



Paul Butler Associates

Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

Hardy Mill Properties

Hollycroft, South Downs Road, Bowdon

Planning & Heritage Statement

21 September 2021

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Professional Planning, Development & Heritage Advisors since 1992.

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1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of the applicant Hardy Mill Properties. The statement is submitted in support of a full application on the site known as Hollycroft, South Downs Road, Bowdon.
- 1.2 The applicant seeks full permission for the redevelopment of the site consisting of one townhouse and four apartments. The site has an extant permission for five townhouses within a building of the same design / siting. The changes proposed as part of this application relate to the following:
- Changing the four townhouses in the main building to four apartments (effectively one on each level).
 - Change to upper ground floor detail on the proposed north elevation.
 - Provision of four no. balconies to the south elevation.
 - Extension of the stair core on the east elevation to enable access to each level.
- 1.3 This statement will provide an overview of the development proposals, summarise the latest position with respect to the design issues relevant to the site and assess the proposals against adopted national and local policy.

Documents submitted with the Planning Application

- 1.4 The following information is submitted in support of the application:

▪ Design Analysis	A258 July 2021
▪ Block Plan	A258_P_002_D
▪ Proposed Floor Plans 1	A258_P_020_J
▪ Proposed Floor Plans 2	A258_P_021_F
▪ Proposed North – West Elevations	A258_P_030_H
▪ Proposed South – East Elevations	A258_P_031_H
▪ Proposed Context Elevation North	A258_P_040_J
▪ Proposed Context Elevation West	A258_P_041_E
▪ Proposed Context Elevation South	A258_P_042_K
▪ Proposed Sections	A258_P_050_F
▪ Proposed External Works	A258_P_060_P
▪ Arboricultural Report	Urban Green

2. Development Context

Development Context

2.1 The applicant, Hardy Mill Properties, received planning permission on 04 July 2017 (ref 91362/FUL/17) for the redevelopment of the site. This consisted of full planning permission for the *demolition of existing dwelling and garage and erection of five townhouses with associated parking, landscaping and amenity space.*

2.2 The above application was subsequently amended by a Section 73 application (Ref: 96268/VAR/18) which approved:

Application for variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) on planning permission 91362/FUL/17 (Demolition of existing dwelling and garage and erection of five townhouses with associated parking, landscaping and amenity space) to allow various changes including re-siting of building, relocation of vehicular access, changes to basement size and access resulting in an increase in size of stairwell enclosure at eastern end of the building, relocation of bin store and cycle parking.

2.3 Development then commenced on site by contractor RJP Construction in November 2019. RJP Construction demolished the existing building and completed preparatory ground works up to the completion of the basement level. At this point it became apparent that the basement location was not in the approved position of application 96268/VAR/18, which in turn required minor changes to the building siting, entrance and building height. Application 102267/VAR/20 was submitted to cover these changes and was approved on the 12 March 2021.

2.4 The previous contractor left the site in 2020 citing Covid-19 as the reason. With the ongoing delays to the construction programme, the townhouse scheme no longer remains a viable or desirable proposition and therefore the applicant is now applying for four apartments, one to each level of the main building. The townhouse in the 'extension' part of the new

building (closest to the junction of South Downs Road, Grange Road and Langham Road) remains unchanged. The proposed change to the unit types necessitates minor changes to the stair core and elevational treatment to be made, including the provision of balconies to the south elevation and changes to the ground floor detail to the north elevation due to the property entrance in this location no longer being required.

Description of Development

2.5 The description of development sought under this application is as follows:

Construction of one new townhouse and four apartments with associated parking, landscaping and amenity space.

2.6 The proposed development is illustrated in the drawings prepared by Ollier Smurthwaite Architects.

3. Planning Policy

Introduction

3.1 In submitting this application to Trafford Council for planning permission, it is duly considered that the key planning issues to be determined under this scheme are limited to:

- Housing Type: the appropriateness of changing from townhouses to apartments.
- Residential Amenity: the potential impact of the minor changes on the amenity of surrounding residential properties.
- Design & Heritage: the appropriateness of the proposed changes in terms of their impact on the streetscene / character and appearance of the conservation area.

