

PLANNING STATEMENT

Conversion of existing premises into a pair of semi-detached dwellings following demolition of rear extension and formation of new rear extension and alterations. Erection of detached dwelling, all with associated parking and amenity space.

The Hop Poles
Mount Pleasant Road
Alton

May 2021

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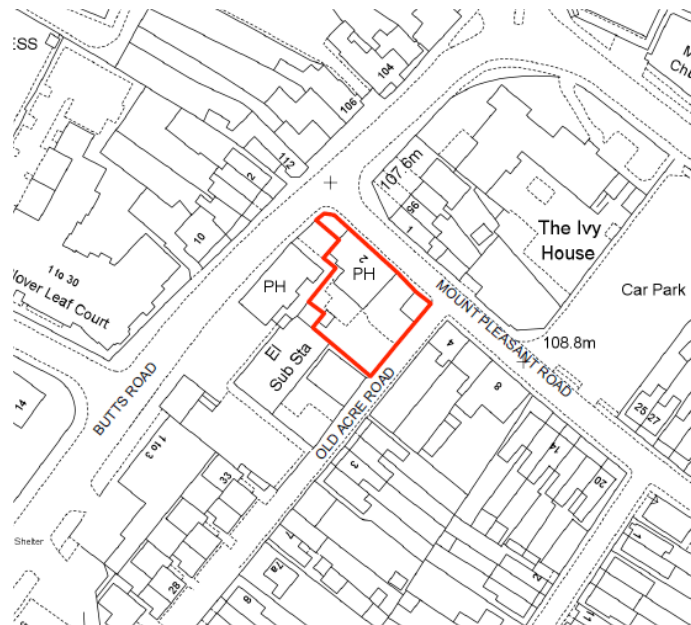
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant in support of a full planning application for the conversion of a former Public House to a pair of semi-detached dwellings, with associated demolition and extensions, together with the erection of a detached dwelling, with associated parking and amenity space ("the Proposal") at The Hop Poles, Mount Pleasant Road, Alton ("the Site").
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to illustrate the key factors that have influenced the design of the proposal and to demonstrate how it accords and complies with the principles and policies established by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and development plan requirements.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The Site extends to approximately 0.07ha and lies on the junctions between Butts Road to the north, Mount Pleasant Road to the east and Old Acre Road to the south east. The existing premises front onto Mount Pleasant Road and it is within the boundary of Alton. It currently comprises a detached building that was most recently used as a Public House (Sui Generis Use). There is an existing vehicular access to the south east of the premises which leads to parking within the site. An OS extract is provided below.



- 2.2 The main building is Grade II Listed with the listing description stating:

“Early C19. 2 storeys; 5 bays. Colour-washed ashlar; slate roof. Ground floor with 4 sash windows and 2 plain doors. 1st floor with 5 sash windows. The end to Butts Road with a single window on both floors.

No 1 and the 'Hop Poles' Public House together with the 'Duke's Head' Public House in Butts Road and Nos 89 to 95 (odd) and Nos 106 to 112 (even) in High Street form a group.”

- 2.3 The building extends over 2 floors and is finished with painted brick with a slate roof. It has been extended and includes a part two storey, part single storey rear extension which is of a flat roof design. The existing extensions are not sympathetic to the form or appearance of the original building and are of poor design and build quality.

- 2.4 To the rear of the building is parking and the former public house beer area, with a timber shed lying at the corner of Old Acre Road and Mount Pleasant Road. The public house has been vacant since 2019. It is currently boarded up.
- 2.5 The site lies within the town centre area of Alton, within the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB). It also lies within the Alton Conservation Area.
- 2.6 The area is mixed in character, reflecting its edge of town centre location. To the west lies The George PH which fronts Butts Road, with modern dwellings recently constructed in its garden area. To the north lie listed properties which are in both commercial and residential use. To the south lies a commercial building with residential properties located east along Mount Pleasant Road and Old Acre Road.
- 2.7 The grain of development is tight knit, reflecting its urban location. The character and scale of built form also varies and includes detached, semi-detached and terraced properties.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY & PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Planning permission was refused for the retention of an extension to the smoking area under applications 27472/005 & 007. Subsequent appeals were dismissed and Enforcement Notices upheld.
- 3.2 Permission was granted under 27272/003 for a change of use from a public house to a hotel comprising 6no. Bed & Breakfast rooms.
- 3.3 Planning permission was granted for the rear extensions in 1983.

PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 3.4 In accordance with the advice of the NPPF, the applicants engaged with the Council at the pre-application stage via the formal pre-app service. The scheme presented at the pre-app stage involved the conversion of the former PH to a pair of semi-detached dwellings and the erection of a detached dwelling at the north eastern corner between Mount Pleasant Road and Old Acre Road. A marketing report was provided as part of the information together with drawings and Planning Statement.
- 3.5 The pre-application advice received can be summarised as follows:
 - Officers are of the opinion that the facility is no longer required and that there are alternative facilities that are easily accessible to the local community they are intended to serve – compliant with Policy CP16.
 - The Marketing Assessment demonstrates rigorous marketing has taken place but it is not apparent whether all reasonable efforts have been made to explore alternative uses of the building beneficial to the local community.
The Marketing Assessment has been refined to address this.
 - The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that the change of use of the building is appropriate and would preserve and enhance the character of the area, would not generate harm to the character of the area in terms of traffic generation, parking, servicing, noise and would allow continued use without compromising future repair or restoration.
 - The existing building has been subject to previously poor alterations and enlargements to the rear and the proposed alterations are an improvement, of appropriate design and scale.

