



HERITAGE STATEMENT

Knowsley House
Ainsworth Nursing Home
Knowsley Road
Ainsworth
BL2 5PT

Author: Michael Moore
Date: October 2020

Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Planning Application Proposal.....	1
3	The Heritage Asset.....	6
4	Assessment of the impact of the proposal.....	6
5	Conclusion	7
6	References	8

1 Introduction

This report has been written in response to Section 16, Paragraph 189 of the National Policy Framework (NPPF), *“requiring an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”*.

For Section 16, Paragraph 197, this report also covers *“the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage assessment”*. This includes weighing the proposed changes against keeping the asset in its current state.

2 Planning Application Proposal

The application is for a disused two-storey building, referred to as Knowsley House, within the centre of a former nursing home complex known as Ainsworth Nursing Home. The entire site is approximately 1.4 hectares in area, with a periphery of trees and immediately beyond that open countryside. It is located less than 1km north of Ainsworth village in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury.

The front of Knowsley House faces south. In relation to Knowsley House, the site consists of the Gate House to the south-west, The Wash House to the north-west, The Coach House to the north, The Haven to the immediate east, Knowsley Manor to the far east and The Bungalow to the south. At one point, Knowsley House was linked via a short corridor to The Haven. This was removed at the time the site was split into plots for sale. The Haven and The Bungalow are much later editions to the other buildings which were erected in the Edwardian period.

Knowsley House consisted of at least 7 bedrooms split between the ground floor and top floor, and ancillary rooms when it functioned as part of the nursing home. The building originally was of symmetrical form with bay windowed rooms at the east and west front ends of the building. The west bay window was lost when a conservatory was built. The east entrance door was bricked up at the time the property was split from The Haven. The single storey rear extension is “L” shaped and stretches north from the main building. The dimensions of the building (with conservatory) are around 27 metres by 20 metres, or 27 metres by 13 metres excluding the rear extension.

All walls are constructed in red brick with the windows and doorways having arched brick heads and brick sills. The main building has a hipped roof of slate with red ridge tiles. The rear roof has two dormer windows. The windows, including the dormers, are in a deteriorated state and are a mix of materials and styles.

The planning proposal is to convert Knowsley House to a single residential dwelling. The changes include the conversation of the conservatory to provide more solid walls up to the roof and a re-roofing in materials that match the rest of the building. The existing rear extension will also have a garage attached so the car entrance faces west.

The rest of the exterior of the building will undergo work to replace windows, doors, guttering and roof. The first-floor windows at the front of building will be replaced with ones that open at the bottom to facilitate emergency escape. The rear dormer windows will be reduced in size to improve their appearance and insulation.