3.2 These issues therefore form the focus of the remainder of this statement. All other issues have been determined via the previous planning application and discharge of condition process.

3.3 This section of the statement sets out the national and local planning policy context relevant to the determination of this planning application. An appraisal of how the proposal relates to the key planning considerations relevant to the site is set out in section 4 of this statement.

The Development Plan

3.4 Section 38 (6) of the Town and Country Planning states that applications for development should be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the case of Trafford Council the adopted development plan consists of the Trafford Council Core Strategy. Due consideration in the determination of the application will also need to be afforded to national policies in the

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which represents a significant material consideration.

Trafford Council Core Strategy (adopted January 2012)

3.5 Policies within the Core Strategy, and against which this application will be assessed include:

- *Policy L7 'Design'* sets out the design matters that must be considered by all new development proposals, including: the design quality of the development; the functionality of the development; the impact of the development on residential amenity; the security aspects of the development; and, its accessibility.
- *Policy R1 'Historic Environment'* states that developers must demonstrate how the development will complement and enhance the existing features of historic significance including their wider settings, in particular in relation to conservation areas, listed buildings and other identified heritage assets; and, demonstrate how their development will protect, preserve and enhance heritage assets and their wider settings.

Bowdon Conservation Area – Supplementary Planning Document SPD 5.9 (Adopted July 2016)

3.6 The purpose of this SPD is to guide development in the conservation area and to ensure that it preserves / enhances its character and appearance. The document identifies those elements that contribute to the special character of the conservation area that need to be considered in the design of new development.

Supplementary Planning Guidance 1 New Residential Development

3.7 SPG1 New Residential Development sets out the guidelines that relate to all forms of new residential development. With regards to privacy, the SPG provides guidance for

development up to four storeys. This states that where there would be major facing windows, development should retain a minimum distance of 24m across a public highway and 30m across private gardens.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (published July 2021) is the overarching planning policy document for England and is a material consideration in the determination of this application. The sections relevant to the proposal are set out below.

Section 5: Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes

- 3.9 Paragraph 60 explains that in order to support the government's commitment to significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward for development where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 3.10 Local Planning Authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies or against their local housing need where strategic policies are more than five years old. The five year supply should include an appropriate buffer. Where the local authority chooses to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan the buffer should be 10% to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year. In the event that there has been significant under delivery when measured against the Housing Delivery Test (November 2018 onwards) then a 20% buffer should be applied.
- 3.11 The NPPF is clear at paragraph 11 that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority

cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below the housing requirement over the previous three years.

3.12 Achieving well designed places (Chapter 12) – this chapter sets out at paragraph 130 that planning policies and decisions should aim to 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 of community cohesion and resilience.

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 3.13 Section 16 provides guidance about how to implement the legislation which covers the historic environment, *the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.
- 3.14 The NPPF builds upon the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and requires at paragraph 194 that *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'*.
- 3.15 Significance' is defined by Annex 2: 'Glossary of NPPF' as: *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'. 'Setting of a heritage asset' is also defined by Annex 2 as 'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*
- 3.16 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF advises that *'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'*.
- 3.17 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF advises that *'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any*

harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of the highest significance (including grade I and II listed buildings), should be wholly exceptional.'*

- 3.18 Paragraph 201 advises that *'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss'*.
- 3.19 Paragraph 202 advises that *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use'*.
- 3.20 Paragraph 203 states *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'*.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.21 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published in March 2011 and collates guidance previously published in a number of separate documents. The guidance in the PPG has been taken into consideration in formulating development proposals for the Application Site.
- 3.22 With regard to Heritage and assessing substantial harm, National Planning Practice Guidance advises: *'Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgement for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases... it is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the*

asset or from development within its setting.' (Paragraph: 017 Reference I: 18a-017-20140306).