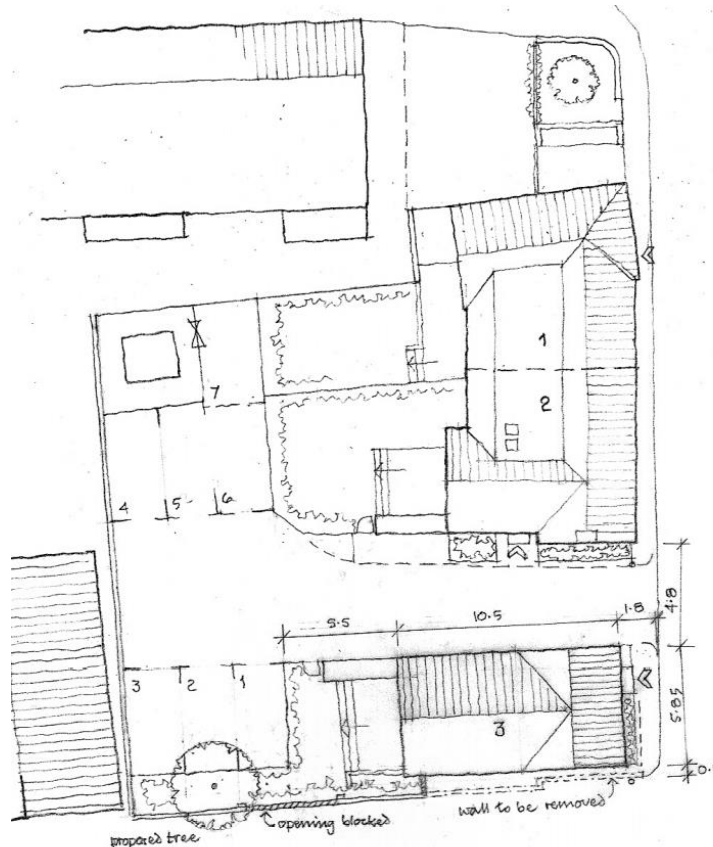
- The principle of a new dwelling on the corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Old Acre Road is acceptable. Following amendments to the design, Officers advised the dwelling was much improved and would not cause harm to the setting of the Listed Building or the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- The scheme has a shortfall of 1 parking space, based on the standards of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan. It was advised that an additional space be provided or one of the units reduced in terms of bedrooms to meet parking standards. *Parking has been revised and a justification for the 1 space shortfall provided herein.*
- The conversion and extension to the listed building would not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring and surrounding properties in terms of privacy, overshadowing, noise and disturbance.
- The ground and first floor windows on the front section of the new dwelling would largely overlook the blank side wall of 4 Mount Pleasant Road. However, there is potential for the ground floor dining room window and two first floor bedroom windows to create overlooking. It was recommended that the first floor layout was amended.

The first floor layout has been amended in response to these comments.

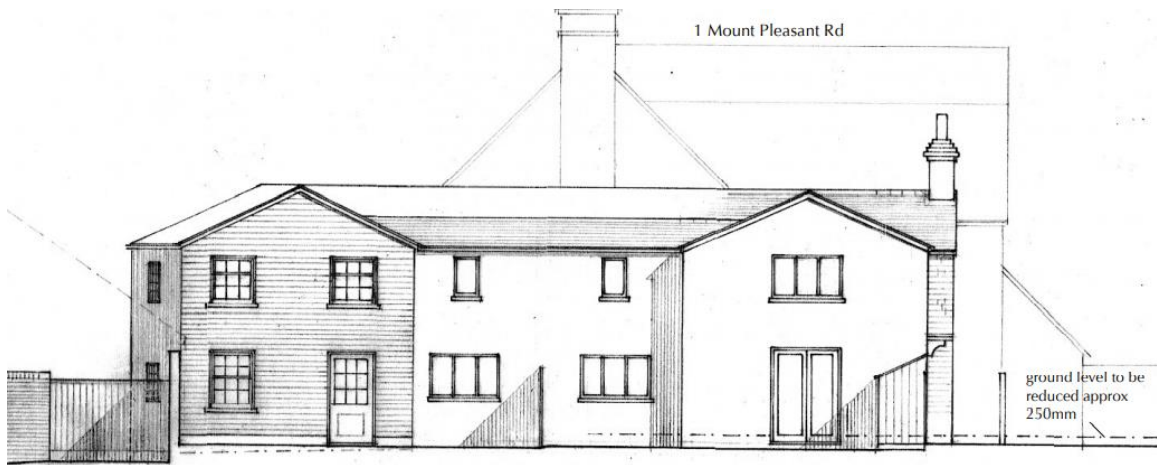
3.6 Overall, the pre-application advice was supportive of the scheme and the recommendations regarding design/layout of the new building have been positively addressed.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