Existing front & rear elevation



EXISTING FRONT



EXISTING REAR

Proposed front & rear elevations



PROPOSED FRONT



PROPOSED REAR

Existing side elevations



EXISTING SIDE

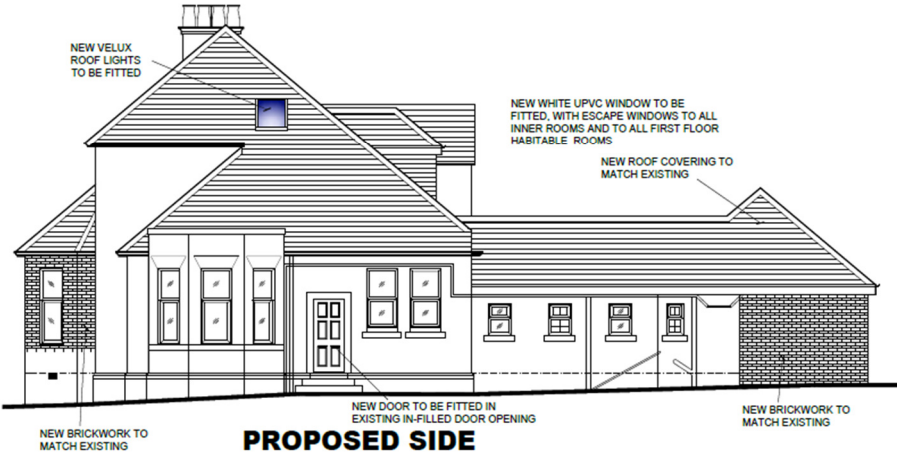


EXISTING SIDE

Proposed side elevations

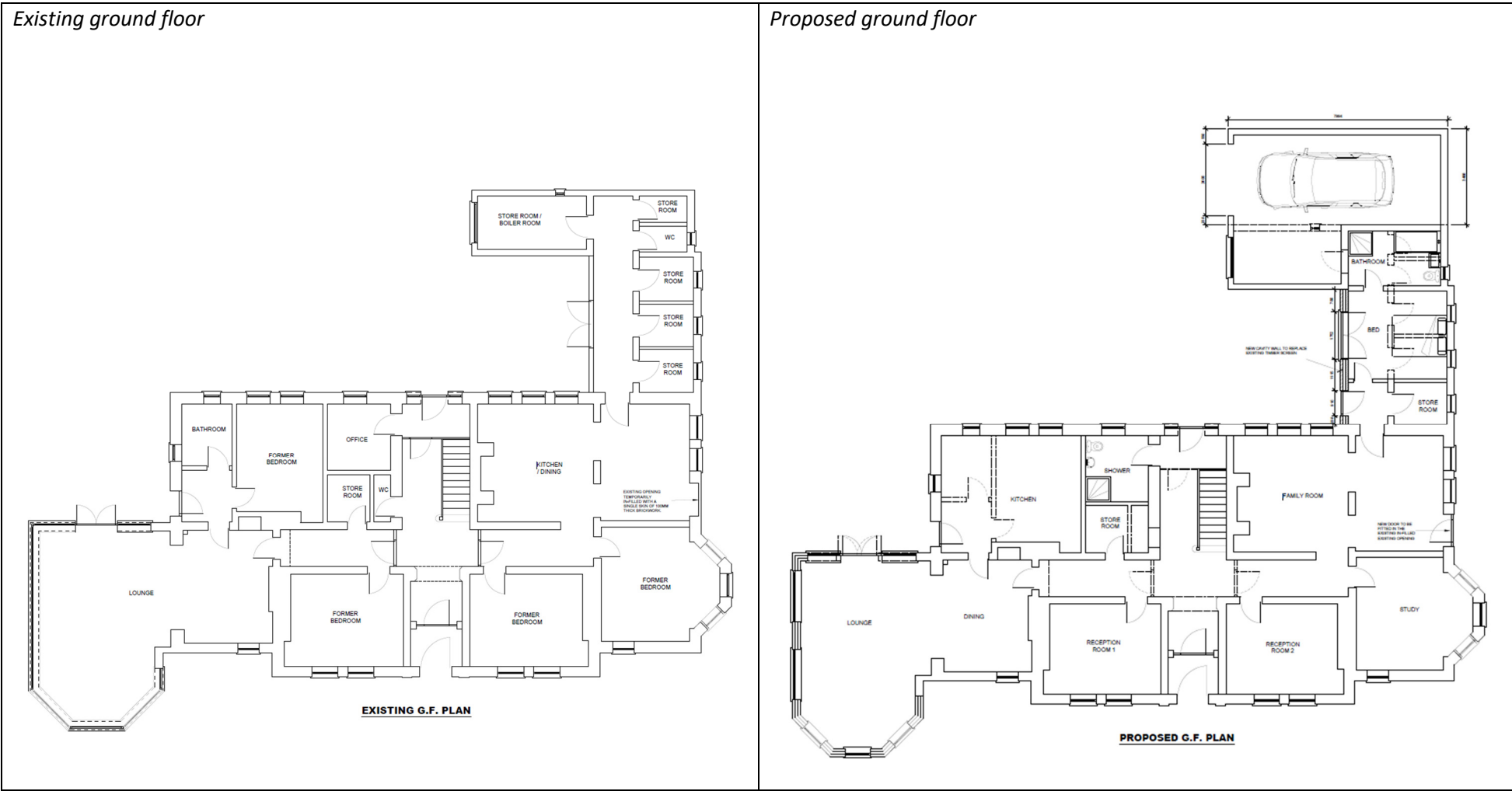


PROPOSED SIDE



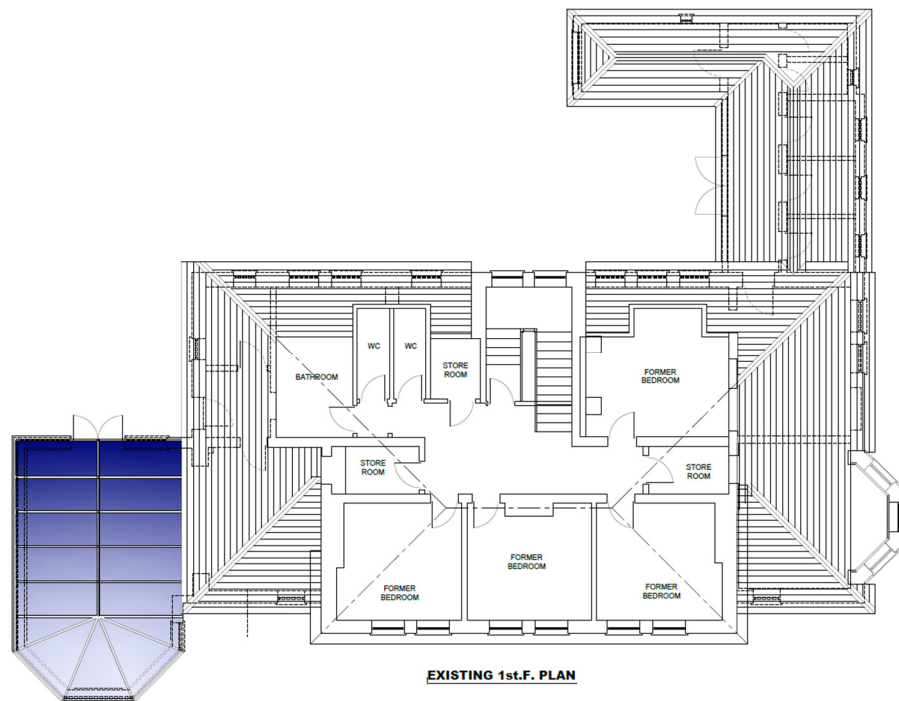
PROPOSED SIDE

Internally changes will be done to balance out the number of bedrooms and non-bedrooms. Extensive internal renovation is needed to rewire and replumb. The building has undergone several previous renovations, and there is a lack of retained Edwardian period features.

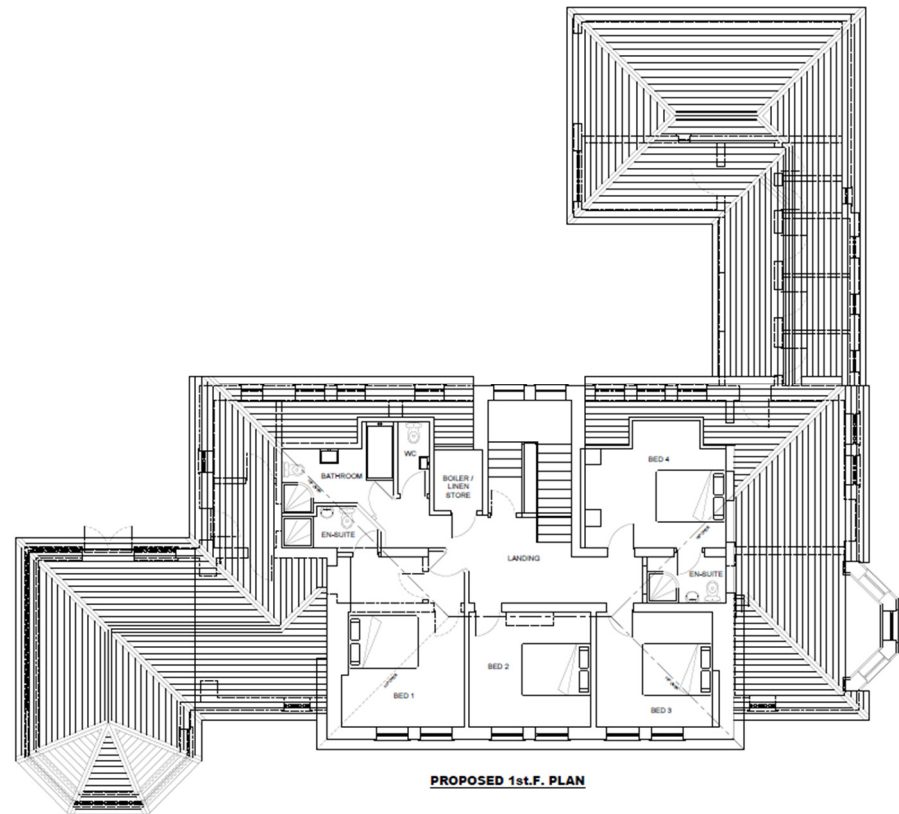


On the first floor the intention is to create a master bedroom and annex one storage room into the master bedroom and the other storage room into the rear bedroom. The first floor will retain four bedrooms and the ground floor will have a guest bedroom created in the rear extension. There will be some rearrangement of internal walls to create the change in use of the rooms.

Existing first floor



Proposed first floor



3 The Heritage Asset

The site was originally commissioned as an hospital in October 1906 under the name Ainsworth Isolation Hospital. Knowsley House was the administration block for the hospital with rooms for a matron, doctor and four nurses.

