

Planning Report, October, 2021

We have commented on two important applications since the last committee.

Re: APP/21/01158 - Ashton House, Ashton House Hospital Complex

In anticipation of this significant application, we drew up a list of criteria in advance which we used to evaluate it.

We judged that the application met most of our criteria. We supported the approach adopted in terms of site layout, landscaping and access and welcome the retention of Ashton House, most of the mature trees and the boundary wall. We are disappointed that the proposals are not designed to be carbon neutral at handover, or optimise the use of passive energy by design.

Detailed comments were as follows

The layout provides a good balance between residences, carparking and landscaping and does not over-develop the site.

Access is in keeping with a conservation area and includes an open (ungated) road and pedestrian access in order to avoid the creation of a gated community.

The landscaping strategy is good with a reasonable attempt to include wild parts to the landscape and the mature trees.

It provides variety and avoids a car dominated scheme although some mitigation/screening should be considered for the large Ashton House car park. For example, screening or a pergola with climbers over the western bays would soften the visual impact.

The design of the houses is not imaginative and does not include energy efficient terraces, although they are consistent with the local character,

There is a missed opportunity to achieve a carbon-neutral solution including energy saving specification of building elements, energy saving house types. Also, there is no reference to car charging points.

LBC/21/01688 - 14 ARNO ROAD, OXTON,

We recognised that this listed building was in great danger of being lost and we applauded the tremendous work of the new owners to rescue it from a derelict condition and support their continued efforts to complete the exterior restoration work.

Our detailed comments were as follows:

We are surprised that the application was validated without photographs

We recognise that windows are more than 50% damaged and beyond repair because of a combination of rot, warping and lead-based paint.

We support the replacement with single-glazed puttied windows with lamb's tongue glazing bars, to the standard of the new window already completed. We hope that the interior shutters will also be replaced.

We suggest that the Council encourages slim-line double glazing in replacement timber windows to improve thermal efficiency - although we recognise that this would be at the applicant's discretion.