© Blair Gratton Architects Ltd 2011
DUKE OF NORFOLK SCHOOL, CHURCH STREET, GLOSSOP, DERBYSHIRE.

HPK/2011/0716
COUNCIL
23 DEC 2011

Job No. 590

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

1.00 ASSESSMENT

1.01 The Duke of Norfolk School (now vacant) is a grade II listed building situated on the south side of Church Street in the Old Glossop Conservation Area. It is a significant structure and makes a positive contribution to the area. The main entrance is at the western end of the site, off Church Street.

1.02 The school dates from the mid. 19th century and is built in the 'Jacobean Revival' style. Walls are constructed from coursed gritstone with ashlar dressings and the roof is covered with Welsh slates.

1.03 The School House is within the eastern wing of the property under separate (domestic) ownership. The former staff room and boys' toilet are on part of the ground floor of this eastern wing and these are to be included with the School House as part of this application.

1.04 There is a single-storey detached toilet block and store in the playground at the rear, which is to become a communal area for the occupiers. External areas of the site to the south and west of the building are tarmac, formerly the school car park. The public footpath on the south side, running from Church Walk to Church Street is to be retained, undisturbed.

1.05 The Duke of Norfolk School is voluntary controlled – the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council and is split on two sites.

1.06 Because of the split usage, the need to travel between sites makes the premises at Church Street unsafe for the welfare and safety of children. Coupled with the need for children to go outside to the toilets, the building is unfit for purpose.

1.07 The buildings are ageing and require regular, increasing maintenance. There is no insulation of the structure or double-glazing, so heating costs are expensive and consequently the CO^2 footprint is high. It is a high-maintenance building.

1.08 Derbyshire County Council decided to remedy the situation by organising and supplying purpose-made modular buildings at the other site. These are modern-technology units, properly insulated, well-equipped, easy to maintain and economical to run with a low carbon footprint. The County Council investment in the modular buildings could only be afforded by the sale of the Church Street site and buildings being used to offset costs.

1.09 The proposal must be viable and relevant to avoid any lengthy delays - a long planning process for change-of-use must be avoided because the County need to re-coup costs as soon as possible.

1.10 The 'new' combined school is not over-subscribed and has a similar capacity to the previously split accommodation. The local RC School is similarly under-subscribed and there are vacancies at the Dinting CE School two miles away.

2.00 INVOLVEMENT

2.01 There has been a pre-submission meeting with the Planning Department by Milner McCrea, Chartered Surveyors, and we have had telephone conversations with Elizabeth Pleasant about the possibility of conversion to residential units.

2.02 A short report was prepared by the Planning and Conservation Department (copy enclosed) after a site visit. This report sets down their comments and also recommends that policies HE7 and HE9 of the PPS 5 should be addressed as part of the consideration process for any future change-of-use application. A Heritage Statement has been prepared and submitted as part of this application.

3.00 EVALUATION

3.01 This area of Old Glossop is predominantly housing: a mix of mainly two-storey dwellings, terraced and semi-detached, built up to the footpath. 'All Saints' church and vicarage are situated immediately to the east.

3.02 Church Street is elevated above the school – road level is similar to eaves height. There is a stone retaining wall at the back of the school from the playground up to the Church Street footpath and wrought iron railings on top of the wall.

3.03 The site is well served with local amenities, all within walking distance and Norfolk Street nearby is a main bus route. Vehicular movements would therefore be minimal and considerably less than was the case when the school was operational.

3.04 A number of possible uses have been suggested for the site by the planning department and 'Friends of Old Glossop' would like the building for use as a community facility. Whilst the County Council and Board of Education have no objection in principle to any particular use, no parties have come forward with any concrete offers. Because the building is high-maintenance, it is unlikely that a local group would be able to afford the running costs as the building stands, or the expensive re-furbishment necessary to up-grade the structure prior to use. (Excessive running costs were one of the reasons for the Diocese/County relocating).

3.05 Domestic use has been considered by the planning department (see report) and is also thought by the surveyors and land agents to be a viable commercial option, even in these difficult times.

4.00 DESIGN

4.01 The Grade II listed building is eminently suited to a sympathetic domestic conversion with little or no impact visually to the existing external fabric, the Conservation Area

or local residents. As noted in the report the building divides well into separate dwellings. Apart from the addition of a kitchen door on unit 4, there are no external changes and the concern noted within the report of 'clutter' has been addressed. The scheme will result in the removal and reduction of general 'clutter' such as vent pipes, floodlights, wiring, wall vents and tv aerials.

4.02 It is intended that the boilerhouse and flue be retained as part of a communal heat and power system, so there will not be any new flue outlets.

4.03 The existing vehicular access (1.01) and parking areas will be retained for the residents and their visitors: a total of 12 spaces, including a disabled space.

4.04 As previously noted (1.04) the public footpath will be retained.

4.05 The enclosed tarmac area on the north side will be retained for the communal use of residents. There is a fall from the retaining wall to the building, so our preference would be to design a scheme for hard paved seating areas on the level. However, the sub-division and creation of private gardens with landscaping is excluded, as the planning department have indicated in their Report (Design and Access Statement 2.02, copy enclosed) that such a proposal would be resisted. Therefore we ask that the matter be determined and Conditioned by the Planning Committee.

5.00 SUMMARY

5.01 The proposal addresses policies HE7 and HE9 of PPS5 noted in the report.
This is covered in more detail in the accompanying Heritage Statement.

5.02 The planners have confirmed that they have held discussions about housing in the area – a clear need has been established but they have not received any formal applications to date. If a decision can be made quickly the vacancy period will be short, which will minimise any deterioration of the fabric.

5.03 This proposal is a live commercially viable solution to bring back into use a locally important vacant building with a scheme which restores, refurbishes and protects the existing fabric – it is the most attractive option in the present financial climate and ensures that the costs incurred to the County's education budget are reimbursed.

5.04 A small development of four units satisfies the following criteria:

Affordable as a proposition;
Quick to achieve – no long vacancy period;
Separates the building into smaller areas, well insulated;
Reduces running costs;

It is a sympathetic conversion, with no effect on the external appearance and all design features are retained and enhanced for the future.