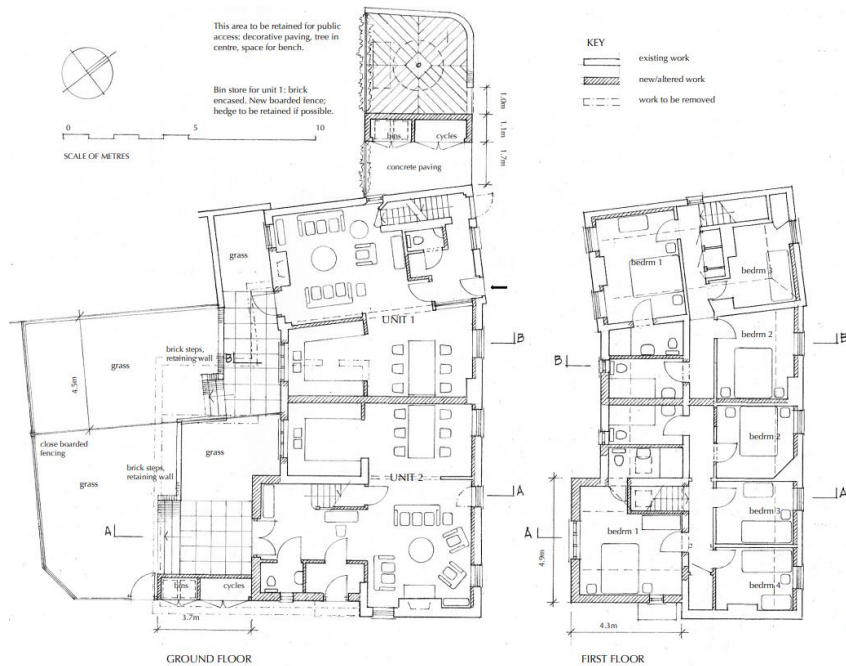
- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the former Public House to residential use as a pair of semi-detached dwellings with associated extensions and alterations. In addition to the conversion of the former Public House, it is proposed to erect a new dwelling to the east at the corner with Old Acre Road, replacing the existing timber store. The proposed layout is shown on the drawing extract below.



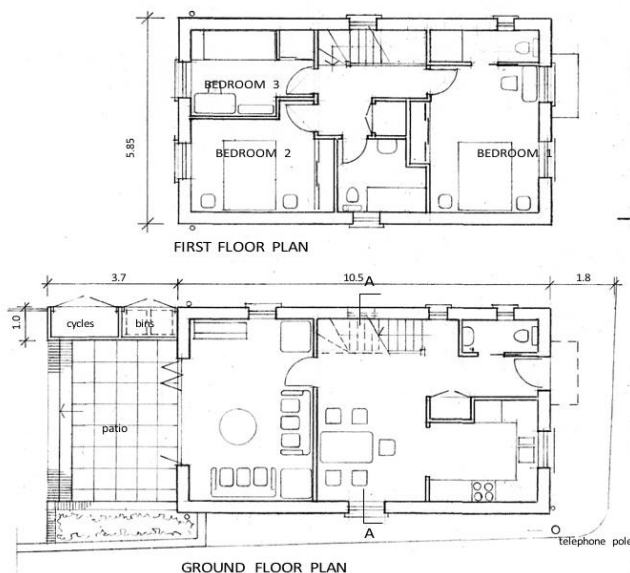
- 4.2 The existing access from Mount Pleasant Road would be retained and would provide access to 7 parking spaces as well as bin and cycle storage, as shown on the site layout above. The former access along Old Acre Road would be formally closed and a brick wall re-instated to match with that existing.
- 4.3 It is proposed to demolish the existing flat roofed single storey rear extension and replace this with a two-storey extension on the eastern flank. The two-storey extension would extend to a similar depth as that which exists on the western end of the building. The existing central first floor flat roof extension would be retained and would sit between the two storey elements at either end of the building. Please refer to the drawing extract below which shows the two-storey extension, set in from the flank elevation.



- 4.4 The existing building would be converted into 2 dwellings comprising 1 x 4bedroom and 1 x 3bedroom, each with private amenity space to the rear. The 3 bedroom dwelling would have a GIA of 109.9sqm whilst the 4 bedroom dwelling would extend to 122sqm. The primary access to each property would be via the frontage onto Mount Pleasant Road with private amenity space to the rear. The proposed floor plans are shown over page for ease of reference.