The hospital buildings were designed in simple Renaissance style by Mr Henry Lord (1843-1926) of Salford, and built by Messer's Thompson and Brierley of Bury using stock brick, red ridge tiles and slate roof, at a cost of over £7,000. The buildings on site have had several refits since, including £43,000 spent on modernisation in 1972. It is believed the Knowsley House building has had at least one chimney stack removed in previous conversions and this sat on the west wall of the rear bedroom.

In 1982, the Isolation Hospital closed and was reopened in 1986 as a nursing home and residential home under the name Ainsworth Nursing Home. In this capacity the site functioned until the owner chose to close it in November 2018. It is likely that during its Nursing Home period, Knowsley House had the Conservatory added to the west side of the building. A corridor was also added, probably when The Haven was built, and then removed prior to its last sale to the current owner in April 2020.

The property has now stood empty for approximately 2 years, and is in a state of deterioration. The building is not habitable in its current state.

The site is not in a Conservation area and none of the buildings have Statutory Listed Building status. However, the site as a whole has been listed by Bury Council as a non-designated heritage asset, and is on the draft local list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as the "Former Isolation Hospital, Broom Field, Knowsley Road, Ainsworth, Radcliffe".

4 Assessment of the impact of the proposal

In what is now the Greater Manchester region, Henry Lord designed many public buildings, including schools, churches, libraries and public baths. These include buildings of greater architectural merit. Locally his work included the Radcliffe Library in Stand Lane, Radcliffe.

Knowsley House, is a prominent building on the site because of its central location and its status as the only building of two storeys. The buildings most striking features are found at the front. Here stone steps lead up to the front door underneath an impressive arch. At first floor level on either side of the front door are decorative bordered brick panels. In addition, the iron hoppers at the front of the building appear original and are ornamented with Tudor rose motifs.

Despite this, the building as a whole has limited Edwardian decorative features. There are no plaster or terracotta panels set into the brickwork. It is devoid of roof crests such as ball shaped finials, and there are no Edwardian stained glass panels in the doors or windows.

None of the hospital buildings, taken individually are architecturally significant. When considered as a group they are representative of a set of early 1900s buildings that provided a public service.

Although the last major smallpox pandemic in Europe was the Great Pandemic of the 1870s, and at its peak was the cause of around 10% of all (London) deaths, smallpox could be attributed to less than 100th of 1% by 1900. Part of this drop was down to the use of compulsory smallpox vaccination from 1853 onwards in England and Wales. However, if patients did catch smallpox, they were considered highly contagious and had to be isolated. Hence the historical importance of this site. It is believed the Isolation Hospital was last used in emergency in 1966 when 11 smallpox patients were admitted. In addition to smallpox, the hospital was also used for tuberculosis patients from 1913 to 1921.

The site as a whole has historical and social significance in terms of its treatment of patients with conditions that aroused considerable concern to the local population. The applicant's building by virtue of its location makes a contribution to this significance.

The applicant's planning application aims to retain the building mostly in its present form. The changes to the conservatory and addition of the rear garage will not detract from the significance of the building, and merely provide functional upgrades to the building with only maintenance changes to the central main body of the building. The central front part of the main building will be subject to maintenance changes only.

Bringing the building back into use would reverse its deterioration and allow the site to retain its social history interest.

5 Conclusion

The aim of the planning application is to allow retention of the building and convert to a high standard so it is habitable as a private residential property. The reuse of historical buildings is widely accepted as the key to their preservation. The building will remain largely in its current form after conversion with a small footprint change to accommodate an attached garage at the far rear. Changes would remain aligned to the architectural style of the original building. The building will also retain the detailing of its neighbouring hospital structures.

It is not thought that there will be any consequential impact on the significance of the site from an architectural, historical or social interest perspective by approving this application. On this basis, it is recommended that the application is approved.

6 References

1. National Planning Policy Framework. Ref. ISBN 978-1-5286-1033-9, CP 48. URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
2. Details of initial Hospital buildings. URL: <https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/buildings/isolation-hospital-ainsworth-bury>
3. Bolton Evening News July 2nd 1972. URL: <https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/6176615.from-the-ben-files/>
4. Bury Council Draft local list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. URL: <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14900>
5. Bury Photographic Archive of Access Way and Knowsley House. Various URLs:
<https://www.buryarchivesonline.co.uk/b05354/>
<https://www.buryarchivesonline.co.uk/b05355/>
<https://www.buryarchivesonline.co.uk/b05334/>
<https://www.buryarchivesonline.co.uk/b05353/>
6. Small Pox deaths in Europe. URL: <https://ourworldindata.org/smallpox#long-run-smallpox-deaths-in-europe>