Historic England Guidance

- 3.23 Historic England has published guidance to assist with the management of the historic environment. This assessment has been prepared having regard to the following Historic England Guidance.
- 3.24 Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets: Published in October 2019, this Historic England advice note covers the NPPF requirement for applicants to describe the heritage significance in order to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for development that affects heritage assets.
- 3.25 Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Published in March 2015, this document provides guidance on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise and heritage recording.
- 3.26 Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, 2017): Published in 2017, this document provides guidance for managing change within the setting of heritage assets, including historic sites, areas and landscapes.
- 3.27 Historic England Technical Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets: Published in February 2016, this advice note illustrates the application of the policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

4. Appraisal

Introduction

- 4.1 It is a requirement of Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 that where a development plan contains policies relevant to an application, the decision must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The statutory development plan therefore relating to the application site consists of the Trafford Council Core Strategy. Material considerations relating to the application site include the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents prepared by Trafford Council.
- 4.3 As set out in section 3, having regard to the limited scope of the development upon that previously approved, the key planning issues to be considered in the determination of the scheme are confined to the housing type, residential amenity and design and heritage matters.

Housing Type and Delivery

- 4.4 The revised application proposes a change in the main building, from the units being arranged adjacent to one another in a townhouse form to the units being stacked vertically to provide single level apartments. The applicant is pursuing this change as a greater demand for this type of unit exists in the Bowdon area (the application is accompanied by a letter from Gascoigne Halman Estate Agents). The number of bedrooms proposed per unit is the same.
- 4.5 In light of the above, the parking and servicing requirements are the same and these aspects of the scheme are unchanged. Cycle parking will be provided for each property

within a dedicated store for each property to be provided at ground floor on the north elevation that will be accessed externally.

- 4.6 The proposed development will therefore continue to contribute towards meeting the Council's housing land targets as expressed in Core Strategy Policy L1 and also responds positively to Core Strategy Policy L2 and the housing needs of the Borough and the wider aspirations of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. The scheme also remains acceptable in relation to Policies L1.7 and L1.8, in that it helps towards meeting the wider Strategic and Place Objectives of the Core Strategy. There will also be a significant benefit associated with the completion of the development on site and the delivery of much needed housing which otherwise would be at risk should this revised form of development proposed not come forward.

Residential Amenity

- 4.7 The development remains acceptable in relation to its impact to surrounding residential properties. To the north and west elevations there is no material change in relation to surrounding residential properties.
- 4.8 On the eastern elevation, the principal difference is the increased height of the stair core. This change will not have a material impact on the property to the east. To the south elevation, a balcony is proposed at each level to provide private amenity space for each unit with each balcony being 1.6 metres in depth. Whilst there are residential units to the south, these are sited 28 metres away under the extant permission. SPG1 states that where there would be major facing windows development should retain a minimum distance of 24m across a public highway, the separation would now be 26.4 metres which remains in excess of the Council's policy requirement.

Design & Heritage

Introduction

- 4.9 In accordance with the NPPF and Historic England's Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' this section assesses the heritage significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Paragraph 195 of the NPPF, specifically requires:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

- 4.10 In considering development affecting a conservation area, special attention must be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area including its setting (Section 72, Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990).
- 4.11 The site is located within the Bowdon Conservation Area, it is therefore necessary to appraise the heritage impact in respect of any impact caused by development on the character and appearance of the Bowdon Conservation Area.

Heritage Significance of the Bowdon Conservation Area

- 4.12 Paragraph 129 of the NPPF states that 'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset)...'.

