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HERITAGE STATEMENT

Proposed Boundary Treatments

Shrewsbury House,
Lowther Road, Prestwich

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RTPI

mediation of space - making of place

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement is submitted in support of an application for the erection of a timber clad concrete and timber fence along Shrewsbury Road, following refurbishment and extension of the property which was approved in 2013 (Ref. 55858) and amended in 2014 and 2019 (Refs. 56691 & 63861).
- 1.2 Prior to this, Shrewsbury House was in an advanced stage of dilapidation, and its refurbishment was secured in part by the development of additional dwellings within its curtilage. This development has now been completed, and the original house has been purchased by a new owner.
- 1.3 The property is a prominent building within the St Mary's Conservation Area and is locally listed.
- 1.4 The purpose of this statement is to assess the proposed development in accordance with the statutory requirement contained in The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in the exercise of its planning functions.
- 1.5 The statement describes the significance of the heritage assets and the impact of the proposed development on its significance. It should be read in conjunction with the proposed plans and other documents submitted in support of the application.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The property as originally built forms a well-designed three storey dwelling, featuring fair faced brickwork with brick arch window heads and fine cill / window detailing and a slate roof. Other notable details include the fascia and soffit timber work, ornate porch and a stair newel post, which are all associated with high quality Victorian architecture and positive features within the Conservation Area. Shrewsbury House sits in an elevated position on the site overlooking the Clough.
- 2.2 The property is situated in the north western corner of the site and has recently been completely refurbished and extended in a more contemporary style. The remainder of the former curtilage has recently been developed with four detached houses situated to the east and south.
- 2.3 The site is bounded to the west by Lowther Road, with post-war semi-detached dwellings facing the site on the opposite side. Beyond the site boundary further north are post-war detached dwellings with access from Lowther Road. Shrewsbury Road is an unadopted road bounding the curtilage of the property, providing access to three of the new houses.

St. Mary's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- 2.4 The site is situated within the Prestwich Park Road South / St. Ann's Road Character Area of the St. Mary's Conservation Area. A Character Appraisal dates from 2009.
- 2.5 This Character Area is predominantly a 19th Century residential suburb, originally laid out as a private estate in the late 1800's. It is however acknowledged that this Character Area also contains and is interspersed with later residential development from the early and late 20th Century with some infill development within the grounds of the earlier larger properties. It is stated that the main quality of the area is in the character created by large period buildings in generous grounds.
- 2.6 In terms of vernacular and architectural styles, individual buildings vary from remnants of the Georgian tradition through the Victorian and Edwardian styles to more recent mid [century] war dwellings. These different styles combine together with the mature street and garden landscape to produce an area of significant character across a variety of styles of architecture.
- 2.7 It is noted specifically that the quality of the area has been eroded by a mix of modern development during the latter half of the 20th Century through the removal of original dwellings allowing for dense redevelopment of plots. In the main, these redevelopment proposals also included new dwellings of poor architectural quality.
- 2.8 Shrewsbury House itself is recognised as a significant building in the context of this Character Area and the Conservation Area more generally. It is described as a detached large house in grounds. Architecturally it comprises a tall and narrow shape with good eaves and verge detail and timber supports. The building is constructed from red brick in Flemish bond with blue bands.
- 2.9 Paragraph 5.7 of the CA Appraisal specifically identified Shrewsbury House and associated land as a derelict and vacant property (and site) which damaged the environmental, economic and

residential qualities of the area. The refurbishment and extension of the property in recent years has rectified this position.

- 2.10 Policy 20 of the CA Appraisal related specifically to Shrewsbury House and underlined that the building was open to the elements at the time the CA Appraisal was drafted, and stated that it was in danger of being beyond economic repair. Policy 20 underlined the powers available to the Local Planning Authority requiring owners to undertake urgent works to preserve unoccupied buildings in Conservation Areas and in the absence of action is able to undertake those works and recover costs.
- 2.11 Policy 20 went on to recommend that Shrewsbury House should be retained and restored, identifying the potential for the property to be extended in order to make restoration viable. It was specifically stated that its demolition and redevelopment would not have protected or enhanced the character of the conservation area.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Following the recent extension and refurbishment of Shrewsbury House, it is now proposed to make some minor alterations to retain and enhance the boundary treatment of the property, fronting onto Shrewsbury Road.
- 3.2 A timber fence has been erected around the formal garden area of the property; and metal railings form the boundary to Shrewsbury Road. Between these, lies an area of unregistered land with tree planting.
- 3.3 It is proposed to retain an existing sectional concrete fence, and to clad this with timber facing panels extending to a gate at the eastern end leading to the garden area.
- 3.4 The concrete fence and proposed new cladding will extend to 2.0m in height, and will be set against a hedge of around 3m in height. The fence will follow the contours of the site, rising slightly from the corner of Lowther Road as it bounds Shrewsbury Road.

