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HIGHTOWN PRAETORIAN & CHURCHES HOUSING ASSOCIATION

PROPOSED 19 no. 1 and 2 BED FLATS

MORNINGSIDE, RICKMANSWORTH

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Issue
Initial

Date
18 June 2009

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Authorised

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1 Introduction

It is proposed to replace the existing building which is no longer considered fit for purpose. There is an oversupply of sheltered accommodation and therefore Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association after much consultation with Three Rivers District Councils' Housing Department are proposing to demolish the existing scheme and provide 19 one and two bedroom general needs rented flats, for which there is a proven housing need. For further information regarding the rationale behind changing the use of the scheme and the support being provided to the existing elderly residents please refer to Appendix, "Morningside Redevelopment: Supporting The Residents"

The existing L shaped block was constructed in 1976 and consists of bedsits with communal bathrooms together with a Wardens flat and a communal lounge.

This Design & Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and the full Planning Application which is being submitted.

The design parameters for the development have been set by the site context and Client's requirements. In responding to these, the design solution has been graded by:-

- relevant national, regional and local planning policy
- recent relevant design guidance
- the specific immediate and local context
- the character of the surrounding area
- the potential of the site considering existing features and constraints

2 Information

Existing:

- Survey drawing: Norman Stangroome Associates, drawing no: 1149/1
- Photographs nos. 1 to 9 inclusive as Appendix 1
- Tree Survey by Caroline Hay Associates dated 13/5/09
- Habitat Survey by Jones and Sons

Proposed:

- Drawing no: 4519/SK/03G, 04F and 05
- 3D images of the schemes: 4519/SK/13 and 14, for illustrative purposes only
- Sustainability Report by David Bedwell and Partners
- A Flood Risk Assessment is not required as we are in the 1:1000 chance of flooding
- Transport Statement by Rowland Blisland Traffic Planning

3 Consultation

3 no. pre-application meetings have taken place with the Council, following the submission of preliminary drawings for comment.

These consultations identified a number of issues which we have been asked to look at and review as part of our design development, including; fenestration, massing and overlooking.

Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association have presented their proposals to the existing residents of the scheme and have also carried out a public consultation which was held on Tuesday, 2 June 2009 when local residents were invited to look at the proposals. The local residents were invited by written invitation.

A number of issues were raised by residents and the notes of this meeting are attached as an appendix.

4 Context

This area of Rickmansworth was developed in the late 1880's as part of the Metro-Land development. The site is located adjacent to two Conservation areas. The first, Nightingale Conservation area, designated in 1999, consists of a mix of Victorian and 'Art and Crafts' style buildings, north of the site. To the south east is the Town Centre Conservation area.

5 Site

The site is almost completely flat and has an area of 1,860m².

At present the site contains a sheltered housing scheme with a footprint of 670m². This is no longer of an acceptable standard.

To the north of the site is the Nightingale Conservation area. The boundary to No. 2 is of brick and is approximately 6' high.

At some stage, part of the garden to No. 2 was sold off and our site now extends to the rear of No. 4 for approximately 15m. This has an existing fence line with some planting.

To the east of the site is the Police Station which is a mixture of tall single storey and two storey rectilinear blocks, which dominate the corner site facing the roundabout.

To the south is the Uxbridge Road (A412) and a large roundabout forming part of the ring road and the lakes, Batchworth and Bury Lakes.

To the west, facing Uxbridge Road, is a development of flats, which again is just outside of the Conservation area.

Access to the site is from Nightingale Road, with a parking court extending right up to the building. A separate garage was constructed for the Wardens house which is at the rear of the scheme and was constructed within the rear garden which was sold off No. 2.

6 Design Proposals

The design of the new flats creates a simple and elegant built form which addresses both Nightingale Road and the main Uxbridge Road, providing improved street frontages, that fit more comfortably within the surrounding areas.

The building has maintained the scale of the properties in Nightingale Road and only rises to 3 storeys adjacent to the roundabout and the Police Station, which is at the furthest point from the neighbouring properties.

The scale of the building has been minimised by the introduction of rendering to the 2nd storey element to lighten the overall form of the building and reflect the surrounding materials used.

As part of our discussions with the Planners, we have removed the balconies and introduced Juliette balconies instead, which provides visual relief to the building, whilst stopping people from selling out and possibly causing a potential nuisance.

The new building relates more comfortably to the surrounding buildings and improves the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area.

The project will provide 19 no. 1 and 2 bed flats. Our proposal is to redevelop a scheme which faces onto the Uxbridge Road. Rising from two storeys to three storeys and curving at the Nightingale Road end and rising round to meet the adjacent Police Station.

On Nightingale Road, the flats are set back on a similar line to the existing and address the street, frontage whilst also avoiding the root protection zone of the street tree.

The elevation facing No. 2 Nightingale Road has been kept blank or with restricted views to minimise potential overlooking of properties. Our drawing no. 4519/SK/13, shows the approximate overlooking of the existing scheme onto the principal side window to No. 2, although this is behind a 2m high wall. This shows that currently a number of rooms overlook in close proximity. In our new proposals, windows are set back much further.

