

Exhibit 8 - Heritage
Report

**Appeal ref: APP/ Q4245/
W/20/ 3258552**

Former B&Q, Old Stone Road, Old Trafford Appeal by Accrue (Forum) 1 LLP

LPA Ref: 100400/OUT/20

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/W/20/3258552

Exhibit 8: "Heritage Report" WSP on behalf of Accrue (Forum) 1 LLP

Heritage Appeal Statement

**Former B&Q, Old Stone Road, Old
Trafford**

Heritage Appeal Statement

Former B&Q Site, Great Stone Road,
Stretford, M32 0YP

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Appendices

Appendix 1

WSP Heritage Report 20 March 2020

Appendix 2

Email of 9 September 2020

Appendix 3

Longford Conservation Area Appraisal

1. Summary of Case

Introduction

- 1.1. This appeal is against the failure by Trafford Borough Council ('the Council') to determine an application for planning permission seeking the demolition of the existing former B&Q premises and the erection of buildings for mixed use purposes including 333 apartments and communal spaces. Since the appeal was lodged, the Council has passed a resolution in respect of putative 'minded to refuse' Reasons for Refusal.
- 1.2. A heritage statement was produced in respect of the planning application, which was prepared by WSP (Appendix 1). In summary, the conclusions reached in that document were as follows:
- 1.3. The proposed development would result in a negligible effect (no harm) to the heritage significance of the Grade II Listed Trafford Town Hall.
- 1.4. The proposed development would have a neutral effect upon the significance of the Longford Conservation Area, so that the character of that area would be preserved.
- 1.5. The application site makes a neutral contribution to the setting of the Lancashire County Cricket Club and the proposed development would have a negligible effect (no harm) on the significance of the Non Designated Heritage Asset.
- 1.6. We, Andrew Graham and Victoria Anderton-Johnson of WSP were instructed on behalf of Accrue Capital to review the heritage impacts of the proposed development. We have reviewed the heritage statement previously produced, since the assessing heritage professional has since left WSP, and have inspected the appeal site, its context and the relevant heritage assets. We have prepared this assessment pursuant to the appeal pursued by Accrue Capital.
 - Andrew Graham is a Built Heritage Specialist and Urban Designer of 20 years' experience of assessing change within the historic environment with particular skillset around new developments within the context of Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas. He is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and a member of the Urban Design Group. He also sits on the Fabric Advisory Committee for York Minster and Ripon Cathedral and as such is well practised in assessing sensitive change within the historic environment.
 - Victoria Anderton-Johnson has over five years of experience in the Historic Environment and over four years of experience in consultancy. She has worked on various projects within the UK and internationally.

Reason for refusal

- 1.7. As noted above the planning application (Reference: 10400/OUT/20) was made the subject of an appeal of non determination and a resolution has since been passed on the basis of "Minded to Refuse (in contesting the appeal)". The suggested reason for refusal (reason 7) was concerned with the impact of the proposal upon the Longford (referred to by the Planning Officer as 'Longford Park') Conservation Area (Appraisal as Appendix 3) as outlined below:

The proposed development by virtue of its layout, scale and massing would have a harmful impact on the setting of Longford Park Conservation Area equating to 'less than substantial' harm in National Planning Policy Framework terms. The benefits of the scheme are not considered to outweigh the identified harm to a designated heritage asset. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policies SL3 and R1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 1.8. We address these alleged impacts in the body of this report.
- 1.9. We also note however that the Officer's Report to Committee references 'negligible harm' as being caused to two other heritage assets. Importantly, such harm is not relied upon in the Reasons for Refusal, and so forms no part of the Council's case. However, given the reference to harm we give consideration to the impact on those assets as part of this assessment. As such this report includes an assessment of the impact upon the Grade II Listed Trafford Town Hall and the Non Designated Heritage Asset of the Pavilion building at Lancashire County Cricket Club.
- 1.10. In this regard we agree with the Council that there will be a negligible impact caused to the setting of Trafford Town Hall and to the Pavilion at Lancashire Cricket Club.
- 1.11. However, we disagree with the Council's position in respect of the setting of the Longford Conservation Area. In this regard we disagree that there will be "minor harm", amounting to less than substantial harm for the purposes of Paragraph 196 NPPF, caused to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area. Rather, the proposed development would have a neutral impact.

