

# PLANNING STATEMENT

Erection of 2no. detached dwellings with associated parking  
Access and amenity space following demolition of  
Existing dwelling.

10 Tower Street  
Alton

May 2021

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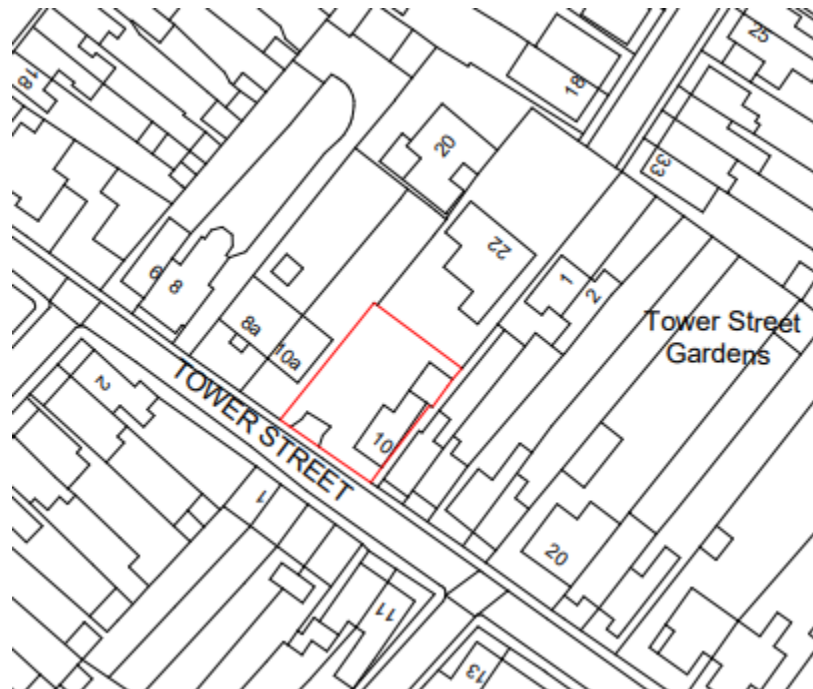
**Appendix A – Appeal Decisions regarding obscure glazing for bedroom windows being acceptable**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant in support of a full planning application for the erection of 2no. x 3 bedroom dwellings with associated access, parking and amenity space following the demolition of the existing dwelling (“the Proposal”) at 10 Tower Street, 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 0.2ha and lies on the northern side of Tower Street. It currently comprises a detached dwelling with associated garden and parking. The existing property is set below the level of Tower Street, set behind a low level wall. An OS extract with the site edged red is shown below for context.



- 2.2 As noted above, the site sits below the level of Tower Street and is relatively level. There are no trees of any merit within its boundaries.
- 2.3 The area is predominantly residential in character and includes detached, semi-detached and terraced units. Many of the properties are Victorian, with plenty of examples of more modern infills. At the eastern end of the Tower Street are more modern properties as well as to the immediate rear of the site.
- 2.4 The area is defined by a tightly knit pattern of development, reflecting the urban grain of the locality. Many properties having lateral space around them and varying garden depths. The properties along Tower Street typically either front directly on to the road or have a small front garden set behind low walls. There are examples of parking along frontages (for example, no's 8A and 10A Tower Street) although many properties do not benefit from off street parking. On street parking occurs on the southern side of the road, with no on street parking on the northern side.

- 2.5 Many properties along Tower Street date from the Victorian period and this is reflected in their form and scale. There are, however, more modern properties located along the street and this adds variety in terms of form and scale. There is an element of uniformity to tightly arranged properties and their roof heights which step up in an easterly direction, reflecting the natural rise in topography along the road. Properties are typically finished with brick or rendered facades.
- 2.6 To the rear of the site is a modern development of dwellings.
- 2.7 The site is located within the Settlement Policy Boundary area and is within walking distance of Alton town centre and its services and facilities as well as local public transport networks and connections.

### **3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

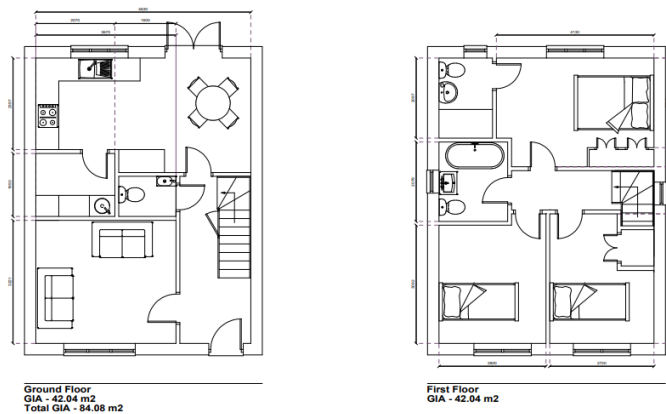
3.1 There is no relevant planning history associated with the property.

