

Deacons Yard



DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT – Dec 2015

GEORGE + TOMOS

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INTRODUCTION

General Description. Location of Development.

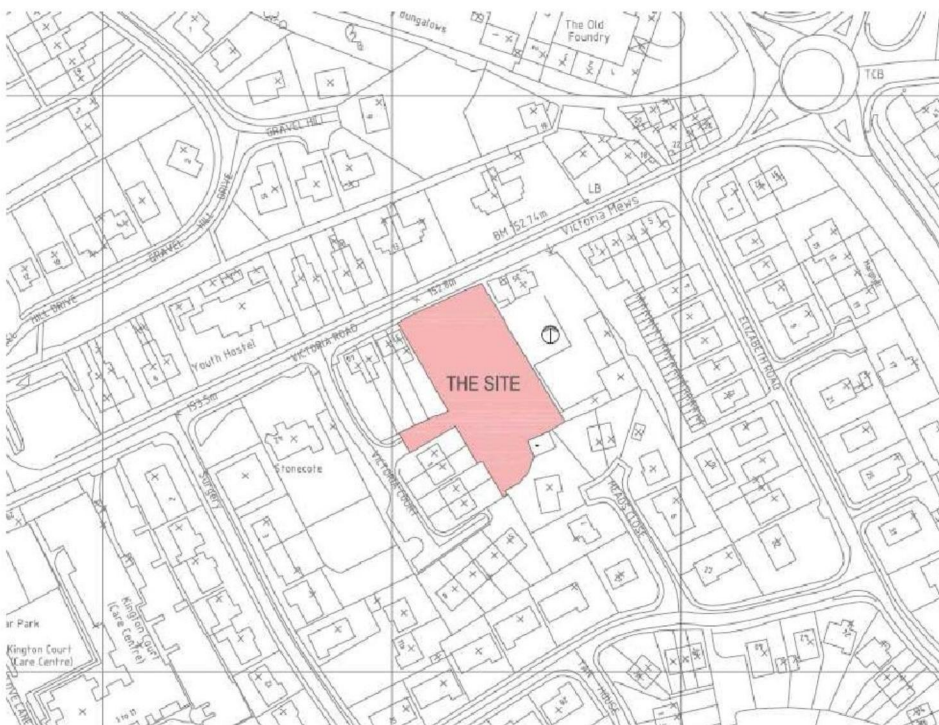
This application is a re-submission for an application which was submitted in 07/07/2015 and withdrawn on the 04/12/2015 (Your ref: 152019) due to the changes in legislation during that period. The proposed development currently has planning permission for the exact same layout and design (ref. – DMN/102016/F), with a large amount of Section 106 contributions attached and 3 of the 10 houses having to be affordable units. From the time permission was granted until now, the applicant has made considerable efforts in looking at every reasonable option of to develop the scheme on site, including: selling the site to other developers and housing associations, and also, considered the options of developing it themselves both independently and joint ventures. It has become clear during this process that the current housing market conditions and the onerous S106 conditions have made it difficult to make any option viable.

Changes to 'Planning contributions' legislation had prompted the submission in July 2015 as the development qualified within the thresholds of 10 units and 1000sqm, meaning contributions were no longer required. However, following the submission of the application in July 2015 the legislation changed yet again and some of the contributions do apply to the development once again. The proposal does not qualify for affordable homes under the current policy, therefore it will offer some improvement over the current permission. The scheme in turn would represent a far more attractive proposition for our client or any developer wishing to buy it, thus increasing the chance of the development actually being built.

Known within the VDP as an established residential area (H1), ostensibly a brown field site, and the application is for a residential development and change of use of a former builder's yard. The proposal consists of new build and conversion of a former woodwork shop, to create ten dwellings. The site is known locally as Deacons Yard, the site formally operated by the building company Earnest Deacon.

