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20/00860/OUT  
28.10.2020



**PLANNING STATEMENT**

**OUTLINE APPLICATION BY  
Mr & Mrs DONNELLY  
FOR  
THE DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS AND THE  
ERECTION OF THREE DETACHED BUILDINGS TO  
ACCOMMODATE 15 SELF-CONTAINED FLATS**

**AT**

**92-94 YORKTOWN ROAD, SANDHURST, BERKSHIRE, GU47 9BH.**

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## **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

**1.1** The application site is currently a disused blacksmiths forge and house. A blacksmiths has occupied the property from at least the early twentieth century and the applicant has occupied the site since 1950. The site is occupied by three main buildings: On the frontage of the site (with Yorktown Road) is a two - storey brick house which was built in the late nineteenth century and extended in the 1980's. In the south west of the site there is a brick built single storey building workshop with a corrugated steel roof. This building was constructed between the 1970's and 1990's and has a steel frame lean-to structure. The building was used mainly for the storage of machinery and tools including rolling and cutting machines together with various small quantities of chemicals/fuels such as greases and hydraulic oil. In the central west of the site is a further single - storey workshop/storage unit with an attached derelict frame structure. It is of metal clad construction, built in the 1990s and also contained machinery and tools. In addition, there are two metal shipping containers located in the north east of the site which were formally used for the storage of oxygen tanks.

**1.2** Immediately adjoining the site to the east and fronting Yorktown Road is a brick built two and a half storey building named Farrier Court. It is occupied by 5 self-contained flats with car parking to the rear. A coach yard and petrol filling station are located further to the east. Immediately to the west is a two - storey building used as a commercial blinds and curtains shop and was formerly a nursery. On the opposite side of the road are residential properties and a library whilst to the south is a residential estate (Coachmans Grove).

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

**2.1** Outline planning permission is sought with access and siting the only matters under consideration. The application proposes the demolition of all of the buildings on the site and its replacement with three detached buildings comprising a total of 15 flats. The frontage building is two and half storeys in height with 6 x 2 bedroom and 3 x 1 bedroom flats arranged over three floors. A communal garden area is proposed to the rear of the building. To the rear of the site are proposed 2 x two storey buildings which will

provide an additional 6 flats. A communal garden area to the rear of the buildings will provide external amenity space to the occupiers. Vehicular access will be from the existing crossover, centrally placed on the site and with an internal access road which leads through the building to a rear parking area

- 2.2** Two disabled parking spaces will be provided on the frontage with an additional 2 disabled to the rear. An additional 23 car spaces will be provided in a central courtyard area between the frontage and rear buildings. Pedestrian access will also be provided to the rear (south) to Coachman's Grove

### **3. RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE APPLICATION SITE**

- 3.1** Outline planning permission was granted under LPA reference 02/00795/OUT for the demolition of all building on the site and the erection of one building accommodating a retail (class A1) unit together with 8 flats with associated parking and access onto Yorktown Road. Siting and access were considered with design, external appearance and landscaping reserved for future consideration.

- 3.2** The aforementioned Reserved Matters (landscaping, design and external appearance) were approved under LPA reference 03/01204. The approved design shows a two - storey building with accommodation within the roof. It also shows a two - storey gable, book - ending the building with the second - floor flats having external amenity space. Vehicular access to the rear car parking area is gained through the building. One disabled parking space is shown on the frontage of the site. Sixteen car spaces are shown to the rear of the site (including a further two disabled spaces). Of note is that the application site does not include the total area of the site and excludes the area to the rear which accommodates the Forge buildings.

#### **4. RELEVANT POLICIES**

**4.1** The basis on which planning applications are to be determined is set out in S.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires,  
*“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*

**4.2** The Development Plan, for the purposes of the determination of this application, is a) The Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (2002) and b) Core Strategy (20008)

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (2018)**

**4.3** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018. The NPPF states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Paragraph 2). Consequently, the starting point in the assessment of a planning application is the Development Plan, and the NPPF states that development that accords with an up to date Local Plan should be permitted without delay (paragraph 11).