## 4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of 2no. x 3 bedroom detached dwellings, with associated access, parking and amenity space following the demolition of the existing detached dwelling. An extract of the proposed layout is shown below.



4.2 The dwellings would extend to 84.1sqm (GIA) and provide a living room, wc, utility and kitchen/diner at ground floor level with 3 bedrooms including the main double, at first floor level with an en-suite and family bathroom. Both dwellings would have the same layout, as shown on the drawing extract below.



- 4.3 The height of the dwellings is stepped, reflecting the natural change in topography along the road. The ridge height of the dwellings responds to the height of 10A to the west and 12 to east, providing a sensitive and appropriate transition between the natural rise in ridge heights along this part of Tower Street, as shown on the drawing extract below. The dwellings would be finished in render with slate roofs.



- 4.4 Parking is proposed forward of each property, with 2 allocated spaces per dwelling. Bin and secure cycle storage would be provided to the rear of each unit, with side access provided into the rear gardens. These arrangements are shown on the proposed site layout details included at paragraph 4.1.



## **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”*.

**The Development Plan**

- 5.6 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*

- 5.7 Relevant policies to the determination of the current application include:

- CP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP2 Spatial Strategy
- CP10 Spatial Strategy for housing
- CP11 Housing tenure, type and mix
- CP21 Biodiversity
- CP24 Sustainable Construction
- CP25 Flood Risk
- CP26 Water resources/water quality
- CP27 Pollution
- CP29 Design
- CP31 Transport
- CP32 Infrastructure

*East Hampshire Local Plan : Second Review*

- 5.8 Relevant policies of the Local Plan include:

- H3 Residential Development within Settlement Policy Boundaries

- 5.9 In addition to the above, the Alton Neighbourhood Plan (2016) is a material consideration and in particular policies DE3 (Building Design and Town Character) and TR5 (Parking Provision and Standards).

## **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 direct news 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 to the re-development of the site to provide 2 small family sized dwellings subject to all other relevant planning considerations and policies be satisfied, as discussed below.

**IMPACT ON THE CHARACER OF THE AREA**

- 6.6 Policy CP29 of the Joint Core Strategy states that all new development will ensure that they layout and design of development contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place and is appropriate any sympathetic to its setting in terms of scale, height.
- 6.7 Tower Street is characterised by dwellings of varied form and includes detached, semi-detached and terrace. The provision of a pair of modest detached dwellings is not therefore out of keeping or indeed harmful to the character of the area.
- 6.8 The proposed site layout respects the established building line of 8A and 10A Tower Street to the west. They are set back from the front building line of no.12 and in this regard they do not appear visually prominent from views looking west along Tower Road towards the site.
- 6.9 The area is defined by a relatively tight knit spatial pattern and the proposal provides a sensitive layout in this regard. Lateral space is secured to side boundaries and also between the properties. The spatial arrangement avoids a cramped appearance whilst reflecting the urban grain and rhythm of development in the area.
- 6.10 Tower Road rises in an easterly direction and this is reflected in the gradual rise in ridge heights along the road. Care has been taken to ensure the resulting ridge heights of the proposal do not interrupt the established roof lines along the road and in this regard the proposal reinforces this distinctive characteristic of the area and avoids them being unduly visible and incongruous in their setting. The extract from the street scene elevation, please see below, highlights the ease within which the proposals sit comfortably in relation to buildings heights and indeed form.



- 6.11 The width of the properties is not dissimilar to others along Tower Street and in particular those bounding the site to the west. The pitched roof is also reflective of roof forms in

the area. In this regard the proposal would not cause harm to the character of the area and would allow the proposal to assimilate into its context.

- 6.12 The existing property benefits from off street parking as do those to the west. Many of the other properties along Tower Street do not benefit from off street parking. Current policy requires parking to be provided on site and the scheme achieves this in a manner that is sensitive to the street scene and includes low boundary treatments. The parking arrangements reflect those to the west of the site and in this regard would they would not appear out of character or keeping. The use of high-quality materials and soft landscaping further ensure no harm would arise.
- 6.13 Overall, it is considered that the scale, form, size, height and spatial arrangement of the development is sympathetic to the setting and character of the area. The development would not be visually prominent or cause demonstrable harm to the character of the area. It provides a sensitive response to optimising the use of the site whilst affording appropriate protection to the character and appearance of the area, in compliance with the NPPF and development plan policy.

**IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY**

- 6.14 Policy CP27 of the Joint Core Strategy states that development will not be permitted if it would have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy or through excessive overshadowing.

**10A Tower Street**

- 6.15 This property lies to the west of the site and comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling which has a small window at ground floor level and rear glazed door. There is a further window at first floor level. None of the side facing windows serve habitable rooms.
- 6.16 The siting of the proposal ensures that the dwellings do not project beyond the front or rear building lines, thus avoiding any overbearing impact or loss of light from the neighbouring front and rear facing windows.
- 6.17 The proposal would be visible from the side facing windows but these do not serve habitable rooms. For this reason, no material harm would arise in terms of outlook or daylight/sunlight.
- 6.18 A first floor bathroom window is proposed on the most western elevation and this would be obscure glazed. No overlooking would arise.

6.19 The relationship between the proposed rear facing windows and the garden of no.10A is typical in a residential area such as this and would not generate significant overlooking or loss of privacy.

**12 Tower Street**

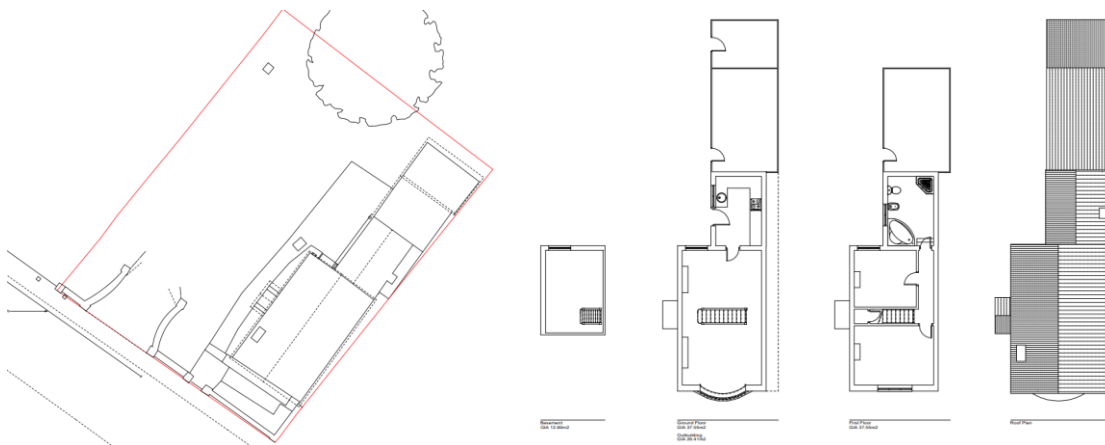
6.20 The proposal would not project beyond the front or rear building lines of No.12 and would not conflict with any critical angles, as dimensioned from the closest rear facing windows. The proposal would not therefore appear overbearing or result in a loss of daylight/sunlight.

6.21 A path separates the boundaries of the site and no.12 Tower Street, with the existing dwelling located along the boundary. This neighbouring property does not have any windows on the elevation looking towards the site. A landing window is proposed on the most eastern elevation, facing towards the path and no.12. This would not serve a habitable room and would not lead to overlooking.

6.22 The relationship between the proposed rear facing windows and the garden of no.10A is typical in a residential area such as this and would not generate significant overlooking or loss of privacy

**No.22 Tower Street Gardens**

6.23 No.22 is a modern property located to the rear of the site. The current arrangement on site includes an extension at the rear that extends virtually up to the rear boundary and includes a window serving a bedroom. Please refer to existing details provided below.