- 4.5 A new dwelling is proposed at the eastern end of the site and on the junction between Old Acre Road and Mount Pleasant Road. This new dwelling, referred to as Plot 3 is shown on the site layout extract provided at paragraph 4.1. It would extend over 2 floors and has been designed with a shallow pitch roof, reflecting that of the main building on site. It is orientated with its frontage onto Mount Pleasant Road following the advice received at the pre-application stage. This dwelling would provide 3 bedrooms and extend to 102.9sqm (GIA). It would benefit from private amenity space to the rear.



4.6 The drawing extract below show the proposed new dwelling in context.



5.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking (para.11) this means:-
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.2 The Framework advises (para 38) that: *“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”*
- 5.3 Para. 59 reinforces the Government’s commitment to significantly boost the supply of housing. Para.68 recognises that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and are often built out quickly.
- 5.4 Para.117 requires planning decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes while safeguarding and improving the environment. Para. 123 seeks to avoid homes being built at low densities and to ensure developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.
- 5.5 Para. 124 confirms that *‘Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps to make development acceptable to communities’*. Para. 127 confirms that decisions should ensure that developments are: *“sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change”*.

5.6 Paragraph 192 requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

5.7 Paragraph 193 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation whilst paragraph 165 notes that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Development Plan

5.8 Development plan policies relevant to the determination of the current application comprise the policies of the Joint Core Strategy (2014) and the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006).

Joint Core Strategy

5.9 Relevant policies to the determination of the current application include:

- CP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP2 Spatial Strategy
- CP8 Town and village facilities
- CP10 Spatial Strategy for housing
- CP11 Housing tenure, type and mix
- CP16 Protection and provision of social infrastructure
- CP20 Landscape
- CP21 Biodiversity
- CP24 Sustainable Construction
- CP25 Flood Risk
- CP27 Pollution
- CP29 Design
- CP30 Historic Environment
- CP31 Transport

East Hampshire Local Plan : Second Review

5.10 Relevant policies of the Local Plan include:

- H3 Residential Development within Settlement Policy Boundaries
- T3 Pedestrians and cyclists
- HE2 Alterations and Extensions to Buildings
- HE4 New development in a conservation area
- HE5 Alterations to a building in a conservation area
- HE6 Change of Use of a Building in a Conservation Area
- HE7 Demolition in a Conservation Area
- HE8 Development affecting the setting of a conservation area
- HE9 Demolition of a Listed Building
- HE10 Extension or Alteration of a listed building
- HE11 Change of Use of a Listed Building
- HE12 Development Affecting the setting of a listed building
- HE13 Buildings of Local Architectural, Historic or Townscape Interest

5.11 In addition to the above, the Alton Neighbourhood Plan (2016) is a material consideration and in particular policies;

- DE1 Town setting and natural assets
- DE3 Building Design and Town Character
- HO2 Storage facilities for household waste
- TR1 Pedestrian networks
- TR3 Cycle storage and parking
- TR5 Parking Provision and Standards

5.12 As the proposal relates to a Listed Building and is within a designated conservation area, The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE

6.1 As set out in Section 5.0, para. 11 of the 2018 NPPF confirms that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision taking means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay unless the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, or policies that protect specific areas or assets provide a clear reason for refusing the proposal or the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

6.2 The following section therefore assesses the proposed development against the principles of sustainable development and all relevant development plan policies and then assesses as to whether any other material considerations are relevant in the assessment of this proposal.

PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

6.3 The NPPF seeks to boost the supply of housing and recognizes the important contribution small sites can make as they are often built out quickly. It recognizes that development should be focused in sustainable locations, such as this.

6.4 The Joint Core Strategy identifies the site as being within the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) where Policy CP2 directs new development growth and seeks to make the best use of previously developed land and buildings. Policy CP10 further seeks the provision of new dwellings within defined SPB's of towns and villages where it is consistent with maintaining and enhancing their character and quality of life to meet the housing provision requirements of the local plan. Furthermore, Policy H3 of the Local Plan also directs new housing to locations within SPB's.

6.5 The application site lies within Alton town and is within easy walking distance of services, facilities, and public transport connections. Accordingly, subject to all other matters being acceptable, there is no in principle objection to the conversion of the premises and erection of an additional dwelling to create a net increase of 3no. dwellings with the presumption in favour of such weighing heavily in support of the proposal.

LOSS OF PUBLIC HOUSE

6.6 The conversion of the building to create 2no. dwellings would result in the loss of a public house which is defined as a leisure and cultural use under Policy CP16 of the Joint Core Strategy.