**4.4** Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF state that there are three dimensions to sustainable development with these being economic, social, and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

**4.5** Chapter 10 deals with climate change, and at paragraph 96 states that local planning authorities should expect new development to comply with adopted local plan policy on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant that it is not feasible or viable. It should also take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing, and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

**4.6** Paragraph 154 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

*a) Not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting green house gas emissions.*

*b) Approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.*

**4.7** Chapter 12 is entitled Achieving Well-Designed Places and states at paragraph 127 that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

*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 live, work 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 Bracknell Forest Local Plan (2002)**

- 4.8** Policy EN20 of the Local Plan is entitled Design considerations in new development and applies a number of criteria. Those relevant to the consideration of this application include the requirement to provide adequate space for private use and visual amenity, where appropriate and does not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding properties and adjoining areas and to ensure that the design of the development promotes, or where necessary creates, local character and a sense of local identity
- 4.9** Policy H8 (affordable housing) states that the Borough Council will require an appropriate proportion of affordable housing on other sites (not major housing allocations) where development would result in a net increase of 25 or more or which are over one hectare in size, irrespective of the number of dwellings

### **The Bracknell Forest Core Strategy (2008)**

- 4.10** Policy CS 7 seeks a high quality of design in all development. This policy states that this should be achieved by building upon the local character, respecting local patterns of development and enhancing the landscape.
- 4.11** Policy CS10 (Sustainable Resources) states that development proposals should be accompanied by a Sustainable Statement demonstrating how current best practice in the sustainable use of natural resources has been incorporated.
- 4.12** Policy CS12 (Renewable Energy) states that development proposals for five or more net additional dwellings, or for 500 square metres (GEA) of other development will be accompanied by an energy demand assessment demonstrating how (potential) carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced by at least 10% and will provide at least 20% of their energy requirements from on-site renewable energy generation

- 4.13** Policy CS17 (Affordable Housing) states that Affordable Housing in the Borough comprises affordable rented and intermediate housing. It states that it will require residential developments on suitable sites to provide affordable housing.
- 4.14** Policy CS19 (Location of Employment) states that small business units (500sqm or less GEA) and non-office employment uses (of any size) will be protected. Planning permission for loss of such premises or uses will only be granted if the proposal does not conflict with other elements of the strategy.
- 4.15** Policy CS23 (Transport) states that the Council will use its planning and transport powers to reduce the need to travel; increase the safety of travel etc.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents.**

- 4.15** Planning Obligations SPD 2015/Parking Standards SPD 2016/Design SPD 2017

## **5. PLANNING ISSUES**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1** As previously stated in the History section to this statement, planning permission was granted for the frontage half of the application site in 2002 for a building containing 8 flats. Although lapsed, this planning permission remains a material consideration in the determination of the current application.

### **Principle of Development**

- 5.2** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material



considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out that for decision makers this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, and
- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

**5.3** Policy CS 19 of the Council’s Core Strategy seeks to protect non-office uses of any size. It further states that planning permission for the loss of such premises will only be granted if the proposal does not conflict with other elements of the strategy. The application site was used for many years as a blacksmiths and forge. The forge was used as a base as most of the work was done on site in various locations. The owner was also a British Oxygen (BOC) agent for at least 30 years. The oxygen tanks were stored in two large shipping containers which are still evident on the site today. Employment levels were low with two or three staff being employed in the office and a couple in the workshop. The workshops have not been in use for over a year.

**5.4** The application site comprises previously developed land (brownfield land) and is in the defined settlement area of Sandhurst. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF under Chapter 11 (making effective use of land) states that planning policies and decisions should “*give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land*”.

**5.5** The business has been closed for over a year and as identified in the accompanying contamination report is likely to contain contaminants in the soil. The cost of remediation is likely to be high which would make it unviable for commercial purposes.

In addition, and as noted in the site and surroundings section, whilst the area historically was mixed in terms of residential and commercial, the former is becoming more the dominant use, with the redevelopment of the site to the east (Farriers Place) and to the south (Coachman's Grove).

- 5.6** The proposal involves a net gain of 14 dwellings. In terms of the Council's housing provision, the proposal constitutes a small windfall site and would contribute to the achievement of the "small sites allowance and overall supply of housing". The proposal would also add to the range of type and size of housing, providing a mix of one and two bedroom flats.
- 5.7** Given the current semi-derelict status of the site with likely contaminants together with its generation of historical low levels of employment it is considered that the re-development of the site for housing makes the most effective use of the land in compliance with the NPPF. It will also bring certainty to its future use providing a use that will be more compatible to the immediate area.

