



## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

The Pearson Building & Headmasters Cottage, Derby

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Richard Blunt is applying to Derby City Council for full planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion & redevelopment of the Pearson Building & Headmasters Cottage, both of which are located on the St Helen's House site along King Street, Derby.

This application seeks to change the proposed usage of these buildings from that approved in 2012 (and before that 2010). The previous approval included the demolition of the detached chapel and classroom buildings and the construction of a residential scheme, all of which has now been carried out by a developer following the sale of that portion of the site.



Aerial photo of site prior to residential scheme development.

## 2. Process

- 2.1 This design and access statement is provided in accordance with the requirements of Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Article 4C of the Town and County Planning General Development (Procedure) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2006.

The planning and listed building applications seek permission for change of use of the Pearson Building & Headmasters Cottage located on the St Helen's House site. Previous approvals were granted in 2010 (DER/06/08/00852/PRI and DER/06/08/00853) & 2012 (DER/01/11/00004/PRI and DER/01/11/00005/PRI).

In summary the proposals include:

- The change of use and associated remodelling and landscaping of the Pearson Building to form 5no ground floor commercial units, 1no first floor office unit 2no second floor residential apartments. Additionally the change of use of the Headmasters Cottage to form 2no residential apartments with associated landscaping.

- 2.2 This Design and Access Statement sets out information concerning the design and access principles for the proposed development of the application site. It provides a contextual appraisal of the proposed development that follows the assessment, involvement, evaluation and design process.
- 2.3 Information is provided on design issues including: the proposed use; amount of development; layout; scale; landscaping and appearance.

- 2.4 The access details provide information concerning the accessibility of the site. This includes links to and from the site for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.

### 3. Assessment

#### 3.1 Site Context

St. Helen's House is the finest surviving Georgian town house in Derby, occupying a site of approximately 0.52ha to the north of Derby city centre. The site is also occupied by a number of nineteenth and twentieth century buildings. St. Helen's House appears on the statutory list of buildings of special historic or architectural interest and is Grade I listed. The Pearson Building was built later than St Helen's House for use by Derby School and is Grade 1 listed by virtue of being within the curtilage of St Helen's House. The same can be said of the Headmasters House, although the building is of limited architectural quality or historic interest.

Currently the buildings are unoccupied, however, the Headmasters Cottage has recently been used as site accommodation during the construction of the adjacent residential scheme. Both of the buildings have suffered from a continued lack of maintenance which has left them in a poor state of repair.

#### 3.2 Historical Background

St. Helen's House was built in 1767 for John Gisbourne by Joseph Pickford. The house was built in grand Palladian style fronted by an elliptical courtyard. The house originally had over eighty acres of parkland.

Fourteen years after the death of John Gisbourne and following the death of his wife in 1800, the Gisbournes' eldest son Revd. Thomas Gisbourne sold St. Helen's House to William Strutt FRS in 1803.

Strutt died in 1831 passing the house to his eldest son Edward. It was during this time that the large grounds attached to the house started to be sold off.

By 1848 Edward had moved out of St. Helen's House and the house was then being let as a school. In 1863 the house was sold to the governors of Derby School, in whose possession it remained until 1972. In 1875 a large annexe was constructed alongside the house to provide additional accommodation for the school. The annexe, now known as the Pearson Building, is connected to St. Helen's House by a link block at ground floor. Also in 1894 a chapel was built on the site and in years between 1894 and 1900 the Headmaster's House and chemistry laboratory were also added.

#### 3.3 General Background

The site was acquired by Richard Blunt in 2008, who was selected as the preferred developer by the then owners Derby City Council.

The proposals outlined by Richard Blunt in 2008 included the restoration of St. Helens House and the Pearson Building, and their change of use to office space. Additionally the proposals included a large enabling development. The restoration works to St Helen's House have been successfully completed for a number of years (completed 2012) with the building being occupied by Smith Cooper.

The Enabling development site was sold in 2017 to a private developer (Grace Construction). The development is almost complete with works being programmed to finish in summer 2020.

