Design and Access Statement

Proposed 4 no 2 bed apartment and 6 no 1 bed apartment
1A Sydnall Road, Longford, Coventry, CV6 6BU

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1.0 Introduction and Supporting Information

We have been approached by our client Zakir Hussain to explore and prepare a scheme for the site indicated above. The site, at present, is a disused commercial laundrette sited within a primarily residential area on the northern side of the Coventry Canal.

The majority of the structure is constructed from the original brickwork, covered by a corrugated, asbestos, pitched roof featuring a flat parapet roof to the northern side and a mono pitch corrugated roof to the southern. At present, vehicular access is gained via a bend from Sydnall Road, which leads to a small car park that can accommodate for approximately five vehicles. A further car park situated on the south west corner of the building is utilised by the occupants of Amy Close. The northern boundary adjoins that of no.1 Sydnall Road, whilst the south-western boundary adjoins the rear garden of no.7 Amy Close; tapering off towards the canal.
The Coventry Canal Conservation Area (Draft Conservation Area Appraisal)  
(Coventry City Council)

‘From Judd’s Lane Bridge the canal curves north-eastwards toward Longford. On the non-tow path side is a good example of a new residential development on the site of the former Keresley Colliery Wharf. The blocks of flats are orientated so they address the canal with communal green space and a waterside walkway lining the water edge. Car parking is located to the rear and away from the canal. The neighbouring housing development on Amy Close is less successful with the houses turning away from the canal and hidden behind tall fences that are tight to the water’s edge.’

‘The footbridge linking Lady Lane to Sydnall Road was erected in 1973 and it is a graceful steel structure with brick approach ramps. The bridge offers important views looking in both directions along the canal; the stretch towards Longford Bridge is particularly attractive with thick Hawthorn hedges lining both sides, with marginal vegetation along the waters edge. From the tow path there are truncated views of the properties on Sydnall Road, which are mainly mid to late 19th century. The properties have a pleasing unity of scale and aspect, although some have suffered from unsympathetic modern alterations.’

‘There is a large area of derelict land on the tow path side, which was previously occupied by small industrial premises. The site has been recently cleared of undergrowth and represents an important future development site with frontages to both the canal and to Lady Lane.’  
(Coventry City Council)

The locally listed buildings adjacent to the site are shown on the site plan below:

![Site Plan](image-url)

**Fig 2:** Showing locally listed buildings
The locally listed buildings from the “The Coventry Canal Conservation Area” (Coventry City Council) in the Longford Village are listed below:

| 57 Lady Lane  | 3 Sydnall Road | 26 Sydnall Road |
| 59 Lady Lane  | 4 Sydnall Road | 28 Sydnall Road |
| 61 Lady Lane  | 6 Sydnall Road | 30 Sydnall Road |
| 243 Longford Road | 8 Sydnall Road | 36 Sydnall Road |
| 243a Longford Road | 18 Sydnall Road | 38 Sydnall Road |
| 247 Longford Road | 20 Sydnall Road | 40 Sydnall Road |
| 1 Sydnall Road | 22 Sydnall Road | 42 Sydnall Road |
| 2 Sydnall Road | 24 Sydnall Road | 1 Union Place |

Fig 3: Image taken above from “The Coventry Canal Conservation Area” (Coventry City Council)

In a document prepared by Coventry City Council the discussed building was described as an, ‘unattractive premises on Sydnall Road’ (Conservation with Christopher Patrick, Coventry City Council, 2012, p61).