4 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan comprises the adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997). The emerging Local Plan is still being formulated and has recently been subject to consultation on proposed Policy Directions. A revised draft of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) has recently been published for consultation but deals with strategic planning matters only.

Local Planning Policy

Unitary Development Plan

- 4.2 UDP Policy EN2 states that the Council will seek to preserve the Borough's built heritage through the control of development, especially that affecting Conservation Areas. Policy EN2/1 goes on to state that the Council will be particularly concerned with encouraging *inter alia*:
- Retaining, replacing and restoring features of historical and architectural interest;
 - Retaining and enhancing existing landscape features;
- 4.3 UDP Policy EN2/2 states that in considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas, regard will be had to:
- The nature of development in terms of bulk, height, materials, colour, design and detailing; and
 - The relationship between the proposed development and the architectural and visual qualities of the surrounding areas.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) addresses the need for conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 189 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 4.5 Paragraph 190 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.6 Paragraphs 193 to 197 deal with assessing the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. Where harm does occur, but this is "less than substantial", this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. Alternatively, where a development leads to "substantial harm" or "total loss of significance", LPAs should refuse consent unless substantial public benefits outweigh that harm or loss.

5 ASSESSMENT & SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS

- 5.1 As required by the National Planning Policy Framework, this section provides an assessment of the Heritage Assets affected by this development proposal – namely the St. Mary's Conservation Area and Shrewsbury House, being an important locally listed building and Non-Designated Heritage Asset within it.

Shrewsbury House

- 5.2 Shrewsbury House is situated within St. Mary's Conservation Area and is a significant building occupying a prominent corner site. The building itself is a substantial Victorian property having been constructed to a high standard synonymous with this period. Its most notable features are:
- This is an imposing building with high floor to ceiling heights in excess of 3m with feature sash windows overlooking the gardens;
 - Polychrome feature brickwork is evident - with feature bands and deep window cills;
 - The roof is slate and projects around 450mm with a dogtooth flute fascia detail quite unique to the house;
 - The entrance porch is finely detailed in timber - in a Victorian style with feature ironwork.
 - A sensitive programme of refurbishment and extension has recently been completed allowing the property to be brought back into use as a family home.
- 5.3 The building is acknowledged as being of significant historic interest to the area, but does not have Listed status. Nonetheless, it is agreed that it is an important component contributing to the historic significance of the St. Mary's Conservation Area.

St. Mary's Conservation Area

- 5.4 The St. Mary's Conservation Area Appraisal, undertaken in 2009, states that the conservation area 'is a generally well-preserved area which has suffered relatively little recent large-scale and dramatic change within its boundaries. There has been some loss of character due to individual 1960s / 1970s redevelopments and also a more recent redevelopment north of St Mary's Park.'
- 5.5 The area is dominated by traditional vernacular spec housing circa turn of the century, with a mixture of some newer properties. Policy 1 of the Conservation Area Appraisal is clear that the loss of significant and Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area should be avoided.

Immediate Environs

Lowther road

- 5.6 Shrewsbury House faces Lowther Road, and there are domestic properties to the western side. These are generally 1960s – 1980s dwellings set in individual plots in keeping with modern standards. This section of Lowther Road is relatively steep outside the site and the hill rolls away to the west. Houses tend to sit on the falling slopes facing the highway. The effect of this is to minimise visual amenity of the Shrewsbury House Site as principal windows on the ground floor tend not to have a direct view. This is illustrated by the photograph below.



Lowther Road and properties opposite the site looking west from Shrewsbury House



View of Shrewsbury House grounds from Lowther Road

- 5.7 The photographs above illustrate the site in the streetscene. It is noticeable that the properties opposite and facing the site are sat at a lower level as a result of topography. There is also a prominent herringbone wall fronting onto Lowther Road, which contributes to the character of the area and this section of the streetscene.

Predominant Materials

- 5.8 The predominant building materials in the locality are as follows:

- Fair faced brickwork
- Slate roofs
- Painted Render
- Concrete Roof Tiles
- Either white or black facias with a mixture of uPVC and timber
- Driveways:- Tarmac, Brick Paviours or gravel with timber or wrought iron gates

