

PLANNING, ACCESS AND DESIGN STATEMENT

**LAND TO THE REAR OF
1 & 2 COLLINWOOD CLOSE
OXFORD**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement relates to a planning application for a pair of new single storey buildings proposed for use as 1 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed units on land to the rear of nos. 1 & 2 Collinwood Close, Oxford. The proposal includes the provision of new bin/bike stores and provision of a new parking space for the 2 bed unit with attendant vehicular access, along with pedestrian access to both units. The 1 x 1 bed unit is proposed on a car free basis.
- 1.2 This Statement sets out a reasoned justification as to why the application should be permitted by reference to the development in relation to its site context, the relevant site planning history and the relevant planning policy framework.

2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application site comprises of a large parcel of land that stands to the rear of nos. 1 & 2 Collinwood Close. The land was formerly occupied by a number of single storey outbuildings that were once in use principally as a busy photographic studio. The principle building has now been demolished, and all related material removed from the site. Access into the site is to be gained via a new pedestrian link that runs from the new parking space to the side of 1 Collinwood Close and down into the site to the rear.
- 2.2 The site is surrounded on all sides by its respective common boundary with the end of the long rear garden areas to houses on Collinwood Road in the east, Downside Road to the south and other garden areas to houses in Collinwood Close itself to the west and north.
- 2.3 Suffice to say, the site finds itself in the midst of a surrounding residential area, physically well separated by relatively long distances in each case to the respective neighbouring housing.

3.0 RELEVANT SITE PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning permission was originally granted on this site in 2013 for “demolition of existing single storey outbuildings. Erection of 1 x single storey, 1 bed detached dwelling with provision for parking, cycle and bin storage to the rear of 1 and 2 Collinwood Close” under the terms of planning application reference 12/03245/FUL. That permission was implemented and commenced at the time, and today, remains fully extant. This was achieved by the main building on site being demolished, all of the relevant pre-commencement conditions discharged in writing and a meaningful physical start of works made on site and confirmed as such in writing by the Council’s own Building Control section who visited the site in May 2016 to inspect it on the back of an appropriately submitted Building Regulations application.
- 3.2 As I say, that permission on site endures today and is the applicant’s fallback position in the proper planning consideration of this new application.
- 3.3 Then in 2019, a similar further planning application was made on the site (application reference: 19/00897/FUL) which in effect sought to turn the originally approved 1 bed unit into a 2 bed unit and to enlarge the building footprint. That application was approved in June 2019 and so that consent on the site also remains extant at this time.
- 3.4 In 2020, a planning application (reference 20/03178/FUL) for the erection of 3no. units on the site was submitted. It was in due course withdrawn however, prior to a decision, on the basis that concern was raised by the Highway Authority at the time on the car free nature of two of the units proposed and the potential impact to car parking capacity on street. Since the time of that withdrawal, a parking survey of the area has now been undertaken and is submitted here in support of this latest application, which of course in addition reduces the number of units proposed from 3no. to 2no. only now and with only 1no. of those units now being provided on a car free basis.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY AND MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.

4.2 The Development Plan for the area comprises the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and I therefore draw upon the relevant policies of that Plan in the consideration of this Statement. I shall return to them below. First, a consideration of the relevant national planning policies.

Government Planning Guidance

4.3 Government guidance as a material consideration relevant to the consideration of this application can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019 (as amended).

4.4 At paragraph 1 the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

Achieving Sustainable Development

4.5 The NPPF at paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 continues by stating that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and that these objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways and give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- a) **an economic role** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- b) **a social role** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) **an environmental role** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.6 It is clear that if the application is looked at across those 3 fronts that it complies with its salient tests. It is submitted that the more efficient redevelopment of an existing site such as this (making a better residential reuse of a consented site) within the midst of the existing built up area of Oxford, putting it into an improved residential use in a high quality and well-designed development, must reasonably be considered to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the locality and Oxford on a wider basis. It will make a positive contribution to the local economy both during the construction phase and thereafter by bringing additional people into the area and helps to support local services, shops, businesses and amenities within the locale. In a related vein it will perform a social role too by bringing new residents that will help to support the vitality of local services and facilities including schools and shops etc, and the provision of a mix of relatively small residential units will add positively to the requirement for such units that society's move towards generally smaller households has generated. In environmental terms, the application site is in the right place inasmuch that it relates directly to the existing developed area of Oxford and makes an excellent and entirely appropriate residential reuse of an under-utilised brownfield site in terms of its current planning consent.

4.7 I consider the cross economic, social and environmental benefits are clear and obvious and the proposal is therefore rightly to be defined as a sustainable form of development.

- 4.8 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF identifies that: “at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.9 Acknowledging then that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, paragraph 11 of the NPPF echoes paragraph 10 and sets out that both plan-making and decision-taking should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.10 It is submitted herein that the benefits that accrue from the proposal, i.e. the provision of additional, new units of residential accommodation, out of a formerly under-utilised brownfield site, delivering some much needed smaller household sized accommodation into this locality and so assisting with social cohesion and housing choice, plainly represents a wholly positive and sustainable development opportunity overall for the local area that should properly be supported.