- 6.7 Policy CP16 seeks to resist the loss of such premises unless the following criteria are met:
- a) the facility is no longer required and alternative facilities are easily accessible for the community they are intended to serve: and
 - b) it can be demonstrated through a rigorous marketing exercise that the use is no longer viable, that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain it and that there is no alternative use that would provide a beneficial facility to the local community.
- 6.8 The pub has been closed since 2019 and has been actively marketed throughout this period. Prior to the closure of the pub several tenants attempted to operate a viable business, without success. The pub suffered from a poor reputation and turnover was low/unviable with a considerable number of other public houses in the area, including the recently extended/renovated Ivy House/Weatherspoons just north of the site which provided strong competition and dominated the local market.
- 6.9 The premises have been subject to extensive and rigorous marketing by Vail Williams, a well-established agent. They have prepared a marketing report which is included as part of this submission and this provides details of the extensive marketing strategy for the premises, the level of interest expressed and offers made.
- 6.10 The marketing report demonstrates that there was limited interest from prospective publicans with no offers made in respect of retaining the premises as a public house. Most of the interest was from individuals/businesses who expressed an interest in re-developing the premises.
- 6.11 Having regard to the marketing evidence, it is clear the premises are no longer deemed viable as a public house despite all reasonable efforts were made to retain it as such. It is our judgment that the evidence clearly shows there is no demand for the facility (public house) given the notable lack of interest for such during the marketing period. Furthermore, it is understood there are 13 public houses in the Alton town centre area, including three within the immediate context of the site (The George, Ivy House/Weatherspoons and The White Horse), with 17 in the wider Alton area. There are clearly a number of other facilities within the local area, including the immediate context of the Site, that are easily accessible to the community.
- 6.12 Accordingly, it is concluded that the Public House is no longer required and there are alternative facilities that are easily accessible to the local community they are intended to serve, a conclusion accepted and shared by the Council during the pre-application process. Consequently, it is held that criterion a) of Policy CP16 is satisfied.

- 6.13 The Marketing Assessment provides a detailed analysis of the rigorous marketing exercise that was undertaken. The premises were advertised as potentially suitable for alternative uses, including commercial and community, subject to planning. No interest in the building/site was expressed for such purposes, despite the extensive marketing.
- 6.14 The marketing report indicates the lack of interest for alternative community purposes may be due to the level of investment required to bring the building into such a use and the lack of viability.
- 6.15 It is important to note that the marketing exercise was not exclusive to a particular use, it was an open exercise and details sent to various potential end users. The level of interest received is clearly expressed in the Assessment and no alternative commercial or community users were interested in the building.
- 6.16 Having regard to the evidence provided within the Marketing Assessment, the rigour of the marketing that was undertaken and lack of interest generated for alternative commercial, or community uses, it is held that all reasonable efforts have been made to explore an alternative use of the building that would be beneficial to the local community.
- 6.17 In view of the above, it is held that criteria a) and b) of Policy CP16 are satisfied.

IMPACT ON LISTED BUILDING

- 6.18 The building is Grade II listed and the listing description refers to some of its external architectural detailing as well as its group value. The mid C19th building is understood to have been constructed between 1832 and 1841 and was originally a pair of dwellings. A more detailed analysis of the building in terms of fabric and design is provided within the DAS.
- 6.19 The building has been in commercial use for a significant number of years and has been subject to unfortunate and unsympathetic alterations and extensions in its modern history. Internally, there is little of historic significance or value and externally it is the flank and front elevations that reflect its period and architectural significance/interest.
- 6.20 The rear elevation has been blighted by inappropriate and unsympathetic alterations, including a substantial flat roof rear extension and two storey flat roof alterations.
- 6.21 It is therefore our opinion that the significance of the building is derived from its architectural detailing (front and side elevations) which are typically of its period and its group value as seen from Mount Pleasant Road and Butts Road. The rear elevation has

less significance. Similarly, the setting of the premises has been much altered over time and the significance of its setting is achieved from its relationship with nearby listed properties.

Works to Listed Building

- 6.21 The removal of the substantial single storey flat roof rear extension and partial removal of the two-storey element (to be incorporated into the two-storey extension proposed) would not result in the removal of historic fabric and provides an opportunity to deliver enhancements to the building.
- 6.22 The two-storey extension would be set back from the flank elevation, thereby retaining legibility of the original form. It has been designed with a depth that reflects the similar two storey 'wing' on the western flank. Importantly, the two-storey element enables the existing first floor flat roof element to be partially screened, reduces its visibility, and delivers enhancements to the property, as highlighted in the image below.



- 6.23 The internal works associated with the conversion would not lead to a loss of historic fabric. The matters of historic significance on the front and side elevations would be retained, as shown on the submitted details.
- 6.24 Accordingly, the significance of the building, that being its architectural detailing on its front and side elevation would not be harmed.

- 6.25 The building is presently vacant, having been so for 15 months. Bringing the building back into a viable use will secure its long-term future, facilitating long term investment into its maintenance and management. This is in the public interest. Furthermore, the building would be converted back to its original use, again a move that positively contributes to its significance and the understanding of its origins.

- 6.26 Notwithstanding the above, it is respectfully noted that in the pre-application engagement with the Council, Officers advised:

“The proposed alterations are considered to be improvements, which would be of an appropriate design and scale to the existing building. It was also noted that the building had limited if any architectural features within the building of note.

No objections are, therefore, raised to the proposed extensions and alterations to the listed building as detailed. However, it is advised that any original features are retained, for example the written name of the building on the front and side elevations (The Hop Poles) and first-floor lantern light.”