Brownhill Hayward Brown Ltd. has now been commissioned by Richard Blunt to undertake architectural and design work in relationship to the development of the Pearson Building & Headmasters Cottage which are the final two buildings on the site that require repair and conversion to ensure a viable use for the buildings in the future.

### 3.4 General Description of Buildings on Site

#### 3.4.1 The Pearson Building

This building was constructed as an extension to the main house in 1874. It is constructed of red brick faced with sandstone ashlar on the north, south and west elevations. The building is of three storeys identified by string courses and incorporates a shallow, pyramidal roof covered with natural welsh slate. The principal (west facing) façade incorporates the Palladian features of high ceilinged first floor rooms with tall windows above the smaller windows of a shallower ground floor, which is identified by rusticated masonry. A pediment over the three central windows suggests symmetry but is not reinforced by any projection forward in the wall plane. In contrast, a full height bay at the southern end of the main façade does project forward, perhaps to soften the symmetry in reference to the principal building. The central second floor window is pedimented and also the ones to either side of the feature cornices. Embellishments to the first floor windows are limited to simple stone surrounds. Window openings on the ground floor are plain.

The Pearson Building is listed Grade I by virtue of its attachment to St. Helen's House, although whether it could be worthy of listing on its own merits is debatable. As an example of educational architecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century we consider the building to be of only marginal interest.

#### 3.4.2 The Headmasters House

The Headmaster's House was built in 1900 in the Arts and Crafts style and is built as a set of semi-detached houses. Walls are constructed of brickwork in Flemish bond. The southern house has an octagonal bay to the side which fronts onto Arthur Street whilst the northernmost house has a square bay at ground level with a further bay on the first floor. Both houses have pitched tiled roofs; these are covered in plain clay tiles. On the west elevation there is a tiled covered walkway at ground floor level which links the Headmaster's House to the Pearson Building.

Although the building is Grade 1 listed by virtue of it's location, this is a building of limited architectural quality or historic interest. Were it not within the curtilage of St Helen's House there is little doubt that this building would not be listed.



The Pearson Building



### 3.5 Condition of Buildings on the Site

One of the main areas of concern with the site is the lack of regular maintenance over many years. This issue is placing the buildings at considerable risk as over time the fabric has decayed and in some cases this could have been avoided by simple maintenance procedures being put into place.

Below is an overview of the main areas of concern within the individual buildings.

#### 3.5.1 The Pearson Building

The building is in fair condition overall. The roof was in very poor condition before being repaired in 2018 by Richard Blunt. The timber windows are in need of repair generally and particularly to the rear elevation where substantial Ivy growth has let to severe decay of frames and the loss of glazing.

The masonry walls are on three elevations faced with ashlar stone which is generally in fair condition. There are a number of cracks that will required pinning/repair along with some repointing. The brickwork to the rear elevation is poor in places and will require some replacement with larger areas of repointing also required.

Internally repairs are required which should be carried out on a like-for-like basis. Structural intervention should not be required with all repairs cosmetic to wall and ceiling finishes.

#### 3.5.2 The Headmasters Cottage

The building is in fair condition overall. The roof appears to be in good condition overall although the rainwater goods require clearing and repair to assist with drainage. The external masonry is eroding in some instances so brickwork repairs and areas of repointing will be required.

Internally the building is in good condition.

### 3.6 Site Assessment

#### 3.6.1 Local Character

The site is within Strutts Park Conservation Area on the edge of Derby city centre and is surrounded by quality buildings in the immediate vicinity. St. Helen's House, St. Mary's Convent and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church form a particularly handsome group of buildings on the approach to Derby from the north. Also of note is a group of Georgian terraces on Edward Street immediately to the north east of the site. On a social level the house is linked to some of the major figures of the early industrial revolution and therefore makes a contribution to the recently inscribed Derwent Valley Mills world heritage site. The immediate area, predominantly residential, has the potential to be both pleasant and extremely marketable, particularly now given the redevelopment of the footbridge over the city's inner ring road which significantly improves access to the city centre.