The site is located within the town of Kington, with current access to the site off Victoria Road. The site periphery has residential accommodation of both private and housing association owned properties: mainly pre second world war housing to the north, north west and north east. Whilst the southeast and south are estimated to have been built in the 1970's, the southwest housing association dwellings were estimated to have been built in the 1990's. It is proposed that the current access to Victoria Road from the yard is stopped up and new access formed to the west of the site off Victoria Court. (Explanation for this provided later in document)

LOCATION MAP



The site has a number of redundant buildings, which include an office of two storeys in Masonry Construction to Victoria Road to the north. Workshops of two storeys, of both masonry and timber construction are to the west. A number of Sheds are scattered around the site which are timber and profiled steel sheeting. The site is bounded to the open areas by a brick and stone wall of shoulder height. Intermixed generally amongst the structures and growing through the tar macadam and stone surfacing are a number of bramble, grass and small bushes. There is little to indicate that mammals habit the site, bird life exists and this can be said to be no different to conditions outside of site and therefore normal. No observations were made of reptiles within the site. Bats were not noted during day site visit. *Refer to Ecologists, Bat and Reptile Survey Report for further information.*

The Proposed Development

It is proposed that the entire site is developed with 10 residential units, and is carried out over one phase. This application is a Full Plans application.

The units are a mix of detached, semi-detached, terraced and low level units. The site area is 0.21 Hectares.

DESIGN COMPONENT OF THE STATEMENT

This statement explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development and a how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

Design Principles and Concepts

REFERENCE	GROSS INTL M2	NUMBER OF BEDS	CAR PARKING
UNIT 1	83.97	2	1
UNIT 2	83.97	2	1
UNIT 3	83.97	2	1
UNIT 4	110.88	3	2
UNIT 5	95.09	3	1
UNIT 6	79.98	2	1
UNIT 7	103.05	3	2
UNIT 8	103.05	3	2
UNIT 9	103.05	3	2
UNIT 10	103.05	3	2

The development concerns itself with the need to provide residential accommodation within a suburban location. In justifying the amount of units is firstly controlled by the physical area of site available. From this overall figure the requirement for vehicle (movements and parking) access is considered, this in its self imposes dimensional conditions that reduce the physical area allocated to construct the units.

The requirements of accommodation type and size have been discussed with Herefordshire C.C Housing department and Case Planning Officer. Initially the proposals centred on providing 2/3 bedroom units with the clients wish for some 4-bedroom units. Subsequent discussions with Estate Agents stated that the market for 4 bedroom units had a negative take up in sales and that the optimum size evolved around 2/3 bedroom units, with some units being suitable for elderly persons, ideally single storey. Conclusion is that, the proposals to which approvals are sought satisfy Herefordshire Housing department requirements. In addition, they reflect the current need for this type of accommodation in the open commercial market. The proposals satisfy the developer's requirement for a sustainable financial return.

Conservation and planning officer preference is for the site to address the street. Hence the 3 two storey units are sited on the former demolished office accommodation. In addition, the highways officers' recommendation was to provide access to the site off Victoria Court and close the current access to Victoria Road. The proposed units' architecture will reflect the existing Vernacular buildings and materials fronting Victoria Road. Retention and conversion of the workshops within the north west of the site, with its north elevation fronting Victoria Road, will as a consequence enclose the site, whilst access is limited to a footpath from Victoria Road. This allows good pedestrian access to Victoria Road and is effectively a short cut when compared with the route along Victoria Court.

Although not listed, the workshops to the west of the site have Architectural merit worthy of retaining. Primarily timber framed and cladded building; it provides historical significance to the site and its reference as a builder's yard. The clients wish to retain this building on sentimental grounds, in a bid to maintain the historical link to the family business, which has occupied this site for generations. This clearly provided the local inhabitants with a name for the site "Deacons Yard".

Layout

The juxtaposition of the buildings as proposed is a reflection of the space syntax, created by the buildings to the areas around the site.

For instance the buildings to the south side of Victoria Road form both terrace and semi detached units. It is therefore appropriate that the three two storey units proposed to front Victoria road reflects the rhythm and scale of the street; by formation of a terrace this then continues and enhances the street context.