Statutory and Policy context

- 1.12. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that 'special regard' must be given to desirability of preserving a Listed Building or its setting or any architectural or historic significance that the building possesses. The same Act states that 'special attention' shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. In practice this means that 'considerable importance and weight' should be accorded to any harm caused by development to the heritage significance of designated heritage assets, within the decision making process.
- 1.13. The site is on the opposite side of the Manchester Metrolink railway to the Longford Conservation Area; this conservation area is the site of the former Longford Hall and still contains remaining estate buildings and landscape features.
- 1.14. As noted above, the application was the subject of a Heritage Statement, prepared in March 2020 (Appendix 1), which assessed the whole range of heritage assets within a wide vicinity of the application site. The statement found that there would be no direct harm to the significance of any designated heritage assets. Further, although it did identify indirect impacts, through setting, to the Town Hall, Longford Conservation Area and Lancashire County Cricket Club, it concluded that such impacts would be negligible if not neutral, meaning no harm to the significance of the heritage assets would be caused. The report summarised the following:
- 1.15. The setting of the Town Hall makes a positive contribution to the Town Hall's significance, however, the proposed development does not lie within the setting of the Town Hall and will have a negligible effect on its significance;
- 1.16. The setting of the Longford Conservation Area makes a positive contribution to its significance; the proposed development will have a neutral effect on the significance of the conservation area;

- 1.17. The setting of Lancashire County Cricket Club Pavilion makes a neutral contribution to its setting, and the proposed development will have a negligible effect on the significance of the asset.
- 1.18. This report concluded that the proposal would not cause harm to the significance of the historic environment. The proposal would preserve the character and appearance of Longford Conservation Area, would not affect the special interest of any listed buildings, and would be in accordance with development plan policy regarding the historic environment, in addition to policies within National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.19. Furthermore, the application and heritage statement were reviewed by the Conservation Officer for Trafford Council who responded on the 9th of September 2020 to the effect that there would be a minor change to the setting of Longford Park and that there would be negligible harm caused to the setting of the Old Trafford Cricket Ground (Appendix 2). The only contentious issue therefore is concerned with the impact upon the Longford Conservation Area. However, due to the references within the Officer's report to the impact upon the Grade II Listed Trafford Town Hall and the LCCC Pavilion, this report briefly reassess this impact as part of the appeal. A copy of the relevant response from the Council's Conservation Officer is provided at Appendix 1.

Main Issue

- 1.20. The main issue is therefore concerned with the impact of the proposed development upon the setting and significance of the Longford Conservation Area.
- 1.21. Below is a brief summary of the context of the area and the relevant heritage assets as discussed. For further detail the WSP Heritage Report of March 2020 and the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal provide some greater contextual detail that is not replicated here. It may however prove useful for the Inspector to consult these documents if they should wish.

Context of the area

- 1.22. Expansion within the area took place in the late 19th century and into the 20th century and was heavily stimulated by the growth of the centre of Manchester. The area subsequently evolved from one of countryside to suburban development focussed around a principal radial route to the city. Nearby the Longford Estate was the seat of the Rylands family in the 19th century, the hall of which (now demolished) was mentioned by Pevsner as being "the only surviving examples of Italianate style of architecture within the Manchester district."
- 1.23. The appeal site itself is located within what may be considered the centre of the Trafford township and sits adjacent to the Manchester Metro railway line and the recently expanded Lancashire County Cricket Club. On late 19th century mapping the site is shown to have been a "Gun Club Ground" and cricket ground that was separate to the nearby Lancashire County Cricket Club that was located next door and was a simple affair at this time. The semi rural character of the area stayed relatively consistent until the 1920s and 1930's which saw large areas of housing within the area being constructed and culminated with the erection of the Stretford/Trafford Town Hall in 1933. By 1950 the site was still free of structures and the present building was granted planning permission in 1976 when it served as the Hardrock concert venue before changing its use to a B&Q store.
- 1.24. This expansion of housing, commercial and residential buildings has continued into the 21st century with the site currently containing the former B&Q building and associated car park along with several taller buildings being constructed along nearby Talbot Road. The site has been underutilised for some time and is now characterised by a redundant building, in poor repair, that is surrounded by large fencing topped by razor wire.