In addition to the information outlined in the Canal Conservation Plan, it was highlighted that the site in question, 1A Sydnall Road, has been identified as a site for which redevelopment is encouraged. Consequently, it would seem likely that the planning department would be in favour of redevelopment proposal; providing that the design demonstrated a sympathetic and well thought out response to both its canal and residential setting.
Planning History

- 36049 - Replacement store – Planning permission granted on 27 August 1980
- 36049/B - Industrial enhancement works to boundary walls – Planning permission granted on 25 August 1982
- 36049/A - Garage for company vehicles – Planning permission granted on 25 August 1982
- 36049/C - Garage for company vehicles - Planning permission granted on 29 December 1982
- 36049 - Replacement store – Planning permission granted on 27 August 1980
- 36049/B - Industrial enhancement works to boundary walls – Planning permission granted on 25 August 1982
- 36049/A - Garage for company vehicles – Planning permission granted on 25 August 1982
- 36049/C - Garage for company vehicles - Planning permission granted on 29 December 1982

The latest planning application was submitted on 09\textsuperscript{th} June 2005 for the Retention of single storey side extension, application number 36049/D.

Proposal summary:
- To retain a new extension that has been constructed along the south eastern boundary of the original building and which increases the total floor area on the site to 656 square metres.
- The extension is effectively a rectangular 'box' constructed of corrugated metal and is 41.8m long by 4m wide at the south west end and tapers to 2.2m at the north-eastern end with a mono pitch roof which is 2.7m high rising to 3m at the highest point.
- It is largely empty but contains a water storage tank and currently some limited storage of materials such as cloth.
- The extension has a full length roller shutter on the north eastern elevation facing the car park and Sydnall Road.
- The applicant has stated in the application form that the development will facilitate an increase in the number of number of employees at the site from the present 8 to 12. Subsequent written information from the applicant indicates that between 2 and 3 staff will be working within the laundry extension on a regular basis.
- The reason for the extension is stated by the applicants to be for the storage and sorting of linen and specifically not as a result of the requirements of new legislation relating to the operation of the site.
- In response to a request by your officers to submit evidence as to why the business would have to close if planning permission for the unauthorised extension is not granted and to demonstrate why he cannot re-locate to another suitable premises within a 6 mile radius and which are presently vacant the applicant has commented that:
- In the past 6 months, in excess of £450,000 has been spent on new plant, machinery and installations at the premises. It would cost in excess of £300,000 to re-locate to another premise. It would make no sense to relocate to another premise as the current unit is adequate.
The application was refused on:
1. The proposal fails to satisfy Policy E13 in that environmental improvements do not result. The extension which has been erected is particularly prominent in this location and the bland, non-articulated canal-side elevation is totally unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the historic canal area disrupting the rhythm of development and thereby detracting from that existing character and layout of the area causing harm to the visual amenity of the locality, contrary to Policies BE2 and BE5 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001.

2. The massing and extent of projection of the extension in close proximity to the boundary with 7 Amy Close results in a severe sense of enclosure and oppressiveness as well as overshadowing of the rear elevation and garden detracting from the living conditions of the occupants of that property thereby conflicting with Policies BE2 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001.
Local relevant planning history

The application with reference FUL/2011/2014 submitted late 2011 by Midland Heart was a proposal for 16 new bungalows on the vacant site opposite 1A Sydnall Road. The bungalows are a combination of 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings served by 20 parking spaces, whilst also offering the resident a well-proportioned, green space close to the canal. Planning permission was granted for this development on 5th March 2012.
Planning Policy

E.8: Development of existing employment sites

‘Proposals for the redevelopment of employment sites for non-employment uses will not be permitted, unless substantial evidence demonstrates that re-use for employment purposes is not realistic or would produce unacceptable environmental, amenity or traffic problems.

In such cases, “quasi-employment” uses may be introduced but only to the extent necessary to bring about the redevelopment of the site for employment uses.

Where the introduction of “quasi-employment” uses will not bring about redevelopment, proposals for mixed-uses including predominance of employment uses will be considered, but only to the extent necessary to bring about redevelopment.

Only where redevelopment cannot be brought about by these means will proposals for residential, open space or other appropriate uses be permitted subject to other plan policies.

An applicant will be required to demonstrate the necessity for non-employment uses and justify their extent. This will usually involve submission of an economic, environmental or traffic assessment, particularly in the case of sites exceeding 1 hectare in size. A comprehensive master plan may be required.’