The proposed conversion of the workshop, by default is fixed in its location. However the spaces created by the low level residential units ensure a secure safe public / private space. Creating a pedestrian path to link Victoria Road from Deacons Yard provides the resident with a safe, traffic free, route.

Vehicle access into Deacons Yard will be from Victoria Court; the route will be a shared for both vehicle and pedestrians. However, the pedestrian only areas will be clearly identified by a contrasting colour.



Speed into Deacons Yard will be controlled at the junction with Victoria Court, by the inclusion of one ramp, thus reducing speed to a maximum of 15 mph. Whilst the general topography of the site is level, by pure identification that the surfaces are

shared; this ensures that the vehicle driver speed is reduced, as they do not have priority over other users.

Within the site, the proposal private and public are defined by the soft and hard landscaping. The ownership of soft spaces will be clearly defined by low-level walls of no more than 600mm high, running back to the façade of the dwelling whose ownership extends to that area.

Orientation of all entrance's facades will face onto the shared surface area, thus naturally policing the space through surveillance.

Travel distances and gradients are minimal; the primary function of the low level units is to provide accommodation for the elderly or to ambulant disabled. As such the sites naturally topography allows this.

Movement to, from and within the development is simple, routes and paths provide free movement in and around the site, whilst also allowing safe access to possible bus routes along Victoria Road.

The document "Safer Places and Crime Prevention" has been considered in the preparation of this scheme. These include the seven attributes of sustainable communities: access and movement, structure, surveillance, ownership, physical protection, activity, management and maintenance. As defined earlier in this document, we believe the scheme provides both the physical and passive attributes, required to satisfy. In addition, street lighting will be designed to BS5489, windows and doors will meet BSI PAS 24 – 1: 1999, BS 3621 – 1998.

The buildings will form a sense of community through properties and areas overlooked by neighbours; the strong landscape will help define both private and public areas. The overall character will create a sense of identity and legibility.

Scale

The general scale of the whole development reflects the context of the building to the surrounding area. Heights, widths and lengths of the building units remain as comparable as can be achieved when consideration is made of current regulations and standards. For instance, the buildings to Victoria Road, form part of a terrace of 3 units, these are two storeys in height with heights at some 7 – 8m above ground levels, reflecting properties of a similar nature to the east along Victoria Road. The vernacular of the buildings along Victoria Road is a modern take on the Victorian / Edwardian details as found typical on buildings to the Northern edge of that road. Human scale entrances have been formed to each unit, thus allowing a sense of individual ownership to each unit: as such providing interest to the façade as a whole.

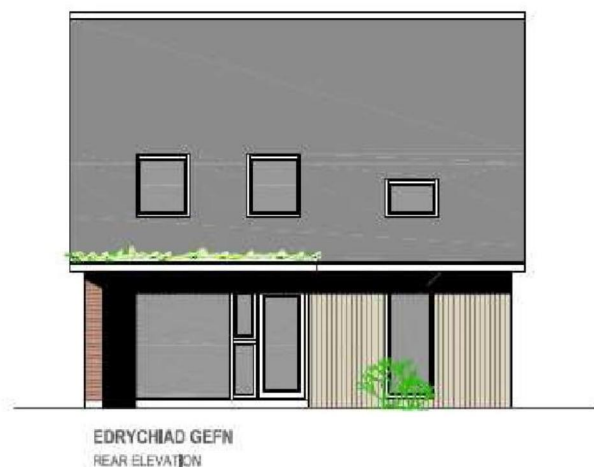


It is intended that the entrances maximise the roof pitch available, thus creating a grander entrance. The front doors to each lobby will have glazing over to maximise north light. Dormer windows are used within the first floor to accentuate the rhythm of the terrace. Dormer windows exist in buildings found elsewhere on Victoria road, and hence the proposal has a contemporary take.