### **Impact on Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area**

- 5.8** Policy CS 7 of the Core Strategy seeks a high quality of design for all development in the Borough. It states that this should be achieved by building upon the local character, respecting local patterns of development and enhancing the landscape. Paragraph 3.7.1 of the Design SPD states that the height shape and form of buildings should be considered at the scale of the street frontage and the street as a whole, in terms of how they contribute to the streetscene and create character. The site is not subject to any restrictions by way of Heritage assets (Listed Buildings/Conservation Area) nor is it within a designated special housing character.
- 5.9** Whilst there are some commercial uses within the immediate locality of the site, the wider area is predominantly residential in character. The character on the northern side of Yorktown Road (opposite the site) comprises mainly two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings, whilst to the south and within immediate context of the application

site, the character is more varied with the adjoining flatted development at Farrier Place and the two storey building currently in use as a blind showroom with residential above.

- 5.10** The site currently presents a relatively unattractive frontage to the streetscene. It comprises the two storey building being the dwelling and offices with a large gap to the eastern boundary which affords views into the site. This comprises a number of industrial sheds together with the open storage of metal girders, oil drums etc
- 5.11** The proposal whilst in outline form, nevertheless with indicative elevations, demonstrates how the proposed will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of Yorktown Road. The frontage building will accommodate 6 x 2 bedroom and 3 x 1 bedroom flats and will be set off the road frontage by between 5 and 6 metres and will have a small grassed garden area set either side of the centrally placed access road. Two disabled parking spaces will be located immediately behind the grass area and parallel to the road. The frontage building will be set off the two side boundaries by over 1 metre and as shown on the indicative elevations will be deigned with two three storey projecting gable features, rendered and with a connecting brick connecting bridge set back and in contrasting brick. Juliet balconies on two of the windows will also assist in reducing the apparent massing of the building.
- 5.12** The driveway will lead under the building into a central courtyard and a parking area designed to accommodate 25 spaces, interspersed with planting. A pedestrian access will also be created to the rear (south) of the site onto Coachmans Grove. The frontage building will be set off the two side boundaries by over 1 metre and as shown on the indicative elevations will be deigned with two three storey projecting gable features, rendered and with a connecting brick connecting bridge set back and in contrasting brick. Juliet balconies on two of the windows will also assist in reducing the apparent massing of the building.
- 5.13** Two x two storey buildings are proposed to the rear of the site and which will “book-end” the development. Paragraph 3.6.2 of the Design SPD states that all backland

development should be subordinate, i.e. it should occupy a minor proportion of the block in which it is sited, should be designed to the highest standards and should have a positive a legible entrance. The principle of backland development is established by virtue of the existing spread of buildings on the site. The scale and type of the development on this the southern end of the site will be seen more in the context of the more recently constructed housing development to the south. Its scale and overall size will be subordinate to the main frontage part of the site in compliance with the Design SPD. The two southerly buildings will be set within a landscaped garden. Between the front and rear buildings there will be a central parking area that will serve the development. The hardsurfaced area will be laid with porous tarmac and will be broken up with planting.

## **Residential Amenity**

### **1. Existing Occupants**

**5.14** Saved policy EN20 of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan seeks to protect the amount of surrounding properties. Paragraph 3.19 also states that new development should be sited and designed to minimise any potential impacts on neighbouring properties and/or its surroundings. The policy requires the Council to have regard to ensuring new development does not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding properties.

**5.15** In terms of protecting privacy paragraph 3.9.14 of the Design SPD states that *“in considering siting relationships between blocks of flats a minimum distance between habitable windows of 22m will be sought to avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking”* The front habitable room windows of rear blocks will be sited some 35m from the rear facing windows of the adjoining flat development at Farriers Place and the rear of 90 Yorktown Road. There will also be a distance of over 40 metres between the front and rear blocks. It is therefore considered that there will be no loss of privacy to the existing properties as a result of the development.

**5.16** Due to the size and relationship of the proposed flats coupled with their relationship to adjoining properties, all of which are relatively distant, it is not considered that the development will appear overbearing or physically dominant.

