

08/1325

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**Provision of a Community Hall and Housing  
at  
School Mead, Abbots Langley  
Hertfordshire**

**Design and Access Statement**

**August 2008**

**Levitt Partnership**

12016/NM/11.8.2008

## **Design Statement**

### **Description of the site**

The site is located at School Mead, Abbots Langley, approximately one kilometre south-west of Abbots Langley High Street. The area is predominantly residential with many of the surrounding buildings built in the early post World War II era. As a result the area has a well established character.

The site is currently occupied by a community facility, Hillside Hall, which is of similar post war age and is a rendered, barrel vaulted single storey building. Although still in use, the performance of the existing building is well below current standards.

The road, School Mead, surrounds a substantial public open space of over one hectare on 3 sides with the northern boundary of the green being formed by Hazelwood Lane. School Mead is a loop road serving only small culs-de-sacs and therefore has limited traffic. Adjacent to the site to the north-west is a Public House (the Breakspeare) beyond which is a new four storey development of flats above shops which replaces an earlier shopping parade. The shops include a restaurant, take-away and convenience store. There is also a nearby primary school and a Baptist Church neighbouring the site.

The nearby properties to the south and east of the site are predominantly 2-storey semi-detached houses.

The main building materials used in the area are brown facing bricks, red/brown plain tiled roofs and painted or white replacement windows. Roofs are generally pitched, some with hips, but the new flats and shops have a distinctive gabled façade

### **Description of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development comprises a replacement community hall with ten flats above for North Hertfordshire Homes.

The housing will comprise:

4 one-bedroomed flats for general needs rent	(40%)
6 two-bedroom flats which will be under the Newbuild Homebuy and General Needs rent schemes.	(60%)

The design of the hall has been finalised following extensive consultation. The requirement for a community hall has been established by the existing facility. It will include a main 187 square metre hall with stores, a kitchen, toilets and ancillary accommodation to an internal area of approximately 340 square metres and as such has a larger main space than the existing building with significantly more storage and much better ancillary facilities. The accommodation has been designed in conjunction with Abbots Langley Parish Council and Three Rivers District Council on the basis of existing and projected uses.

These include:

- Residents' Association meetings.
- Children's parties.
- Youth Club
- Playschool for 2-5 year olds (OFSTED registered)
- Leisure and recreational classes
- Yoga and Pilates
- Martial Arts
- Slimming classes
- Blood transfusion services
- Red Cross and St John's Ambulance training
- Polling station

The facility will not include a bar.

The hall has been designed to face the green to the north with storage areas on the south side forming a noise buffer to the adjoining residential areas and entrance to the new flats. It will allow both directional uses, with a temporary stage, when required, being placed against the east wall, uses in the round and informal layouts. A large window will allow both views in and out and, being north facing, will give high quality natural lighting without glare or overheating.

The entrance to the flats is from a secure internal staircase on the south of the building which leads off the car park serving the flats and is thus completely separate and segregated from circulation around the hall and any of its functions. This arrangement also allows low level security lighting to the flat entrances with minimal impact on the neighbouring homes. Security to the car park is provided by a vehicle barrier.

The flats have been designed to housing association space standards and comprise open plan living and kitchen areas, many with balcony type windows, and generous bedrooms. A large floor zone between the flats and community hall will allow adequate acoustic insulation to be incorporated.

The inclusion of both flats and a community facility both realises the potential of the site and provides use and surveillance at times when the hall is not in full use

## **Appearance**

The design of the scheme is contemporary as was that of the surrounding buildings when first constructed. Although only three storeys high, the increased height of the community facility on the ground floor will make it comparable in height to the new shops and apartments to its north-west. The gabled elevations and generous eaves have a similar character to those on the neighbouring new development.

The two functions of the building are expressed by giving the ground floor (community centre) a darker rusticated treatment and the upper floor will be lighter in colour and overall appearance. The proportions of the openings in the façades of the flats have been kept simple in order to compliment the necessarily simpler hall below with square proportioned windows and French doors to balcony features.