Aerial photo of site, showing the relationship between St. Helen's House, St. Mary's Convent and St. Mary's Church. Also indicated is the footbridge link over the inner ring road to the city centre.

3.6.2 Access

The site and its setting have in the past been divorced from the town centre. This happened over a period of time, a major contributing factor being the construction of the inner ring road (St. Alkmund's Way). However, the now completed improvement works to the footbridge have successfully re-established a connection with the centre of the city.

3.6.3 Parking

The site in question has no off road car parking, the only car parking on the wider site is associated with the use of St Helen's House which does not form part of this application. However, the site benefits from its central location and proximity to both the public transport network and public car parks, such as the council owned multi-storey south west of the site. Additionally, there is permit parking that can be paid for along Arthur Street to the rear of the site.

3.6.4 External Factors

Adding to the present vulnerability is the uncertainty of the impact of current highway proposals. These proposals involve the construction of a new length of highway from the King Street/St. Helen's Street junction and the creation of a one-way system to the front of St. Helen's House, King Street becoming one way in a southerly direction. One way flow of traffic could lead to greater volumes and higher speeds, both of which would erode the quality of the setting of the site and threaten its amenity.

3.6.5 Transport and Highways

The site benefits from its central location and proximity to Derby town centre. A transport assessment was undertaken by PTB Transportation Planning Ltd. Which was submitted with the previous applications for the site development. The transport assessment demonstrated that the application site is accessible by a range of sustainable travel modes, minimising the use of private vehicles. It also showed that the proposed development will not give rise to a material impact on the adjacent highways network.

4.00 Involvement

4.1 The proposals for the previous applications emerged following pre-application consultations with a number of officers at Derby City Council including planning, conservation and highways. Additionally a number of interested third parties were consulted including:

- English Heritage
- The Georgian Group
- The Victorian Society
- Derby Civic Society
- St. Helen's House Trust

The new application being submitted to which this design & access statement relates does not differ in terms of alteration to that of the previously approved scheme(s). With this in mind, other than conversations with the local planning department and conservation officer, no further consultation with external third parties were carried out.

## 5. Evaluation

### 5.1 Townscape Analysis

This analysis highlights various strengths and weaknesses of the setting:

- The site is close to the city centre and there are both shops and restaurants within walking distance;
- There are a number of new residential developments in the immediate area that have been successful;
- The site is in a Conservation Area and has other quality historic buildings in the immediate area. The area has the potential to be pleasant although buildings surrounding the site would benefit from an enhancement scheme, in particular the row of Georgian terraces on Edward Street;
- St. Helen's House, St. Mary's Convent and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church form an attractive group of buildings, which could be further enhanced by improving the 2 buildings on the site and bringing them into use;
- A dedicated entrance to the Pearson Building can be formed complete with landscaping to the rear of the premises off Arthur Street which would ensure traffic to King Street is unaffected;
- While parking on the site is not available the site benefits from its proximity to the public transport network and public car parks, notably the council operated multi-storey car park.

### 5.2 Setting and Surrounding Landscape

In order for the development of the site to be a success the landscaping and setting will need to be improved.

The immediate area around the site would greatly benefit from improved hard landscaping. In particular the rear elevation to the Pearson Building needs to be addressed. The space to the rear of the Headmasters House (up to the adjacent residential development) would benefit from formally landscaped garden space for any residents to use.

## 6. Use

### 6.1 **Existing Use**

The Pearson Building was originally built for Derby School and has since been used for adult learning facilities by Derby City Council. The Headmasters Cottage was again built for use with Derby School and has more recently been used as site offices for the adjacent residential development.