The rear of the building, which is southerly facing, has storage (for bicycles) at right angles to the main façade. The remainder of the façade at ground floor levels are given over to glazing, thus to maximise the sun and provide a light and airy kitchen / dining space within. The front floor windows are shallow in depth as these serve bedrooms and bathrooms. Both ridge and eaves heights are comparable in heights to buildings that are located to the southern edge of Victoria Road.



In reference to the existing workshop building, there will be no changes to heights as it is the intention of the proposal to work within the confines of the existing fabric. Material alteration of doors and windows will be made, but as a whole, the scale and façade context will remain as. The proposal also creates a single storey extension to the south end wall to the workshop and is suggested to treat this as a “lean to” which is typical of vernacular architecture.



The four low level units take a theme precedent from bungalows in Meads Close. Although having two floors, the units' appearance will have a low impact, as the upper storey will be within the rake of the roof. The primary bed accommodation will be on the lower floor, thus these units will suite elderly and disabled owners, thereby allowing able body visitors or relatives to occupy the upper floor bedrooms. Low fascias, introduce a human scale to the development. The architectural precedent of the site is varied and general; important features of scale and proportion have been incorporated into the proposals. Local character of the area has been considered and integrated within the design in a contemporary manner thus preserving and enhancing the vernacular.

Landscaping

Public spaces within the site will be generally limited to the hard paved areas. Vehicle and pedestrian routes, where segregated, will be treated in a contrast of colour. General roadways of 4.5m widths are shared surfaces and as such will not distinguish between vehicle and foot traffic. Parking bays, both public and private, will have a recycled plastic eco grid that allows free drainage and a robust finish for car parking. The grids can be filled with either grass or gravel.

Soft landscaping will form the private areas to the units, and as such, will be planted with low-level shrubs and turfed to general areas. Low-level walls of no more than 600mm in height above general areas will delineate private boundaries facing onto the “shared access road”. Close-boarded fences of no more than 1.8m in height will separate gardens, to the rear of the units. In general terms, it is the intention of the scheme’s designer is keep the area to the shared road as open as possible; thus allowing natural surveillance of the area for crime prevention and also in a bid to prevent the egg boxed theme, if high fences were to be installed. Low-level walls will be created using second hand stock bricks, with semi circular contrasting copings.

Due to the constraints afforded by the proximity of the properties proposed, the approach to the overall landscape design differs to those at the general areas. It is intended that all aspects will be of low maintenance. If required, a “planting and landscaping schedule” could form a “condition” to the planning approvals.

Appearance

The architectural languages of the proposed buildings are routed in the houses, terraces and villas found in the local vernacular. These features are enhanced with a contemporary twist: timber rain screen to reflect the boarding to the workshops; large areas of glazing which are positioned to maximise sun paths for day lighting and passive energy gains and the use of the wire cut (smooth) red bricks which are a president set by the villas on the northern edge of Victoria Road. In all buildings proposed, the use of a contrasting materials and colour define the main entrances. This, in addition to the principle of the main entrances, are projected or recessed with the exception of the workshop block, where the façade is as existing. The design here seeks to embellish and define the entrance with a contrast of solid against a background at glazing.

The pallet of materials used will be a mix of slate, zinc sheet, timber boards and face brickwork. These materials (albeit zinc) are used within existing buildings surrounding the site. Location, intensity and amount of lighting are essentially to define routes, provide a safe after dark environment, be low key and avoid unnecessary light pollution. It is proposed that all main entrances to dwellings be defined by a wall bulkhead fitted with low wattages bulb and be set via a light level switch. The use of low-level bollard lighting, which throws light direct to footpath routes and road routes, eliminates the need for mass light from high-level lamps standards. The lights will be protected by anti-vandal fittings and will be controlled by light sensor switching. Where units have rear yards or gardens these will have manual switched units that will be identical to those used in main entrances.



