

Town Planning Statement

Proposed Alteration Works and Extensions to provide
Improvements to the Existing Listed Property

The Almshouses
West Street, Rochford, Essex SS4 1AS

for and on behalf of
The Trustees



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Brief History

The almshouses were founded in 1567. Tudor society was not always sympathetic to the poor. 'The deserving poor' (those who were too ill to work) were supported, but vagrants (unemployed persons who had left their home parishes to roam and find work) were discouraged. Nevertheless, it was the legal duty of parishes to find a home for a deserving homeless person. This was the purpose of almshouses, many of which were solidly built enough to survive for centuries.

Lord Ryche's almshouses are an attractive feature of the market town of Rochford. They consist of a single storey brick building containing 6 small dwellings. Each unit originally had a bedroom/living space with kitchens and bathrooms being added approximately 50 years ago to improve the basic facilities and enjoyment of the residents.

Richard Ryche was the young lawyer who was taken in by Thomas More who betrayed this generosity by giving evidence, suggested to be false, which led More to the scaffold.

Ryche became speaker of the House of Commons and Lord Chancellor and did indeed become very rich, owning great swathes of Essex including Felsted (where he founded the famous school) and Rochford Hall, which is now the clubhouse of Rochford Hundred Golf Club.

In 1567, towards the end of his life, fearing that he might not be bound for Heaven, he founded the almshouses in Rochford.



Existing Building and Construction

The properties are single storey buildings constructed in 1567. The later additions to the rear of the buildings formed small kitchens and bathrooms some 50 years ago.

The main building is a brick double skin construction to the external walls and sub-division party walls taken up to the ceiling height internally and with gable ends to the flank elevations.

The later rear additions are constructed in brickwork with flat roofs.

The whole building has been sub-divided into 6 residential units, each consisting of a living space and bed alcove to the main section of the building, the small rear extensions house the kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The main roof is completed with plain tiles with small overhanging eaves to the front and rear and pointed verges to the gabled end flanks.



Eaves and Verge Details

Internally the walls and ceilings are plastered.

It should be noted that the brick party walls do not extend above the ceiling level other than the areas where the chimney stacks are located.

Note : Due to the nature of the building being occupied by separate units there would appear to be no adequate fire protection in the roof void to each of the units and in my opinion this is a situation that needs to be addressed without delay.



The building has timber, single glazed, window units, painted with white gloss paint set into brickwork. There are small porches also constructed in brickwork and tiled roofs to the front elevation.



Windows to Front Elevation

Each unit has gas, water, and electricity supplies, which are metered on a communal basis. There is a central gas fired communal boiler located in the existing outhouse at the rear of the building.

There are 3 large chimney stacks projecting through the roof that serve the residential units. It is not been established whether all the chimney stacks are in use at present. It is noted that some of the pots to the stacks will require attention as part of the proposed new works.

There are neat gardens to both the front and rear of the building mainly laid to lawn. The boundaries are finished with brick walls, timber close/boarded fencing and a feature brick and part railing with gates to the road frontage.

There are some ornamental trees to the rear of the property and the remainder of the site is laid to lawn with concrete pathways to the perimeter of the building. It is considered that the existing trees would not affect the new works

There is no allocated or designated off-street parking within the site.

It is understood that the buildings are well maintained and the Trustees have an ongoing maintenance programme, which keeps the buildings in good order.



Building Listing

English Heritage Text.

Lord Riches Cottages

Listed 15:4:59 Grade 11

NGR TQ 8730790572 – EHB ID 123254

Formerly 92 – 100 Church Street, Rochford.

Row of almshouses. Founded 1567 by a bequest of Lord Rich of Leez Priory who died at Rochford Hall 1566 and probably built late c16 early c17 by his grandson the Earl of Warwick. C20 restoration.

Red brick, plain tiled roof with 2 forward gables to right and left of centre. 3 red brick chimney stacks with small buttresses to bases. Single storey. 3:1:3:1:3 one or 3 light C20 small paned casements 6 C20 vertical boarded doors, one to left and right of each gable of main block. Each gable apex with a small plaque that to left reads '**Lord Ryches Cottages**' to right '**AD 1576**'.

Dated 1959



Proposed Works

The proposed works will create new updated kitchen and bathroom facilities to each of the units. The current facilities are in need of upgrading and the new extensions and internal layout provision will give each unit more space and a better living environment

The external finishes and overall appearance of the rear extensions has been design to blend in with the existing building. The existing flat roof rear additions are to be demolished to make way for the new increased floor space extensions to the individual units.

The new roof construction will be completed with a 'cut and pitch' system over the extensions. The new roofs are to be linked to the existing roofs and insulated to current Building Regulation standards. The valleys and trough gutters to the new and existing pitched roofs are to be completed with a suitable lead gutter system on lay boards over the existing rafters.