The ground floor will be clad in red/brown bricks to reflect those predominant in the neighbourhood. It will be rusticated by indenting brick courses to relieve the elevations, most of

which have minimal openings to provide security and minimise disturbance to neighbours. As a contrast and to both break down the scale of the building and to distinguish between the two elements of the scheme, the flats will have a contrasting buff brick façade. The roof will be tiled with Forticrete Gemini roof tiles which are very similar in appearance to the plain tiles used on many of the surrounding buildings.

## **Sustainability**

The location has been proven for the intended uses by the existing Hillside Hall and surrounding residential development. Access issues are covered below.

The dwellings will be designed to achieve the Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standards and attain a Sustainable Homes Level 3 rating. Facilities will be provided for homeworking.

Water metering will be provided throughout and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be employed. Heating and insulation will be designed to minimise carbon usage.

The scheme has been designed to make best possible use of natural lighting, particularly by the north facing window to the hall which will provide a high quality of lighting while minimising glare and overheating.

Wherever practicable building materials will be locally sourced and/or sustainably produced.

The scheme will be detailed in accordance with Secured by Design principles in association with Hertfordshire Constabulary.

## **Landscaping**

The building effectively divides the site in two. The area to the south of the building contains the residents' facilities including a refuse and recycling compound, parking and landscaping. This will include a barrier to restrict unauthorised vehicular access.

The areas beside and north of the building will be related to the community facility and will contain car parking and refuse storage as well as soft landscaping. Robust but discreet measures will be included to maintain security such as the installation of bollards and provision of security railings and fencing to the front façade. Plant species will be chosen for both biodiversity as well as the use of prickly plants for deterrence.

While no specific amenity space is provided within the site, this is more than compensated for by the adjoining public open space.

## Site Photographs



View of the cul-de-sac to the east of the site. The site is on the right. The Baptist church is to the left of the picture.



View of the site with the existing building looking south-west



View of the site looking west along School Mead. The site and existing Hall are to the left of the picture. The Breakspeare Public House is in the centre. The local shopping facilities (under construction) in the background and public open space in the foreground are to the right.



View looking north from the site across the public open space

## **Access Statement**

### **Access - Sustainability**

The site is located in the centre of an established residential area to the south-west of Abbots Langley.

Transport links are detailed below:-

#### **Bus**

The closest bus stops are at Hazelwood Lane, approximately 200 metres and The Fairway approximately 400 metres from the site.

Routes include:-

No. 8 Abbots Langley - Mount Vernon every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday with an hourly service on Sunday and in the evening.

No. 318 Abbots Langley - Watford every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday with no service Sunday or in the evening

No. W1 Abbots Langley - South Oxhey Hourly Sunday and in the evening

#### **Rail**

Kings Langley Station is approximately 1.8 km from the site.

#### **Major Road**

The M25/A41 interchange is approximately 2 km distant.

Local facilities including Baptist church, pub, shops and primary school adjoin the site and other facilities within Abbots Langley are within easy walking and cycling distance.

The local shops, pub, schools and church ensure that there is already a large number of people visiting the locality and the viability of the site for community facilities has been established by the current building.

### **Access - Specific**

The vehicular access to the development will mainly be from the cul-de-sac to the east of the site with six parking spaces being provided for hall users at right angles to the road and a secure car park containing 10 residents' spaces provided to the south of the building. Disabled parking is within the secure area.

Access for emergency vehicle and refuse collection is from the existing road, School Mead.

The opportunity to provide optimum facilities for disabled users as well as parents and other groups will be incorporated into the scheme. The community facility has been designed on one level without the need for ramps or lifts.

The generally flat topography in the immediate area of the site will allow level access and full compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

The flats will be accessed by a staircase designed in accordance with part M. Within the flats the layout will be level and fully compliant with the Regulations.