This policy aims to avoid the loss of commercially viable employment sites in all sectors where they come up for redevelopment, through a sequential assessment. The retention of such sites is a vital policy approach complementary to the provision of new employment sites set out in Policy E6 and is designed to minimise the amount of Greenfield land released by that Policy. Policy E8 has been applied to existing employment sites listed in Policy E6 and the policies together maintain a portfolio of land that is balanced geographically to the advantage of the City’s Priority Areas as well helping to maintain a range of quality and size of sites.

In exceptional cases, a complete change of use may prove to be the only practicable outcome where environmental; amenity or highway problems cannot otherwise be overcome. Where this is unequivocally demonstrated, consideration will be given to residential and open space use or other appropriate uses in accordance with policies in the Plan. Allowing residential use on former employment sites can facilitate effective redevelopment of the area, providing a choice of new homes in close proximity to local facilities and the public transport network.

Any justification for the introduction of non-employment uses on grounds of commercial viability should usually be supported by evidence of unsuccessful marketing of a nature and duration which shows that redevelopment for employment uses, or for a greater extent of employment uses, is not realistic. Such evidence should be accompanied by an analysis which explains and demonstrates why the site is not likely to become viable in the future. The extent and depth of evidence and analysis will depend on the size, importance and other circumstances of the site, but a professionally prepared economic assessment will usually be expected where a site exceeds 1 ha in size. Exceptionally, an assessment might be able to demonstrate non-viability convincingly before marketing has taken place. In such a case, permission may be granted so as to facilitate a rapid, beneficial re-use of a site which would otherwise lie vacant.
In order to get planning approved for a residential development, sufficient evidence relating
to Policy E8 would need to be submitted. The evidence needed would be as follows:

1. Evidence that the site is in a predominantly residential area. This can be shown by a
   simple location plan highlighting all the existing residential buildings.

2. Evidence to show that a residential development would be more viable than commercial.
   This can be done by a traffic assessment as Sydnull Road in its current condition would not
   be suitable for heavy goods vehicles.

3. A statement explaining the reasons for the relocation of the business and why the
   building has been vacant for some time.

4. Evidence would need to be submitted to show Unsuccessful marketing.

**National Planning Policy Framework**  
*March 2012*

Paragraph 111
Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of the land by re-using
land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high
environmental value. Local planning authorities may continue to consider the case for
setting a locally appropriate target for the use of the brownfield land.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a consideration of land which is considered to be suitable for housing development. There are many derelict or vacant sites within Coventry and the aim of the SHLAA is to identify these sites in order to satisfy the need for housing within the city as well as the need for sustainable growth.

Sites identified in the SHLAA list have the following criteria:

- Vacant or derelict land and buildings
- Surplus public sector land
- Land in non-residential use which may be suitable for housing, such as commercial buildings or car parks
- Additional housing opportunities in established residential areas, such as under used garage blocks
- Large scale redevelopment and re-design of existing residential areas
- Urban extensions

Meeting with Christopher Patrick (Coventry City Council) 24/04/2012

During the meeting it was found that 1A Sydnall Road is not on the SHLAA list, however the duty planning officer suggested that this site could be recommended as an addition to the SHLAA sites. The site satisfies the criteria as it has been vacant for some time and the land is situated within a residential area. If the site becomes part of SHLAA, it will provide further evidence which suggests that a residential development would be favourable for the area. Furthermore, the planning officer expressed that there would be little resistance towards a planning application for a residential development as the area is at present largely residential and thus it seems to be a logical approach.
Fig 2 – Existing property facing Sydnall Road

Fig 3 – Existing view taken from the foot bridge

Fig 4 – Existing, access from Amy Close
2.0 Design Proposal

2.1 Evaluation

We have been commissioned by our client, to develop a scheme in which the tired, empty commercial property that currently occupies the site is replaced by four 2 bedroom apartments and six 1 bedroom apartments that will be served by 10 parking spaces, to suit single or coupled professionals.