The overall bulk of the building and its relationship to No. 2 and No. 4 will be greatly improved by the demolition of the existing building as the major bulk to the east of No. 2 will be removed, giving more privacy and increasing the amount of sunlight into the rear gardens.

The existing garage is to be retained and converted into a bin store, thus improving on the current situation where bins are stored along the boundary wall with the existing property at No. 1 Nightingale Road.

The existing access point to the site is to be maintained and the scheme provided with 19 parking spaces, one of which is fully wheelchair compliant. A landscape buffer has been provided at the bottom of the site adjacent to the rear boundary of No. 2 and No. 4 Nightingale Road, with the demolition of the existing building, the skyline will be opened up for the residents of these two properties.

The scheme has some storage for cycles within the building.

7 External Materials

The external materials will reflect the types and finishes found in the surrounding buildings:

- External Walls: facing bricks and render
- Roofs: eternity or similar slates
- Windows: fine line UPVC windows
- Boundary Fences: existing wall to Uxbridge Road and Nightingale Road to be retained and repainted. Boundary planting adjacent to the Police Station is to remain.
- Remaining boundaries to be repaired or replaced as necessary.

8 Sustainability

A separate sustainability report has been included as part of this submission, which explains in detail the proposals.

We will be reducing the overall energy requirements of the building substantially by increasing the thermal performance of the building and thereby cutting the CO₂ emissions substantially.

In use, waste reduction will be encouraged across the scheme through recycling and waste recovery. General refuse will be collected in compliance with Three Rivers District Councils requirements. The proposals provide for an external bin store to accommodate two 1100 litre Eurobins and usual recycling provision. Internally, all kitchens will be provided with dedicated storage bins to enable the separation of waste at source.

9 Transport

The site is located close to the town centre and the railway station, with good local bus services.

10 Access Statement

The proposals will fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and parts M1 and M2 of the Building Regulations.

There will be level thresholds to the external entrances. There will be no changes of levels within the flats or over the full extent of each floor.

The main stairs will be designed for the ambulant disabled.

A disabled parking space is provided adjacent to the main entrance.

The garden will be fully accessible to all residents.

11 Areas

The gross external areas are as follows:

Site Area:	1,860 m ²
Area of existing houses and annexes:	Footprint 670 m ²
Area of proposed development:	Footprint 525 m ²

12 Design Team

Client:	Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association
Architects:	The Tooley & Foster Partnership

13 Conclusion

We believe that these proposals are sensitive to the scale and form of the existing buildings in the immediate area and will contribute positively to this significant corner site.

14 Appendix

- **Appendix 1 – Photos**
- **Appendix 2 – Supporting Statement**
- **Appendix 3 – Notes of Public Consultation**

Appendix 1



View of No. 2 Nightingale Road



View of entrance to vehicular entrance to site



View looking towards the roundabout on Uxbridge Road



View of neighbouring property on the opposite side of
Nightingale Road



View of Morningside and the adjacent Police Station



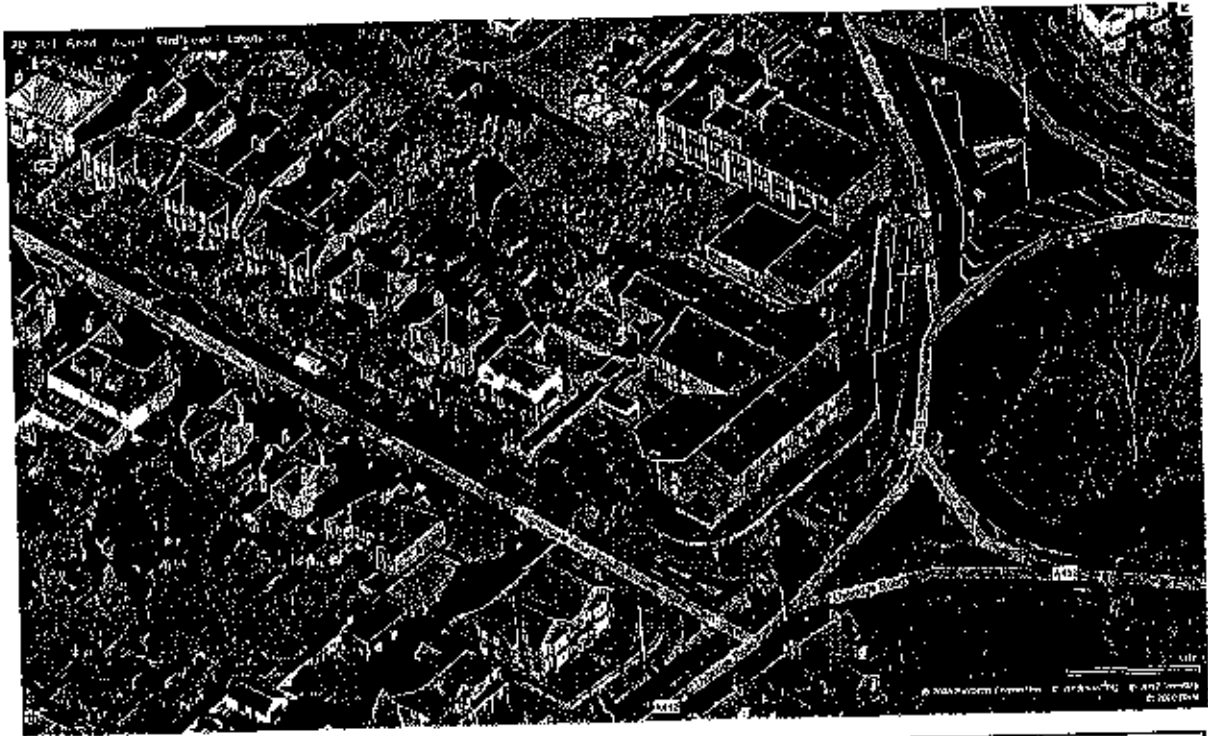
View of Morningside from Nightingale Road