Longford Park

- 1.25. Longford Park encompasses much of the former grounds of Longford Hall which was demolished by the local council in 1995, despite the hall being Grade II Listed. The site today still contains a small part of the original portico of the hall along with several ancillary and estate buildings. These include the former hall stables, walled gardens, lodge houses and a pleasant row of estate houses that are still in occupation. The former hall itself used to face south and was located a considerable distance from the application site with much of its grounds bounded by landscape scale shelter belts typical of such a formal parkland. Worthy of note is the 1881 estate plan on page 17 of the adopted conservation area appraisal. This map shows the extent of the formal parkland surrounding the hall overlaid with the approximate conservation area boundary of today. Notably this historic estate is somewhat smaller than that of the existing conservation area.
- 1.26. The estate has however been a public park for over 100 years and is now characterised as open parkland and playing fields to the north with a more formal appearance to the south, where the more formal approaches to the old hall were located. This reflects the historic character of both the formal grounds of the original Longford estate and the less formal lands adjacent, a combination of which are now included within the conservation area.

Trafford Town Hall

- 1.27. Trafford Town Hall was constructed in 1930 by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope and was opened in 1933. It is a landmark in the local area and its southern elevation, overlooking Talbot Road, is of the most architectural significance. The building contains several neo-classical features with hints of Art Deco motif at various points. The proportions of the building elements, materials and architectural details all contribute to the building's overall significance. The landscaped grounds and sunken memorial garden to the west also contribute positively to the significance of the Town Hall. To the rear a 1980's extension appears to have been recently renovated and provides a contrasting modern counter point to the original Town Hall building itself.

Lancashire County Cricket Club Pavilion

- 1.28. The LCCC pavilion was built in 1895 and designed by Thomas Muirhead, a Manchester architect, who later designed the pavilion for Surrey County Cricket Club at the Oval. The building was used during World War I as a hospital and as a transit camp and a storage depot in World War II. It was extended and altered in the late 1950s, the early 1990s and again more recently.
- 1.29. The pavilion is now surrounded by modern buildings and has been substantially altered both internally and externally, starting with the first phase of major change in 1958. Further change in the 1990s and more recently has completely altered the shape and arrangement of the building. It is now a building that presents a façade to the playing area, with some internal historic value.
- 1.30. The frontage on the north side of the building adjacent to Talbot Road is entirely modern and was completed very recently. To either side of the pavilion, are modern buildings including a recently developed hotel, café and hospitality and events building that are clad in bright red cladding. Old Trafford is now a modern sports ground, with floodlighting and media centre as well as stands for spectators. The remnants of the pavilion are the remaining features of historical value.
- 1.31. The cricket club also holds communal value in terms of its cricketing history and cultural characteristics. Whereas once the historic pavilion would have been a dominant feature at the ground and within the surrounding urban area, its setting is now contained by the modern stadium and the urban form immediately surrounding the ground, including the office blocks, tramline and floodlights. The setting makes a neutral contribution to the significance of the asset.

Assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon the Historic Environment

Impact upon Longford Conservation Area

- 1.32. The Heritage Statement of March 2020 (Appendix 1) concluded that the impact on the conservation area would be neutral, due to the area being within a mixed urban context and the location of the proposed development being some distance from the park. In this regard the Conservation Officer acknowledged the conservation area is located within an urban environment and the conservation area appraisal also acknowledges the urban nature of the park's surroundings and the change in character between the formal landscape to the south or the park and the more open fields to the north.
- 1.33. The majority of the conservation area is somewhat screened through trees and vegetation both to its boundaries and from within. Views towards the appeal site therefore can only be obtained from certain points within the northern parts of the conservation area. This northern area is arguably of less significance to the history of the Longford estate due to it being located away from the polite landscape grounds of the former hall. This is echoed in the change in character from formal gardens and driveways that are to be found in the south to open football pitches and wider open spaces to the north.
- 1.34. Views towards the site are only available from certain points within these northern extremities of the park. Moreover, these spaces appear to have historically been outside of the formal parkland of Longford Hall and as a result are less historically sensitive. The primary view (as related within the LVIA) is from an area of football field which was certainly outside of the formal grounds as the 1881 estate plan reveals. From this open playing field, the character of the park is noticeably different from that of the former grounds of the hall with less enclosure and the housing development that surrounds the park being much more obvious.
- 1.35. The existing Lancashire County Cricket Club floodlights can be seen to roughly mark the position of the site from the park and this illustrates that the experience of development is likely to be one of peripheral views of the very highest extremities of the proposed building and confirms that development will not protrude into any significant viewpoints. Moreover, in summer the majority of the building will likely be obscured by trees.
- 1.36. The Conservation Officer has identified harm through the potential of light spillage from the proposed building and the impact of such light pollution upon the park. Whilst some windows may be visible, they will be filtered behind trees and, due to the distances involved, will appear very small from the points at which the proposal will be visible from within the park. Moreover, any light spillage will be significantly drowned out by the existing houses surrounding the site. In addition, it is important to note that on occasions where evening matches are played at Old Trafford, the high wattage lights from the floodlights that tower over the cricket ground that shed light for miles around.
- 1.37. Although some small areas of the proposed buildings may be visible, at certain times of year and from certain places within the less sensitive, northern area of Longford Park, the actual impact upon the conservation area as a whole would be minimal, indeed insignificant. The proposal will not cause harm to any buildings or spaces of particular historic significance associated with the former use of the park, or for that matter, from major routes through the park. Therefore, our assessment concurs with our colleagues' report of March 2020, namely that to the impact of the proposed development on the Longford Conservation Area will be neutral.



Above: Two views towards the site from Longford Conservation Area. The lower image just shows the floodlights from the cricket ground to the left of the image.

Impact Upon Trafford Town Hall

- 1.38. No perceived impact to Trafford Town Hall is relied upon by the Council in support of its position.
- 1.39. Trafford Town Hall is located within an urban setting dominated by the Lancashire County Cricket Club ground opposite and other large scale developments along Talbot Road. The Town Hall itself obtains most of its significance from its mid century Neo Classical architectural form and the pleasant landscape gardens and trees that surround the building. The character of Talbot Road, towards which the Town Hall faces, is characterised by its tree lined verges and footways which frame views looking towards the high-rise buildings of Manchester. Approaching the Town Hall from the south-west the building is heavily screened through these tall trees although glimpses of the red brick tower are available as one gets within 100 metres or so of the building. Immediately opposite the Town Hall lies the Lancashire County Cricket Club grounds alongside several multi storey modern buildings. These structures highlight the modern urban surroundings of the Town Hall area and are often of some



significant scale and bear little or no contextual relationship to the Town Hall or other buildings in the vicinity