Determining Applications

- 4.11 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF sets out that “planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. In this context, I am not aware of any material considerations that arise here that would come to outweigh the clear presumption in favour of the proposal, which is a defined sustainable form of development and fully compliant with the relevant provisions of the Development Plan (as detailed below).

Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

- 4.12 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF sets out “the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes”. The proposal goes to the heart of this basic requirement, insofar as it would deliver new units of residential accommodation, out of an under-utilised site in terms of its current consent.

Identifying Land for Homes

- 4.13 Indeed, paragraph 68 of the NPPF makes clear that small sites, such as this, can make an instant contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area, since they can deliver additional residential units and which can often be built out relatively quickly. This is particularly germane in an Oxford context where housing is in relative short supply and sources for new housing are incredibly finite.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 4.14 Paragraph 102 of the NPPF sets out that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals, so that, inter alia, “opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are pursued”.
- 4.15 Supporting paragraph 103 then goes on to state in addition that “development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes”. The site stands fully within the developed area of the Oxford, plainly a highly sustainable city, and where new development can readily be contemplated in all areas, because of its generally accessible location and the full choices of all non car-borne modes of transport that the City affords.
- 4.16 The NPPF makes further clear at paragraph 109, that new development “should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”. I cannot conceive of any such “severe” impact on highway related grounds, that the proposed move from a 2 bed unit (as extant) to, in effect, a net further 1 bed unit, would likely cause. Indeed, the Transport Technical Note and Car Parking Beat Survey which accompany this application, have not identified any aspects of this development which would cause severe harm in highway safety terms and no other transportation reasons which should properly prevent the development of this site.

Making effective Use of Land

4.17 Paragraph 117 of the NPPF sets out that “planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes”. Supporting paragraph 118 states that planning decisions should, inter alia:

- give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes;
- promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites would be used more effectively.

4.18 The application site is previously developed land that has an extant consent already for a 2 bed unit, on a relatively large available plot. The proposal, with its relatively enlarged building footprint overall to accommodate the extra unit, is more efficiently built out by comparison than its predecessor, whilst at the same time still making for an appropriate and proportionate use of the site. The principle of a more effective reuse of the available plot plainly exists here and the principles and values of making a better use of such brownfield land, towards meeting the need for new homes, is met squarely in this proposal.

Achieving Well-Designed Places

4.19 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF provides that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”. The submitted scheme demonstrates how the proposal would be very carefully laid out over the available site, produced in such a fashion so as to fit comfortably, and indeed positively with its local context and its surroundings and is well-designed, and remains proportionate overall. It follows the design solutions found appropriate to the site previously and its identified context, remaining single storey, low slung and flat roofed overall. Those fundamental design principles within the currently proposed scheme have not changed.

4.20 The NPPF at paragraph 127 requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure new developments deliver high quality schemes, judged across a range of fronts. Those cited below are deemed of relevance in the consideration of this application:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to work, live and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The latest scheme remains carefully designed in its overall concept to accord with all of these aims.

Local Planning Policies

- 4.21 There are a raft of locally based policies contained in the OLP that work between them towards the proper consideration of this proposal. Those considered of relevance are set out below with a brief commentary.
- 4.22 Policy S1 of the OLP 'Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development' sets out that the Council will take a positive approach to new development proposals and which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Planning applications that accord with the OLP will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, it has already been set out above that the proposal is a defined form of sustainable development and the principle of it at least must be beyond any reasonable dispute. Also, that there are no known material considerations which stand against it. Accordingly, it is submitted that the Council should reasonably approve this planning application without any delay.
- 4.23 Policy RE2 of the OLP 'Efficient Use of Land' expects for development proposals to make an efficient use of land and best use of available site capacity. The proposal goes to the heart of this policy and makes the best use of a relatively large plot, inefficiently developed at present by the consent for a single new unit only. It now seeks to reuse it in a more efficient manner by developing it out for 2 units at an appropriate density, that optimises the available site area, while at the same time producing new buildings that are proportionate in form, layout, scale and appearance with the site itself and which would fit in with the local built context and are neighbourly all round.
- 4.24 Policy DH1 of the OLP 'High Quality Design and Placemaking' seeks a good standard of urban design in new development which relates well to the character and appearance of the area and its context. The proposal in this case follows the overall design approach to the site established in the previous extant scheme and retains the new buildings as low slung, single storey buildings in a mixed contemporary urban fashion, that reflects both the modern day aesthetic with the flat-roofed form and the vernacular too in the use of timbered appearing cladding facing materials which will provide for a

traditional finished look. It is certainly a high quality scheme of design that overall, will allow the proposal to come to fit appropriately and proportionately on the site and be complementary and characterful for those reasons in the unique context of this site and the local built context.

