need in South Liverpool for the type of housing proposed, and this has been confirmed by the City Council, Leonard Cheshire and the Care Commission. The application scheme will provide a much needed resource for people with disabilities who are seeking to live independently within a supported environment.
- 7.22 For the reasons given in this Statement, we consider that the proposed development accords with the strategic objectives and relevant policies of the adopted UDP and emerging Core Strategy, and is entirely consistent with the NPPF.
- 7.23 Accordingly, the application is *'in accordance with the development plan'* and should be approved.