- 6.27 For all these reasons, it is held that the works to the listed building would not cause harm or loss to its significance or historic fabric. Instead, the sensitive works proposed will enhance the significance of the property and secure its long-term survival.

Setting of Listed Building

- 6.28 The new dwelling would be sited within the curtilage of the listed building. The scale, height and form of the dwelling has been carefully assessed to ensure it does not visually compete with the listed building, with the advice received at the pre-application stage positively addressed. The listed building retains its visual prominence by virtue of its width/scale whilst the ridge and eaves height provide a sensitive transition between that of the host building and the terrace property on the opposite side of the junction with Old Acre Road.
- 6.29 The proportions in terms of wall/roof ratio and shallow pitched roof of the new dwelling have been influenced by the proportions of the listed building. The design provides an appropriate response to its setting in this regard. The narrow plot has dictated the roof form, and the former gable roof as proposed at the pre-application stage has been omitted. The scale and roof form are sensitive to the setting of the listed building and indeed the wider street scene.

6.30 The listed building would remain legible and prominent in the street scene. The modest dwelling would not appear cramped and would not cause harm to the setting of the listed building.

6.31 It is noted that in the pre-application stage, the Council advised:

“In summary, the proposals, following receipt of revised plans for the new dwelling, are considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Plan: Second Review, Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy and the advice contained within the NPPF.”

6.32 In view of the above, it is held that the proposal would conserve and maintain the buildings architectural features and would secure enhancements to it. It would also bring the building back into a viable use, thereby protecting its long-term survival which is in the public interest. The scheme would not cause harm to its setting. As such, the significance of the heritage asset is duly protected in accordance with the policy requirements of Policy CP31 of the Core Strategy, policies HE10 and HE12 of the Local Plan, section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the advice of the NPPF.

IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION AREA/CHARACTER OF THE AREA

6.33 The site lies within the Alton Conservation Area, with the rear of the garden defining the boundary of the designated area.

6.34 The significance of this part of the Conservation Area is derived from the pattern of development, with properties typically abutting the pavement or highway, together with their architectural detailing and proportions. The pattern of development is tight knit, reflecting the urban location and general character of the area.

Works to Listed Building

6.35 The two-storey extension would replace a large and unsympathetic single storey rear extension. It is well designed and appropriate in scale to the main building. The visual quality of the building is accordingly enhanced and so too is its contribution to the character of the area.

6.36 The extension would be visible from views within the Conservation Area but would not be unduly prominent or intrusive. It would be in-keeping with the building in terms of form, appearance and finish and would accordingly preserve and indeed enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This view was supported by the Council at the pre-application stage.

New Dwelling

6.37 The new dwelling would be sited on a corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Old Acre Road and occupies a prominent position in the streetscape. The proposed change from a single storey timber building to the dwelling on this corner would be appreciable from the street scene but this does not, however, infer or imply that it would be harmful.

6.38 At the pre-application stage, the Council advised :

“It was advised during our meeting that the creation of a new dwelling on the site in the place of an existing timber shed, on the junction of Mount Pleasant Road and Old Acre Road, was acceptable in principle.”

6.39 Initial concerns were raised about the original design solution for the new dwelling, which Officers concluded was of insufficient quality. The advice was carefully reviewed, and revised details submitted at the pre-app stage which essentially reflect the scale, form and detailing of the dwelling that comprises part of this submission. The amendments, that have followed through into this application involved a re-design of the roof to deliver a gable roof, with the roof slope fronting Mount Pleasant Road, revised window proportions and details as well as locating the main entrance on the Mount Pleasant Road frontage.

6.40 The amendments reflects the arrangement of the listed building within the site and other properties along Mount Pleasant Road. The window details and proportions also better reflect the period properties within the area, reinforcing its local identify.

6.41 The dwelling continues to be sited to reflect the general relationship between the built form and highway found within the area, including on the opposite side of the junction between Mount Pleasant Road and Old Acre Road. In this regard, the siting is appropriate and reflects the grain of development and its relationship with boundaries in the area. The dwelling would be of height lower than those properties opposite and to the east. It would not therefore interrupt the skyline or appear overscaled/visually dominant in long or short views.

6.42 Traditional materials and simple detailing are proposed, reflecting the character of dwellings found in the area. The quality of built form, treatment of hard surfaces, discreet form of parking, bin and cycle storage, all ensure the development would sit comfortably in the street scene and avoid prominent or excessive areas of hardstanding, intrusive parking or visual clutter.

6.43 The new dwelling would optimise the use of the site whilst ensuring no harm to the character or appearance of the area results.

6.44 In considering the scale, form and detailing of the new dwelling, the Council concluded:

“The revised design shows the main front entrance door onto Mount Pleasant Road, a pitched roof angling back away from the road and a gable end to the rear of the property, and larger window opening on the front and both side elevations of the property...”

On consideration of the revised new dwelling, the Conservation Officer has advised that the revised proposal has addressed initial concerns, with the new proposal considered to be much improved relating to the listed building, surrounding traditional buildings and the buildings of the Alton Conservation Area.”