As previously stated, it is considered that as part of the new works a system of fire protection within the main roof void, is required. This is to be fully investigated and one of the options being considered is to build a fire blanket along each party wall division within the roof void. The fire blanket to be suitably fixed to the existing rafters and ceiling joists to conform to the latest Building Regulation standards. To complete this work it will be necessary to form loft hatches to 3 of the units to allow access for the work to be carried out. The loft hatches to be a minimum of ½ hour fire resistance standard and lockable to restrict unnecessary and non-approved access.

The proposed floor plans indicate a bathroom with the option to have either a bath or shower with a toilet and wash hand basin. Each bathroom will be fully tiled. The floor finish will be non-slip vinyl sheet with welded seams, an upstand to the perimeter of the room, allowing easy washing/maintenance of the floors. This finish will also be extended to the new kitchens.

The new kitchens will be fitted with high quality contract units, with base level and high level cupboards. The kitchens and bathrooms will be fitted with standard extraction units to conform to Building Regulation standards.

The new building works will also allow certain improvements to be made to some of the units. These works will include repairs to damaged ceilings and upgrading of decoration to the walls and general paintwork to the woodwork such as skirtings, architraves and doors.



All the new windows and external doors will be completed in timber and made to match the existing profiles. These items will be decorated with approved gloss paint to tints to match the existing.

The existing services to each property will be checked and as may be necessary they are to be upgraded to meet current standards.

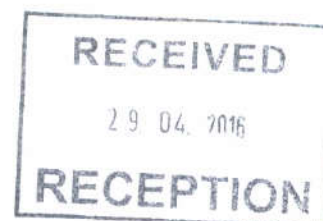
As indicated on the proposed details the existing boiler store is to be retained and in part rebuilt to form a cohesive external appearance with a plain tiled pitched roof to match the other rear extensions.

The existing heating pipework is to be altered to accommodate the new works. As previously stated the existing boiler system facilitates each unit and this arrangement is required to be retained. All new services are to be insulated with suitable insulation where necessary.

The exterior concrete paths around the existing rear extensions are to be cut back as necessary and increased to provide access around each unit for pedestrian traffic. It is also noted that some of the units have small private garden spaces and these are to be retained as part of the building works and handed back to the tenants at completion of the works.

All existing finishes are to be made good where the new works meet the existing. The existing floor finishes to the units are to be protected at all stages of the works.

It is noted that whilst the building works are being carried out it will be necessary to protect the existing tenants and the Trustees have approached a local housing association to discuss the possibility of providing temporary accommodation for the tenants during the course of the works. This matter will be agreed with all interested parties prior to any works commencing on site.



Planning Issues

The Local Authority has been co-operative during discussions for the proposals.

Meetings with the Local Authority planning officer, Mr Mike Stranks, and the County conservation officer, Mr Richard Broadhead, have been carried out and from these discussions the project details now shown on the drawings, together with the formal applications for full and listed consents, are submitted to the Council and show all the points raised by the officers as required.

The existing building is a listed property and it is essential that any new works to the building relates well with the architecture and environment of the existing. The selection of materials including the plain roof tiles and the red facing bricks will be sourced via specialist suppliers who have already confirmed they are able to match the existing materials.

The Rochford Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan defines the application building as 'a picturesque row of six almshouses' and places them in Character Zone 3 which is described as having a mixture of buildings of different ages and uses but which are spaciouly laid out reflecting their suburban location peripheral to the town centre. The almshouses are assessed as making a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.

The proposal involves the demolition of the more recent flat roofed rear additions to the properties. The Council's Conservation Area Guidance notes say that there is a presumption of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These additions are out of character with the original buildings and make no positive contribution to the area.

The Character of Place section of the Council's Core Strategy states an objective 'to support and enhance the local built heritage'. It also aims to ensure that the design of all new development is consistent with local character and says that design is crucial when considering proposals that affect historical buildings.



Policy CP2 – Conservation Areas, says that the Council will have regard to advice contained within the Conservation Area Appraisals and Supplementary Planning Documents when considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas.

The Development Management Plan contains a policy relevant to the proposal. Policy DM8 – Demolition within Conservation Areas says that consent for demolition will be granted where the benefits of the demolition outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area. It is clear that the proposed demolition of the unsympathetic rear additions and their replacement with extensions of a sensitive design more in keeping with the original building will be of benefit.

Supplementary Planning Document 6 – Design Guidelines for Conservation Areas recommends early contact with the planning department before submission of applications. Meetings and consultations have been undertaken in this case with relevant officers and agreement reached on the final design of the proposal.

The document sets out general design guidance relating to the assessment of the existing character of place, scale and form, materials and design detailing. It gives specific guidance for extensions, saying that attention must be paid to the manner in which the extension may directly affect the existing building. Extensions should not dominate the existing building in scale, they should be visually subordinate and sympathetic in character. It also says that the main building must be a reference for materials and detailing.

It is felt that the proposal complies with all the relevant policies and guidance provided. The new extensions are subordinate in nature and sited to the rear of the existing main building. They will not therefore impact upon the public views of the almshouses and their setting within the Conservation Area. Careful thought has been given to the design and the finish of the proposed extensions and they will form a sympathetic addition to the main building. The completed development will provide improved living conditions for the occupants and also improve the visual appearance of the Listed Building.