6 IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSETS

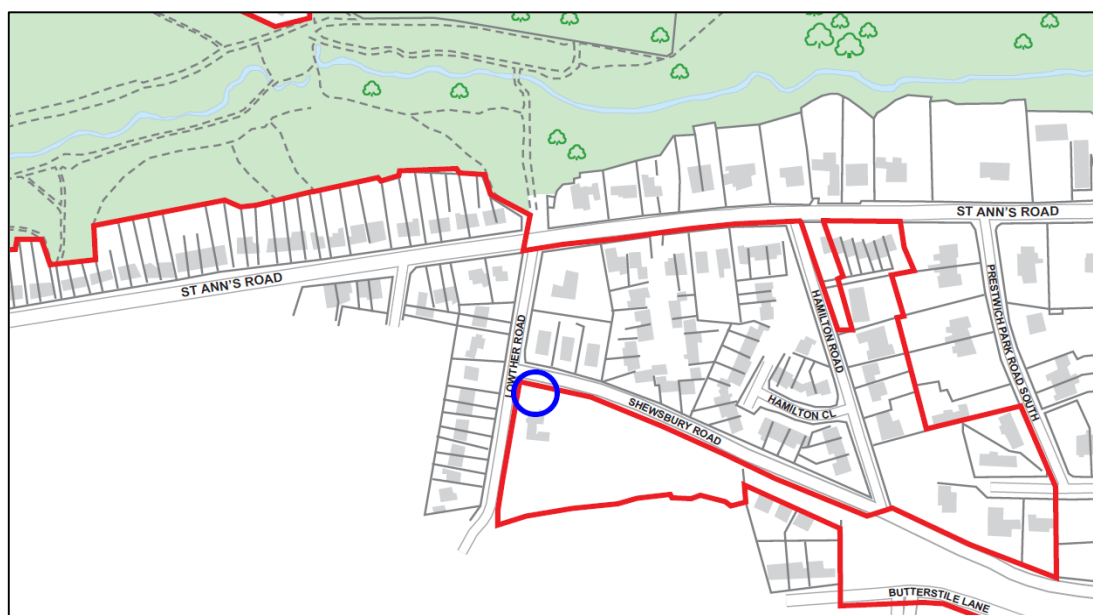
- 6.1 In understanding whether or not the principle of development is acceptable in this location, the primary consideration is the impact on the heritage assets concerned, in particular whether the proposal conserves or enhances the St. Mary's Conservation Area and whether it adversely affects the setting of Shrewsbury House.

Shrewsbury House

- 6.2 As evidenced by the description of the property in the 2009 Conservation Area Appraisal and referenced by material submitted with the previous planning application in 2012, Shrewsbury House had deteriorated over time to an advanced state of disrepair and had become uninhabitable. The refurbishment and extension, together with enabling development within its curtilage has served to preserve and enhance Shrewsbury House as a locally listed and prominent building.
- 6.3 New boundary treatments comprising a tall timber fence behind existing landscaping and metal railings on the road frontage have been incorporated in the refurbishment and new development proposals, providing some additional formality to the property and its location.
- 6.4 The concrete panel fence with proposed timber cladding sits outside the curtilage of the property and is screened from it by the existing timber boundary fence. Additional landscape planting will also serve to screen the property which cannot be seen from Shrewsbury Road.
- 6.5 The historic features which give the property its character and contribute to its importance will be unaffected by the proposed new fence arrangement. It is not considered that any harm will be caused to the significance of this Non Designated Heritage Asset.

St. Mary's Conservation Area

- 6.6 Shrewsbury House lies on the edge of St. Mary's Conservation Area and the proposed fence alterations lie on the edge of the Shrewsbury House property, as shown circled in the extract from the character appraisal below.



6.7

- 6.8 As a result, the fence alterations do not prominently feature in views from within the Conservation Area, and cannot be seen from the St Ann's Road section to the north.
- 6.9 Views of the timber-clad fence and gate are available from Shrewsbury Road and partially from Lowther Road which lie outside the conservation area, however these are seen in the context of other boundary treatments in the vicinity of the site, which include a variety of tall timber fences, metal gates and tall hedges situated around residential properties.
- 6.10 The fence detail proposed is therefore not significant in nature and extent and not prominent when viewed from key vantage points. It will be seen in the context of the varied boundary treatment already present in and around the conservation area and will therefore, at the very least, preserve this character, and arguably enhance it by adding positively to the appearance and landscaping of the site.
- 6.11 For these reasons, it is considered that the development will continue to preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed development which comprises a fence clad in timber and new gate will be visible outwith the Shrewsbury House site, which is an important building in the context of the St. Mary's Conservation Area, but not from the house itself or in views of it. The fence will therefore have a neutral impact on the building, which is a Non Designated Heritage Asset and its setting, as supported by Conservation Area Policy 20 in the Character Appraisal.
- 7.2 The fence will be visible from outwith the Conservation Area but will be seen in the context of similar existing features in the area and may therefore have a marginal positive impact on the Conservation Area.
- 7.3 It is considered that the proposed development accords with the NPPF, UDP and St. Mary's Conservation Area Appraisal in that it both preserves **and** enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area, and preserves the historic significance of Shrewsbury House. Very significant weight should be given to this policy position in determining any planning application.