6.45 As a consequence of the above and having regard to the pre-application advice, it is concluded that the proposal would conserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and would not generate harm. Consequently, it is held that the proposal is compliant with the requirements of Policies CP29 and CP30 of the Core Strategy, Policies HE4, HE5 and HE8 of the Local Plan, section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the advice of the NPPF.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

6.46 The site lies on the edge of the town centre and whilst the area is predominantly residential in character the site is bordered by other uses. To the west lies The George PH, whilst opposite is both residential and commercial properties. To the south is a commercial unit, used for purposes associated by a Funeral Director, whilst to the east are residential properties fronting Mount Pleasant Road.

Conversion to 2 dwellings

6.47 The first-floor accommodation within the former public house provides accommodation with the front and rear facing floor windows serving this. The conversion would retain the front and rear facing windows which would continue to serve habitable accommodation, and, in this respect, there is no material change in terms of relationship with neighbouring properties.

- 6.48 The two-storey extension would include rear facing windows and that would look towards the commercial unit – no material overlooking, or privacy issues would arise in this regard.
- 6.49 The existing access would be retained, and parking provided to the rear of the site. This arrangement reflects the existing situation, with parking available within the site. Given the separation distances involved and level of parking proposed, no harm would arise for neighbouring residents.
- 6.50 It is noted that at the pre-application stage, the Council concluded:

“The conversion and extensions proposed to the listed building are set away from the neighbouring and surrounding properties, with views towards the neighbouring pub, pub garden and existing large outbuilding. These alterations are not considered to result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring and surrounding properties in terms of privacy, over shadowing and noise and disturbance.”

The works to the listed building associated with its conversion remain as per the pre-application stage and there is no basis on which to reach a different conclusion, with the conversion and extensions compliant with development plan policy designed to protect neighbouring amenity.

New Dwelling

- 6.51 The proposed new dwelling would be sited adjacent and parallel with Old Acre Road, with its front elevation facing onto Mount Pleasant Road. The front elevation would look towards 1 Mount Pleasant Road, located on the other side of the road, and its rear garden and parking area. Having regard to the separation distances, intervening road and relationship to the rear garden and parking area, the first floor windows would have no greater impact than those on the Hop Poles building or neighbouring residential properties. No harmful loss of privacy or overlooking would result, a conclusion supported by the Council at the pre-application stage.
- 6.52 No.4 Mount Pleasant Road lies on the opposite corner with Old Acre Road and the new dwelling would be opposite the flank wall of this property that includes a small window at ground floor level. The proposed new dwelling would have a dining room window on its side elevation, facing Old Acre Road and the flank wall of no.4. Having regard to the intervening road and oblique angle between the windows, it is not considered that a harmful loss of privacy or overlooking would arise.

- 6.53 At the pre-application stage the Council suggested that the first floor windows be reviewed to ensure any windows serving primary habitable accommodation do not overlook the rear garden serving no. 4 Mount Pleasant Road. It was further noted that any side facing windows should serve non-habitable rooms and be detailed to be obscure glazed with high level opening windows only.
- 6.54 In response to the pre-application advice, the first floor layout has been reviewed and does not include any side facing windows at first floor level serving habitable accommodation. One side facing window is proposed to serve a bathroom and this would be obscure glazed and high level opening only. No overlooking towards no.4 or its rear garden would arise from flank windows. The rear facing windows would not generate direct views into the garden of no.4 and the relationship is not unusual in this urban context. The rear facing bedroom windows would not lead to harmful overlooking or loss of privacy to the rear garden of no.4.
- 6.55 No side facing windows serving habitable rooms are proposed on the rear extension to the listed building or the new dwelling and no mutual overlooking would arise.
- 6.56 The sensitive design, scale and siting of the development would not lead to any overbearing or overshadowing impacts on any neighbouring property.

HIGHWAY AND PARKING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.57 The existing access into the site from Mount Pleasant Road is located between the public house and an existing timber structure. The access would be retained in its current position. The traffic generation from 3 dwellings is not considered to be materially greater than that associated with the former commercial use, which included a public house and rental rooms above, and in this regard no intensification of use of the access would arise.
- 6.58 Policy TR5 of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan establishes the parking standards for the area and requires 7 parking spaces for the dwellings plus 1 visitor space should be provided for 2 x3 bed dwellings and 1 x 4 bed dwelling. The proposal provides 7 spaces. As such, there is a shortfall of parking of 1 parking space. .
- 6.59 It is acknowledged that the Alton Neighbourhood Plan does not allow for a reduction in parking standards even where proposals are within the town centre and close to sustainable modes of transport, such as this site. However, we remain mindful that the site is highly sustainable in terms of accessibility and, in line with the Government's

commitment to encouraging less reliance of motor vehicles, the level of parking is considered adequate in terms of avoiding pressure for on street parking whilst recognising the highly accessible location of the site within the town centre.