### 6.2 **Proposed Use**

6.2.1 The change of use of the Pearson Building & the Headmasters Cottage aim to create facilities with various uses, including:

- The Headmasters Cottage to be split into 2no apartments;
- The Pearson Building aims to provide 5no commercial units on the ground floor, an office suite on the first floor (complete with new mezzanine floor above the former stage area) and 2no residential apartments.
- Removal of the existing boundary wall along Arthur Street which will then be rebuilt complete with railings & new metal access gates. Landscape the area between The Pearson Building and the new boundary wall.
- The formation of a formal landscaped garden between the Headmasters Cottage and the residential development on the adjacent site for use by residents within the Headmasters Cottage.



### 6.3 The Change of Use of The Pearson Building to Create commercial units, first floor office suite and second floor residential apartments

The previous proposals approved under the current planning permission converts the use of the Pearson Building to office space and also included the insertion of a new mezzanine floor in between the first and second floor levels. The new proposals within this application seek to vary the use throughout the building:

#### Ground Floor:

5no individual commercial units to be formed all serviced by one central lobby accessed off the new entrance off Arthur Street. The units will be positioned within existing rooms so minimal intervention of the existing fabric is required. One wall is proposed for removal which is hollow and assumed to be in stud work construction. This allows the lobby space to be opened up to form a much more inviting and welcoming entrance.

#### First Floor:

1no office suite is to occupy this floor, open plan in form and access via the existing staircase that will also provide access to the second floor above. As with the current approval, a new mezzanine floor is proposed but much smaller in size (formed above the existing stage) and therefore with less impact to the existing windows.

#### Second Floor:

2no residential apartments are to be formed here, accessed via the main existing staircase. Existing lightweight stud walls are to be removed and new lightweight stud walls are to be provided to separate apartments (party walls) and rooms within the apartments. Additional fire escape will be achieved via the existing external staircase that will be repaired as part of the works.

#### 6.3.1 Removal and rebuilding of existing boundary wall to the Pearson Building

In order to improve the rear elevation of the building facing Arthur Street, limited demolition is proposed and includes the demolition of the existing brickwork boundary wall. The current condition of the wall is very poor and would require extensive repair if it was to be retained. To create a more welcoming elevation and to improve the setting, it is proposed that the wall be rebuilt up to half the height, with cast metal railings and an access gate being provided. This would provide the Pearson Building with a much needed entrance.

7. Amount

7.1 The table below sets out the approximate schedule of areas that are included within the proposed development scheme:

<u>Office Scheme</u>		
<u>Office Suite</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Area</u>
1 Pearson Building	Ground Floor (commercial)	242m <sup>2</sup>
2 Pearson Building	First Floor (office)	250m <sup>2</sup>
3 Pearson Building	Second Floor (residential)	250m <sup>2</sup>
4 Headmasters	Ground Floor (residential)	78m <sup>2</sup>
5 Headmasters	First Floor (residential)	85m <sup>2</sup>
Parking		N/A

8. Scale

8.1 The scale of the existing buildings remains the same with no alteration.

9. Landscaping

9.1 Landscaping is an integral part of the proposals and we have tried to significantly improve the immediate environment to both buildings as well as the wider setting within the Grade 1 listed site.

The landscaping proposals are concentrated and centred around 2 elements – the new entrance to the Pearson Building and the rear courtyard to the Headmasters Cottage. The proposed landscaping scheme is simple by it’s design and consists of box hedging, planting beds and York stone paths.

10. Access

10.1 Accessibility

The application site is located close to the centre of Derby and as such is accessible by a range of non-car travel methods.

10.2 Cycling and Pedestrian Access

Recent improvements to the Alkmund Way pedestrian bridge have made access to the site from Derby town centre significantly better for pedestrians and cyclists. Note: secure cycle storage is provided in a number of locations across the site.

10.3 Vehicular Access

No vehicles will be able to access the site with no car-parking available in the site itself.

Parking for a small number of cars can be found on Arthur Street but permits will be required to be purchased. Additional parking is available within the town centre notably the council’s nearby public multi-storey car park.

10.4 Servicing

The service requirements of the office scheme will be made from Arthur Street to the rear; this will include deliveries and refuse collection.