The proposal features a new access road to the south of the site, leading to a new car park that is situated centrally between each of the ground floor apartments. The small number of proposed apartments ensures that the structure is modest and presents minimal difference in height to the existing building.

The existing building has been vacant for many years with its most recent use being that of a commercial laundrette. In account of its position, adjacent to a substantial volume of residential land, the existing, commercial building appears inappropriate, which is perhaps reflected in the prolonged period of vacancy. Consequently, a proposed residential development, in principle, seems appropriate given the site setup.

2.2 Design

The design aims to respond sympathetically to the characteristics of its residential setting whilst also recognising the proximity of the Coventry Canal. The buildings footprint itself is significantly less than the existing structure, in recognition of the current disproportionate structure to land ratio. This reduction enables the site to better cater for owners vehicles and other associated services required for a proposal of this nature.

We propose to construct the envelope from facing brickwork, complimentary to the neighbouring properties whilst also incorporating a ‘Canal Basin’ quality within its architectural language, in account of its location and proximity to the water. To emphasise this quality, the elevation facing the water features arched openings and balconies in recognition of the desirable vista, providing natural light to the open plan living spaces beyond. The proposed car park that resides centrally between each of the ground floor apartments enhances the circulation efficiency, as well as security.

2.3 Use

Despite that the land is at present vacant, it previously functioned as a commercial laundrette offering services such as washing, drying, dry cleaning and ironing of linen. The proposed change of use to residential has been discussed at length at the beginning of this document.

2.4 Amount

The existing building has a total footprint of 518 sqm whilst the site area measures 812 sqm. By reducing the proposal’s total footprint to 265 sqm the building is better proportioned to the site, thus minimising the buildings density and visual impact.
2.5 Layout

The layout of the proposed building is centralised around its Coventry Canal setup increasing the amount of natural light in the apartments and maximising the appealing views, whilst simultaneously minimising overlooking onto neighbouring property. This principal is also reflected in the buildings footprint that is positioned towards the canal boundary of the site.

The layout of each apartment features an open plan living space running the length or width of the building incorporating a double door opening that takes further advantage of the Canal vista. By orientating the living space towards the canal, the natural light benefits the most utilised spaces. The living space, bedrooms and bathroom are all accessed by a corridor that also adjoins the apartment entrance that is served by a staircase.

Externally, an access road which runs along the north side of the site enables vehicular access to the central car park. The entrances that serve the apartments are also on the north side of the building developing an efficient circulatory route throughout the site.

2.6 Scale

The proposed schemes modest capacity of four 1 bedroom apartments and six 2 bedroom apartments ensures that the buildings visual impact is not dissimilar to that of the existing. By increasing the distance from the neighbouring property to the proposed building and by minimising its overall height the change in the visibility splay, as shown in drawing 636.08, is kept to a minimum.

The similarity in height to the existing structure maintains the volumetric appearance of the street scene, whilst vastly improving its aesthetic appearance and increasing the probability that the site will be properly maintained.

2.7 Landscaping

The existing access road to the front of the site will be re-laid to fall, gradually adjoining the existing road level. A proposed new access road will be formed between the proposal and 1 Sydnall Road that will connect to the existing bend on Sydnall Road. Existing planting, trees and lawn along the edge of the canal will remain unaffected by the proposal.

2.8 Appearance

The buildings appearance responds sensitively to the neighbouring buildings brickwork makeup whilst simultaneously developing a language typical of a ‘Canal Basin’ scheme. The modest 3 storey volume of the proposal maintains the existing scale of the street scene whilst vastly improving its aesthetic appearance.

2.9 Access

Access to the site is gained via the existing bend on Sydnall Road, which leads to the proposed car park and rear entrance points to the apartment block.
3.0 Summary
3.1 Conclusion

In summary, we seek approval to carry out these works to provide longevity at this location and to significantly improve the street scene, providing an appropriate change of use to this site, in a sustainable manner.

_Prepared by Callingham Associates, March 2013_