APPRAISING THE CONTEXT

Assessment

On site observations of the immediate and close surrounding area at Deacons Yard provides a general opinion that the dwellings in terms of physical characteristics denote both middle and lower financial income residential units which include social housing to Victoria Court. More elaborate and larger buildings are located to the Northern edge of Victoria Road, whilst the southern edge are smaller and have minimum embellishment. The areas to the Southern and West, including Meads Close, could be said to be medium value units. The economic characteristics are readily identified by the type,

scale and physical size of the dwellings. The proposed units will be a combination of lower income through the terraced housing. The low size storey units will be of similar economic standing as the bungalow units to Meads close, whilst the refurbishment workshops will be of a similar economic standing as the dwellings to the Northern edge of Victoria Road. The proposal is a mix that will complement the area's current social and economic context.

Involvement

The following officers of Herefordshire Council were consulted during the schemes initial to planning stage. Case Planning Officers, Case Highways Officer, Case Area Conservation Officer and Case Area Housing Officer and Case Planning Ecology Officer. The observations of the individual officers can be found in the appendix section under "minutes of meetings".

To summarise, the following has been considered, and where appropriate have been included within the proposal and documented in the application (planning):

- Density of units – Planning Officer
- Access for vehicles and pedestrians to site, including shared surfaces – Highways officer
- Reptile and bat survey – Planning Ecologist
- Material use and orientation to Victoria Road – Conservation and Planning Officer

In addition the application proposal has received comment from local estate agents as to the recommended size and number of bedrooms to each unit. There was request for low storey accessible housing for elderly and disabled.

Evaluation

In general terms the vehicle access arrangements will significantly improve when compared with the current arrangement with access direct from Victoria road. The proposal is to allow vehicles to enter from Victoria Court, thus providing a safer junction for vehicles exiting to Victoria Road. Pedestrian access has a dedicated route from the site to Victoria Road. Principally this allows pedestrians to walk from Victoria Road and public transport.

The context of the proposed development sits comfortably in the locale. The juxtaposition of the proposed units addresses the mass and rhythm of the surrounding area by complementing with its space syntax. Due to the space (width) constraints, the proposed new route to Victoria Court will not have a service margin associated with a shared surface road as this not achievable. Relaxation of this requirement is requested. The alternative routes for services into the site is direct from Victoria Road parallel to the pedestrian footpath, this currently is the route for existing power and water supplies to Deacons Yard.

Design

The designs have been developed in conjunction with the client's needs and aspirations and within the confines and constraints of current legislation and site context.

It is proposed that the buildings erected on the site will be both efficient and environmentally sustainable, surpassing current Building Regulations in terms of thermal performance.

The developments context has been described earlier; the designer's main points for clarification purposes are as follows.

Sustaining local character – the local character of the area has been considered and integrated within the design in a contemporary manner, therefore preserving and enhancing the vernacular.

Promoting legible development – the proposal provides a clear definition to the use of the site in a manner that is legible with the existing vernacular.

The relationships between public and private spaces have been well considered and will be clearly defined by use of materials of both hard and soft landscaping.

The principles for the housing include:

- Orientation to maximise views and sun paths
- A variety of house types, which promote physical interest.
- Stonewall to Victoria Road is retained
- The design is a contemporary take on traditional homes, within the constraints of the developments budget.
- Amenities and privacy have been incorporated within the design.
- Key objective was to provide above average standard accommodation but at an affordable scale and price. This responds to the government's directives of construction sustainable and energy efficient homes.
- The contemporary and traditional balance in terms of the development's spatial context and the use of material pallets, such as a boarded timber, face brick work, renders, slate and zinc roofing materials. Providing a balanced solution with key attributions identified in many buildings locally.

ACCESS COMPONENT OF THE STATEMENT

We deem that due consideration has been given to reasonable access for all, the design has also been considered under Building Regulations Part M.

As stated previously in this document, site ground levels are minimal and will be considered to ensure that they meet the criteria of Part M of the Building Regulations. At crossing points from pedestrian routes to roads these will be defined by contrasting pimpled paving. All edges to paths roads will be of contrasting colours.

Access for emergency services will be via Victoria Court with the exception of the units fronting Victoria Road.