- 4.25 Policy H15 of the OLP 'Internal Space Standards' deals with internal space standards and does so in conjunction with the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard' document. This sets out minimum gross internal floor areas for all types of new residential developments, including for 1 bed 1 person and 2 bed 3 person units as proposed. The minimum floor space requirement is respectively 37m² and 61m² for single storey buildings and each of the units proposed straightforwardly satisfy these minimum requirements at 48m² and 62m² respectively.
- 4.26 Policy H16 'Outdoor Amenity Space Standards' of the OLP sets out the Council's general expectations for external amenity space in new developments and requires that for houses of 1 or more bedrooms, a garden space at least equivalent to the size of the original building footprint is provided. Here, rear garden areas are provided to each of the units, readily in excess of that minimum measure and each would provide excellent rear garden areas to the would-be occupiers.
- 4.27 Policy DH7 of the OLP 'External Servicing Features and Stores' requires that bike and bin stores should be considered from the start of the design process in their siting. That is indeed the case here where each of the properties have dedicated areas set aside for these facilities within the overall site layout.
- 4.28 Policy M5 of the OLP 'Bicycle Parking' then defines the number of required bike parking spaces per unit, in this case at least 2 such spaces for 1 and 2 bed houses are required. And 2 spaces are indeed provided for each new unit in secure locations in the rear garden areas.
- 4.29 Policy M3 of the OLP 'Motor Vehicle Parking' requires that in locations such as Collinwood Close, which are within a 400m walk to frequent (every 15 minutes) public transport (as exists on the nearby London Road) and are

within a 800m walk of a local supermarket or its equivalent (as is the case to the local Roundway parade of shops) then in those circumstances new residential developments can be required to be car-free. And in compliance with those terms, the proposal is made on a part car-free basis, with one car parking space only provided to the new 2 bed unit in the form of a parking space set to the site of 1 Collinwood Close and accessed via a shared access point with that property and with the 1x1 bed unit being provided on a car free basis. The parking arrangement to the 2 bed unit is as agreed previously by the Highway Authority in the consideration of the previous scheme. Collinwood Close is also due to be introduced to the County Council's CPZ roll-out for Risinghurst shortly and that fact along with the prevailing good issues of accessibility generally in the local area, means that a car free development for the 1x1 bed units must reasonably be considered to be acceptable. Plus, Collinwood Close itself is a relatively lightly trafficked road where the majority of the houses have their own off-street parking and where ready capacity to park on street is always invariably available. Indeed, the Car Parking Beat Survey evidences this and sets out that there is sufficient spare parking capacity of an average of 30% availability on the streets surrounding the site. This is plainly more than adequate to accommodate the one car space generated by the proposed 1 bed unit.

- 4.30 Policy H14 of the OLP 'Privacy, Daylight and Sunlight' sets out that permission for new development will only be granted where the proposal provides reasonable privacy, daylight and sunlight for the occupants of both existing and new houses. In this case, the proposal is carefully designed to comply with the guidance in full on light, outlook and privacy. Being single storey only, and very well separated all round from the nearest other houses, at the foot of their respective long gardens, then it is genuinely difficult to imagine how the proposal could in any material sense be judged to be at all unneighbourly. Indeed, in all of these neighbour related considerations, there are no issues of light or outlook impact or privacy to properly consider and the careful low level nature of the overall design of the scheme, and relative building footprint positioning in relation to the surrounding housing, all ensures the scheme complies fully with the requirements of this policy in so doing and is not unneighbourly in any way.

- 4.31 Policy RE1 of the OLP 'Sustainable Design and Construction' requires the submission of an energy statement to demonstrate compliance with this policy for new built residential. An energy report is submitted which demonstrates full compliance with the required terms of the policy and, in short, looks to achieve this by means of a combination of the installation of PV panels to the roofs of the new units along with the use of a gas flue saver combination boiler.

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This latest scheme for the site now makes a more efficient re-use of an available windfall site, in a sustainable manner and in an accessible location which provides for 2no. useful, small units of accommodation.
- 5.2 It retains a well-designed, high quality low level new building approach to the site, that reflects closely the previously accepted overall design approach and remains proportionate to the available site itself.
- 5.3 It remains modest in scale and form, single storey only and causes no issues of unneighbourliness.
- 5.4 Comprising a mix of 1 and 2 bed properties, it contributes positively to the balance and mix of properties in the area, which are otherwise predominantly larger, family style housing.
- 5.5 Car parking, cycle parking, bin storage and private garden space are all provided on site in an acceptable fashion to standard, with the car free nature of an element of the scheme suited to the accessible nature of the location and evidenced to be capable of being accommodated on the surrounding streets.
- 5.6 There are considered to be no planning related constraints to the proposed development and no planning nor highway related issues at all in fact that properly mitigate against the proposed scheme.

- 5.7 A similar scheme of development in terms of principle has already been found acceptable on this site and has in fact been commenced for planning purposes. The current scheme involves an effective re-working of that previous development to deliver now a more efficient reuse of the available site.
- 5.8 In the circumstances of this case, it is very much hoped that this latest submission can now be supported and granted the planning permission applied for.