Aerial view



Aerial view from the North



Aerial view from the South

Appendix 2

Morningside Redevelopment: Supporting the Residents

The purpose of this supporting statement is to outline the reasoning behind the decision to redevelop the Morningside site and to give a brief précis of the support being provided to the existing elderly residents.

Technically the issues covered in this statement are not planning issues. However, they are issues of much importance to the existing residents and they may be of interest to the planners/planning committee.

Renovation Versus Newbuild

The current over supply of sheltered accommodation within Three Rivers District coupled with the fact that the Morningside scheme provides bedsit accommodation with shared bathrooms has led to the scheme having many vacancies. This problem has been further impacted as Supporting People (The body responsible for providing the funding for the elderly residents support package) will no longer provide funding due to the over supply issue. As a consequence there isn't currently a scheme manager in residence at Morningside. Floating support is provided by Thrive for several hours a day, the residents pay for this themselves.

Of the 26 bedsits available for rent 11 are currently vacant. Every attempt has been made to let the empty bedsits to an elderly client group but unfortunately this hasn't been possible. In recent months some of the bedsits have been let on a short term basis to younger residents who would be better suited to general needs housing.

The existing scheme is clearly not suitable for a general needs client group. The bedsit accommodation and shared bathrooms are likely to lead to a high turnover of residents with there being much potential for friction between residents.

Consequently two options have been considered:

Renovation of the Existing Buildings: Potentially two bedsits could be combined to provide one self contained flat. However, the accommodation provided would be somewhat sub-standard and the existing residents would have to move out whilst the renovations are being undertaken due to the substantial nature of the building works. Unfortunately the scheme is not of a sufficient size to enable the residents to be moved to one part of the scheme whilst we undertake renovations on another part. Consequently this option was discounted.

Demolition and Rebuild: This option enables more accommodation of a higher quality to be constructed. Consequently this is the option which has been pursued.

Consulting With And Supporting The Residents

Two formal consultation meetings have been undertaken with the schemes residents where we talked through our proposals and outlined timescales.

We have also undertaken individual 1:1 meetings to ascertain where they would like to move to whilst the new scheme is being constructed and if they want to move back. Priority will be given to the existing residents when allocating new flats. It is not our intention to wait until

Planning Permission is granted and move all the residents within a very short timescale. In order to ensure that they are given the maximum amount of choice the process of ascertaining where and when they want to move has already begun.

The following support is being offered:

- Individual staff member at Hightown Praetorian and Churches allocated to assist residents in choosing where they want to move to and assisting with the move.
- Statutory Homeless payment of £4,700 to be paid to residents with security of tenure.
- In addition to the homeless payment any incidental moving expenses will be covered by HPCCHA so that the residents will not suffer financially as a consequence of the move.
- Should the residents wish to move back they will be given a choice of wall colours, kitchen units and carpets etc.

Supporting The Residents In The New Scheme

It is intended that the new scheme be for general needs rented housing.

As previously mentioned the existing elderly residents will be given the option to move back. Floating support will be provided in the new scheme in exactly the same way as it is currently provided.

Three Rivers District Councils Housing Department have been kept informed regarding progress and are fully supportive.

Appendix 3

From: Craig Dransfield - Development Manager [mailto:craig.dransfield@HPCHA.org.uk]
Sent: 18 June 2009 10:45
To: Keith Everitt
Subject: Morningside Public Consultation

Notes of Public Consultation Meeting

- Held on 2/6/09 between 4-7:30pm in the common room of the Morningside scheme.
- Well attended by local residents
- No formal presentation was given. The drawings were on display so that we could talk the residents through the scheme and answer their queries.
- Both development and management staff were available to talk to residents.

Main issues raised were:

- Problems caused by construction traffic.
- Overlooking to 2 & 4 Nightingale Road.
- Some of the residents weren't happy with three storey construction.
- Some residents thought the scheme wasn't sympathetic to the conservation areas.
- Most concerns raised were regarding the general needs social housing client group. Comments such as "we don't want tattooed single mothers living in the scheme" and "are the tenants going to be police checked because we want our children to be safe" were made.
- No 2 Nightingale was worried about the adverse affect on his property price.
- We're destroying an existing community.
- We're mistreating the existing residents by forcing them to move out.