2) Future Occupants

**5.17** Paragraph 3.9.13 states that with a building(s) with windows above first - floor level, back-to-back separation of no less than 30m is considered reasonable. Intervisibility across the site will be over 30 metres which will prevent any direct overlooking within the site. In addition all flats will be well lit from natural sources and will comply with the National Described Standards in terms of flat size and room size.

**5.18** Paragraph 3.9.2 states that all new dwellings should have easy access to usable outdoor space. The frontage block has an external outdoor area communal area to serve all of the occupiers of this building. In addition, additional space can be provided by way of private balconies. The rear blocks will have rear south facing communal space commensurate in size to the number of flats. Bike and refuse/recycling facilities will be provided in safe and secure enclosures so as not to adversely impact upon the character of the area.

### **Parking and Transport**

**5.19** A Transport Statement has been prepared by Paul Mew Associates. As noted in the report a total of 27 car parking spaces will be provided on-site for the 15 dwellings. Of this total, four will be allocated as blue badge bays and six spaces will be provided with charging points for electric vehicles. In terms of cycle parking, 15 secure and sheltered long-stay cycle parking spaces and six visitor spaces will be provided for the development.

- 5.20** The existing crossover from Yorktown Road will be utilised by the development. A 7 metre wide access road will be provided at the access point and lead to an internal rear parking area. A pedestrian access point will be provided from the south onto Coachmans's Grove.
- 5.21** The Transport Statement has applied local car or van ownership census data the proposed 15 dwellings will generate a demand for 21 cars. The report states that *"therefore, all the future predicted parking demand will be accommodated by the 27 informal parking spaces provided under the proposals"*. In addition, visitor parking demand can be accommodated within the surplus of six spaces. The report concludes that all delivery and servicing arrangements are compliant with local/regional planning guidance and are considered to be satisfactory.

### **Contamination**

- 5.22** Given the previous use of the site as a blacksmiths forge the applicants have instructed Argyll Environmental to undertake a Phase One Planning Preliminary Environmental Risk Assessment. The report considers that the overall risk rating is moderate with contaminant linkages being identified that may impact the proposed residential development. As such it recommended that a Phase II Investigation should be undertaken at the Site to identify whether any contaminants associated with the former use as a blacksmiths forge are within the soil/controlled waters at an unacceptable level.
- 5.23** The report also recommends that before any structural works begins, a refurbishment and demolition survey must be carried out to identify the presence and extent of all Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's). All these actions as recommended in the report can form part of an appropriately worded condition on a planning permission.

## **Sustainable Construction/Renewable Energy**

**5.24** Core Strategy Policies CS 10 (Sustainable Resources) and CS12 (Renewable Energy) state that *“Development proposals for five or more net additional dwellings, or for 500 square metres (GEA) or more of floorspace for other development, will be accompanied by an energy demand assessment demonstrating how (potential) carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced at least 10% and will provide at least 20% of their energy requirements from on-site renewable energy generation”*. In compliance with policy the applicant has commissioned Base Energy to prepare an Energy Statement.

**5.25** The report concludes that solar panel PV would be the most feasible solution to meet the 20% policy requirement. This would be used in combination with a high standard of efficient measures to achieve the initial 10%. As such it has been demonstrated that the development is capable of achieving the energy policy requirement. An appropriately worded condition to require full details of these energy reducing measures at Reserved Matters stage would be acceptable to the client.

### **Flooding**

**5.26** The site is in Flood Zone 1 as described in the Environment Agency’s Flood Maps and therefore at “Low Risk” from flooding. In these circumstances a Flood Risk Assessment is not required.

## **Section 106/Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

**5.27** The applicant is prepared to contribute towards both a Section 106 contribution to the provision of off-site affordable housing and CIL payments where it has been demonstrated by the Local Planning Authority that these relate fully, and are directly attributable, to the proposed development.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1** The application brings much needed housing and a well-designed development that takes full account of the site characteristics and context. It responds to the constraints imposed by the relationship of the adjoining properties by ensuring that the houses will enhance the character of the area, and not detract from the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers, together with providing an attractive environment for future occupiers. The development also incorporates sustainable design and construction principles to a level exceeding current best practice standards. It is supported by policies in The National Planning Policy Framework and the Bracknell Forest Local Plan and Core Strategy. In these circumstances planning permission should be granted.