Above: Trafford Town Hall from Talbot Road

- 1.40. The site is visually well shielded from the Town Hall with only a glimpse available through the modern buildings of the cricket club. The identified views from Great Stone Road towards the Town Hall are heavily dominated by the recent grandstand buildings that now serve the Cricket Club. Looking from the upper parts of Great Stone Road over the site towards the Town Hall only the very top of the clock tower can actually be seen (see photos below). The Town Hall is simply not a focal feature in the landscape and is barely noticeable from Great Stone Road other than for a glimpse of the Town Hall tower's highest extremity from the very highest point of the footway as one walks over the railway bridge adjacent to the site.
- 1.41. From the site, the Town Hall tower does not stand out and is overshadowed by the red grandstands of the Cricket Club, the large cricket club flood-lights and other high-rise buildings along Talbot Road and beyond. There would therefore be no impact on the Grade II Listed Trafford Town Hall as a result of this proposed development. Although arguably within the wider setting, this is only due to the physical proximity of the site to the Town Hall and there is no other physical, visual, historical or contextual relationship between this site and the Town Hall.
- 1.42. The proposed development will introduce a larger building onto the appeal site, but even this will have no impact upon the understanding or significance of Trafford Town Hall. Instead the proposed building will sit comfortably upon this site and actually mitigate the existing views of the rather ramshackle rear of the cricket ground. Even though the minor glimpse of the top of the Town Hall tower will be removed over this site, the impact will be negligible. In this respect our conclusion is entirely aligned with that of the Council's Conservation Officer.



Above - View looking north towards Trafford Town Hall from Great Stone Road. Below: Same view highlighting the Town Hall tower



Lancashire County Cricket Club – Cricket Club Pavilion

- 1.43. The significance of the Non Designated Heritage Asset in the form of the Muirhead designed Pavilion is largely drawn from its historic use as a cricket pavilion and the associative significance of its use as a facility throughout the life of the cricket club itself by visitors. The wider setting contributes very little to the significance of the asset and the building is presently nearly completely surrounded by modern buildings and grandstands alongside the wider urbanised landscape. Similarly views towards the Pavilion from the site are obscured by grandstands, fences and floodlight columns. Due to the presence of the red cladded buildings, the asset is not a focal point within the landscape.

(below). View of the Pavilion from Great Stone Road obscured by the paraphernalia associated with the practical running of the ‘back of house’ cricket ground.



- 1.44. The proposed development will introduce a larger structure upon this site, but it will in no way dominate the Cricket Club but will instead reflect the increasing urbanisation of this area as supported through the emerging Civic Quarter Area Action Plan. The Pavilion itself draws little significance from this site and therefore the asset will be subject to negligible harm. Again, in this regard our view accords with that of the Council's Conservation Officer.

Discussion

- 1.45. In resolving that it was 'minded to refuse' to grant permission for the proposed scheme, we consider that the Council have significantly overstated the potential harm to the historic environment. The Council themselves recognise that there would only be negligible impacts on the Grade II Listed Trafford Town Hall and Lancashire County Cricket Club Pavilion. This statement has showed that there would be no material harm caused to any heritage asset at all, including the Conservation Area. Both the Town Hall and the Pavilion are removed from being focal points of the setting as a result of existing high-rise buildings and the red clad grandstands of the recently extended cricket club. Insofar as the Council have identified harm to the Longford Conservation Area due to light spillage from the proposed residential units, we consider that this is not a credible assertion. In this regard we note both the fact that the park in this vicinity is already surrounded by many two storey houses that directly around the park (and which generate light), and that towering above the proposed development stand four high luminosity floodlights. Furthermore the appeal site can only be seen from a select number of view points from within the historically less important areas of Longford Park and even then it is within largely peripheral views and nearly completely obscured by trees.
- 1.46. This report has illustrated therefore that no harm to the character or appearance of the Longford Conservation Area will occur and there will be no harm to the setting or significance of the Grade II Listed Trafford Town Hall or the LCCC Pavilion Non Designated Heritage Asset. Should any harm be identified by the Inspector, which we do not accept, such harm must sit at the very bottom of the spectrum of 'less than substantial harm' for the purposes of Paragraph 196 NPPF. In the event of the Inspector finding such harm, we note

public benefits as identified in the Appellant's Statement of Case.

CONCLUSION

- 1.47. This proposal has no material impact upon the setting or significance of nearby Listed or Non Designated Heritage Assets and no material harm would result. There would be no impact upon Longford Conservation Area; alternatively, to the extent there would be a degree of harm, that would be so minor as to be negligible. The proposed development will improve the perception of Great Stone Road and obscure the untidy backs of buildings associated with the cricket club. It will also remove a building of low architectural merit and introduce residential units that will enliven and activate the street at this point.