- 6.24 The dwellings would be sited around 7.5m from the rear boundary and would include a bedroom and en-suite window per unit. The proposal therefore results in one additional window, serving a habitable room, on the rear elevation when compared with the existing situation. However, the separation distances now proposed far exceed the existing arrangement and it is therefore considered that the overall impact is not materially worse than the existing situation. It is further noted that these distances/relationship is not unusual in this urban context. For these reasons, the additional rear facing window, when contrasted to the existing situation, is not considered materially harmful to the amenities of the occupiers of no.22 to the rear.
- 6.24 Without prejudice to the above, it is further noted that there is scope to partially obscure glaze the rear facing bedroom windows in the event the Council consider it reasonably and necessary to do so. The upper elements of the window could be left clear glazed. It is widely accepted by numerous local authorities and appeal inspectors that bedrooms are generally used in the evening/night and as such outlook is not critical from such, although daylight/sunlight is and would continue to be generously provided. Attached as Appendix 1 are appeal decisions to reflect the general acceptance to the use of obscure glazing for bedrooms.
- 6.25 The en-suite windows would be obscured glazed and could be restricted to top opening only. This can be controlled by way of condition.
- 6.26 The scale of the dwellings is such that they would not appear visually overbearing or generate any material loss of daylight or sunlight to this neighbouring property.

#### **HIGHWAY AND PARKING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.27 Policy CP31 of the Joint Core Strategy requires that regard is had to any impact on the safety and convenience of the public highway. The Alton Neighbourhood Plan provides advice in terms of cycle and car parking requirements.
- 6.28 Parking standards determine that 4 parking spaces for the dwellings plus 1 visitor space should be provided for 2 x3 bed dwellings. The proposal provides 4 spaces, 2 allocated for each dwelling. As such, there is a shortfall of parking of 1 visitor space. These standards should be viewed as maximum standards given the Governments drive towards alternative means of travel rather than reliance on private motor vehicles.

- 6.29 The site is in a town centre location, within easy walking distance of all the services and facilities offered with Alton town centre. It is also within easy reach of public transport networks and pedestrian and cycle path routes. The site is therefore 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 appropriate in terms of avoiding pressure for on street parking whilst recognising the highly accessible location of the site within Alton. The development provides a sensitive solution to optimising the development of the site and the provision of off street car parking.
- 6.30 Bin and cycle storage are provided within the site and bins can be left kerb side, as occurs for other properties in the immediate area, for collection.
- 6.31 The proposal would not generate conditions that would be prejudicial to the highway safety of any user.

#### **HOUSING STANDARDS**

- 6.32 The dwellings would all exceed the Technical Housing Standards in terms of overall size and bedroom sizes. The garden space is commensurate for the size of property 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**

- 6.33 The site is not subject to any ecological designations. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) has been undertaken by David Archer Associates and a copy submitted as part of the application. This concludes the existing property has moderate suitability for roosting bats and recommends 2no. emergence/re-entry surveys to be undertaken between May and August. The additional survey work as been instructed and the results and mitigation strategy, as required, will be submitted in support of the application within the coming weeks.
- 6.34 The site itself is largely open and comprises tended garden space. The proposal offers the opportunity to enhance bio-diversity interests using landscaping and reliance on native species.



**ENERGY**

- 6.35 Policy CP24 of the Joint Core Strategy requires new development to promote the conservation of energy by seeking the highest practicable degree of energy efficiency. Residential developments are expected to achieve at least 10% of energy demand from decentralized and renewable or low carbon energy sources. This can be appropriately secured by way of condition.

## **7.0 WEIGHING THE PLANNING BALANCE**

- 7.1 The site lies within the Settlement Policy Boundary of Alton and comprises a detached property with associated garden and parking space. The area is characterized by a tight knit pattern of development with limited lateral space. The existing plot is not optimized in terms of use and its spatial arrangement is at odds in the context of the surrounding development.
- 7.2 Permission is sought erect 2 detached modest family dwellings, each providing 3 bedrooms with associated garden and parking spaces. The dwellings would front Tower Street, with parking forward of them and garden space at the rear.
- 7.3 The proposal has been carefully considered to ensure it is sympathetic to the character and grain of development in the area. The properties are of a scale, form and height that ensure they sit comfortably within the street scene and do not cause harm to the visual amenities of the area. Parking is forward of the properties, reflecting the existing arrangement at the neighbouring property. The frontage would also benefit from low boundary treatments and landscaping to avoid the hardstanding being overly dominant.
- 7.4 Neighbouring amenities would be afforded appropriate protection.
- 7.6 The town centre site is very accessible, and the proposal sustainably located and the Government are very clear in their drive to ensure future occupiers should not be reliant on private motor vehicles. Four parking spaces are proposed which provides appropriate parking for properties of this size. Visitors could park on in local car parks, if required.
- 7.7 Overall, the development comprises a sustainable form of development, optimizes this developed site within the Settlement Policy Boundary. For these reasons, it is held that the proposal would in accordance with the development plan and NPPF. No material considerations have been identified that generate substantial harm such to outweigh the merits of the scheme.