- 6.60 Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that the former use of the site, as a public house, would have generated on street parking demands and, on balance, it is held that the proposal would not generate any additional demand over and above that associated with the current use.
- 6.61 The provision of an additional space to meet the parking standards has been carefully considered. It would, however, lead to excessive harking and parking, which would be to the detriment of the setting of the listed building which remains a competing and material consideration in this particular case.
- 6.62 Given the unique circumstances associated with this site and in particular the listed building and the need to protect its setting, together with the parking demands generated by the former use, it is considered that the provision of 7 parking spaces to serve the 3no. dwellings is an appropriate balance and would avoid any increase in demand for on street parking when compared to the current use of the site. Town centre car parks are also available within 40m of the site.
- 6.63 Bin and cycle storage are provided within the site and bin can be left kerb side for collection, as occurs for other properties in the immediate area.
- 6.64 Overall, the proposal would not generate conditions that would be prejudicial to the highway safety of any user.

HOUSING STANDARDS

- 6.65 The dwellings would all exceed the Technical Housing Standards in terms of overall size and bedroom sizes. The garden areas are commensurate for the size of properties in a town centre location, is level, accessible and usable. All habitable rooms would be served by a good standard of daylight/sunlight and outlook. Overall, the dwellings would provide high quality living accommodation, compliant with the objectives of development plan policies and NPPF advice.

ECOLOGY

- 6.66 The site is not subject to any ecological designations. A Phase 1 ecological survey has been undertaken and this concluded that there was low potential for roosting bats, with a recommendation for Phase 2 emergence surveys to be undertaken. The emergence surveys are being undertaken and an addendum report will be submitted in due course together with details of any appropriate mitigation, as required.
- 6.67 No other protected species or potential for such were noted.
- 6.68 The removal of extensive areas of hard surfacing to the rear of the site and provision of native planting within the rear gardens offers opportunities for bio-diversity enhancement.

FLOODING

- 6.69 The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of flooding.
- 6.70 The submission includes details of foul and surface water drainage. It is noted that the development would increase the extent of permeable surface within the site. No surface water flooding would arise from the development and foul water connections would be made in liaison with the utility providers.

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

- 6.71 The conversion of the listed building presents limitations in terms of retrofitting the building. However, energy efficient design would be secured in the replacement rear extensions, together with the installation of secondary glazing. The carbon requirements would accordingly be reduced through sensitive design and construction.
- 6.72 There is greater scope to reduce energy demands for the new dwelling and these matters can be appropriately controlled by way of condition.

7.0 WEIGHING THE PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.1 The Hop Poles, a former Public House, is Grade II Listed and lies vacant, having ceased trading 15months ago. The building has been subject to extensive works over the years, including unfortunate and less than sympathetic extensions at the rear. The building needs investment and to be brought back into economic use.
- 7.2 Permission is sought to extend and alter the building to facilitate its conversion to 2no. dwellings with a detached dwelling proposed at the north east corner of the site. The existing access would be retained with parking discreetly provided at the rear.
- 7.3 This submission is accompanied by a marketing report prepared by Vail Williams who actively and extensively marketed it for 15months. This confirms the level and extent of interest, concluding that no publicans expressed serious interest or made offers for the public house. No alternative community/leisure users expressed interest, instead the only interest was to convert the premises. In view of this marketing exercise, it is concluded that the continued use of the premises as a public house is not viable and there is no demand for its continued use as such. There are 17 public houses serving the local community, including 3 within 75m of the site. The loss of the public house would not compromise the range of similar services offered to the local community and all reasonable efforts have been made to explore the potential for alternative community uses.
- 7.4 The conversion and alterations would bring back this vacant listed building into economic use, a matter that attracts substantial weight in secures the long-term future of the heritage asset. The extensions and works to the rear enhance the quality of the building and secure the removal and screening of less sympathetic alterations. No loss of historic fabric would result, and no harm would occur.
- 7.5 The new dwelling has been carefully sited, scaled and designed to ensure no harm to the setting of the listed building. Its form and siting is responsive to the conservation area in which it is located. Parking is discreet and would not dominate the site or frontage. Overall, the quality of development would afford appropriate protection and enhancement to the significance of the conservation area.

- 7.6 A total of 7 parking spaces are proposed, with a shortfall of 1 space resulting. Having regard to the lawful use of the existing premises and the parking demands it generated, it is held that the proposal would not lead to any increase in pressure for on street parking. It is further noted that the parking design represents the optimal balance between the parking standards and the statutory need to protect the setting of the Listed Building. For these reasons, it is held that the development would not prejudice highway safety or increase pressure for on street parking.
- 7.7 No harm would arise for neighbouring occupants and future occupants would benefit from high quality accommodation and amenity space.
- 7.8 Overall, the development comprises a sustainable form of development, optimizes this previously developed site within the Settlement Policy Boundary. The development is acceptable within the context of the existing built environment, affording protection and enhancement to heritage assets, securing the long term management and maintenance of the listed building by bringing it back into a viable use. An acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties is achieved.
- 7.9 For these reasons, it is held that the proposal would in accordance with the development plan and NPPF as well as the relevant provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.