- 4.13 The site is located within the boundary of the Bowdon Conservation Area. The ‘special interest’ of the Bowdon Conservation Area is set out in the Bowdon Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). It states that the main interest relates to many fine individual residences built in the area, in a variety of architectural styles. The housing comprises a combination of large terraced houses, semi-detached houses and detached dwellings. The materials include red brick, Bowdon ‘white brick’ (buff and later yellow), with render and pebble dash common on the arts and crafts houses. There is a high level of architectural integrity and detail. Houses are set in gardens, which are characterised by a variety of mature trees and shrubs. The area is characterised by the low garden walls of large stone blocks with gate posts, with hedges of various species above and trees along the boundary; some of the houses also have attractive arched doorways in the walls.
- 4.14 The application site is located within Character Zone C ‘Early Victorian Expansion’. Para 4.3.48 of the CAA states that ‘This is a large character area comprising some key roads. Stamford Road, an early route from the church on the ridge of the hill to the road to Ashley, with a few pre-1838 buildings, was developed in a series of small developments. The eastern section of Langham Road, from the junction with South Downs being a later extension of an historic route, along the foot of the ridge; above it on its north side mansions were built which enjoy views, while on the south side are more substantial houses than at the west end, in Character Zone B. Two roads connect these routes: Richmond Road to the west, a steep road leading up to the church, and Heald Road to the east which crossed the ridge at a lower point and slopes more gently.’
- 4.15 With regard to the qualities of the buildings the CAA states in para 4.3.50 ‘The scale and massing within this character zone is larger than that of Character Zone B. The plot sizes are larger and the height of the structures is greater, because of the 2 or 3 storeys and also the average height of the individual storeys. It is a large character zone, which also encompasses a variety in terms of size and style, both in the original structures and as a result of subsequent re-development.’
- 4.16 Page 78 (Map 12 Townscape Analysis) identifies the key townscape features within the conservation area including key views and vistas.

Heritage Appraisal

- 4.17 The proposed design changes requiring consideration as part of this application, consist of the:
- Change to the upper ground floor detail on the proposed north elevation.
 - Provision of four no. balconies to the south elevation.
 - Extension of the stair core on the east elevation to enable access to each level.
- 4.18 The previous permission approved a timber clad combined cycle store entrance area at ground floor level on the north elevation. With the change to single level apartments, this structure has been rationalised to provide the external cycle store only with the adjacent opening a full height window instead of an entrance door in this location. The proposed changes allow the verticality of the built form to be expressed and still convey the appearance of a townhouse scheme when viewed from the north. The impact of this proposed change is considered to be negligible.
- 4.19 Similarly, the proposed balconies to the south elevation continue the language of stone projections to this elevation as established with the extent permission. The vertical emphasis and legibility of the fenestration and projections is maintained, with the scheme continuing to read as a series of individual terraced townhouses. This is illustrated on page 2 of the Design Analysis Document. The impact of this proposed change is considered to be negligible.
- 4.20 The enlarged stair core to the east elevation is proposed to accommodate access to each level. Whilst this increases the height of this part of the building, the structure will remain below the ridge line of the main form of the building and set back from the front / rear elevation of the main building. There is existing tree cover and vegetation along the eastern boundary edge which will also help screen the built form. The Design Analysis Document

submitted in support of the application demonstrates the limited visibility of this structure from wider viewpoints and the effect that existing vegetation will have in screening this element of the proposals. Significantly the proposals will not interact with the key views and vistas identified in the CAA.

- 4.21 In light of this subservience and limited visibility it is considered that the revised development will not appear overly dominant or harm the visual spaciousness between this building and the building to the east, especially as it's no closer. The impact is considered to be neutral compared to the previously approved development.

Summary

- 4.22 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development remains appropriate in its context and relates to the surrounding built form and will not cause harm to the character and appearance of the Bowdon Conservation Area. The proposed changes will have no adverse impact on the design and appearance of the scheme, or the surrounding streetscene / conservation area. The proposals are therefore consistent with policy L7 and Policy R1 of the Trafford Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.
- 4.23 In summary, the design of the proposed scheme will continue to achieve a high design quality and will accord with local and national policy. Although it is not necessary to justify the proposals by demonstrating public benefits, it is considered that enabling the delivery of housing on this site with a viable scheme is a significant public benefit which needs to be considered against the risk of the site continuing to stall and potentially remaining partially developed.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposed scheme seeks permission for minor changes to the previously approved development to allow a change in housing type from 5 no. townhouses to 1no. townhouse and 4 no. apartments. The proposals will allow the delivery of the site to continue without any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The development will also continue to have an acceptable impact in relation to neighbouring properties.
- 5.2 The proposed scheme is considered to be in accordance with national and local planning policy guidance allowing the full potential of this previously developed site to be realised.
- 5.3 Paul Butler Associates are pleased to submit this application and look forward to working with Trafford Council in progressing the application through to a positive determination.