



ROMAN SUMMER

Planning Department
Sefton Council
Magdalen House
30 Trinity Road
Bootle
L20 3NJ

Our Ref: RG/G267/L001
Date : 25th April 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**LAND AT REAR OF 76A SEGARS LANE, AINSDALE, PR8 3JG
DEMOLITION OF GARAGE AND ERECTION OF ONE 2 STOREY DWELLING WITH
ASSOCIATED ACCESS, PARKING, BIN AND CYCLE STORAGE, FRONT AND REAR
GARDEN CURTLAGE, AND ALTERATIONS TO FRONT BOUNDARY WALL**

We are pleased to submit this full planning application seeking permission for the above works.

The application site is located within the established residential area – an infill plot between two houses - and currently comprises a single garage and part of the rear garden of 76A Segars Lane.



This application comprises :

Application form
This covering letter



The following drawings (Hawthorn Design Partnership) :

- Ø L01 A – Location Plan
- Ø L02 A – Existing Site Plan
- Ø L03 B – Proposed Site Plan / Ground Floor Plan
- Ø L04 B – Proposed Site Plan / First Floor Plan
- Ø P01 B – Proposed Plans
- Ø PLN E 01 – Proposed Elevations 1 of 2
- Ø PLN E -2 A - Proposed Elevations 2 of 2
- Ø E03 – Existing and Proposed Street Scene

Pre-Application Feedback

The LPA set out its pre-application advice in its letter of November 2022 (ref: DC/2022/01997), based on the following layout :





The letter notes that the application site is situated in an area designated as Primarily Residential, and in turn suggests that residential use is acceptable in principle.

The letter comments on residential amenity, design and potential impact on the street scene, drawing attention to the New Housing Supplementary Planning Document (June 2018). This provides details of the minimum interface distances that are designed to protect residential amenity and living conditions. The minimum distances between the windows of dwellings are listed as:

Habitable room to a blank wall or a non-habitable room window = 12 metres

Habitable room window to another habitable room window = 21 metres

The letter notes that the 12 metres interface distance can be accommodated between the habitable room windows located in the rear elevation of 76A Segars Lane and the side elevation of the proposed dwelling (a blank elevation). It notes that, although there are windows located on the rear elevation of the extension to 76A Segars Lane, which will be less than 12 metres from the side elevation of the proposed dwelling, there are also other windows and a door located on the side of that extension, and as such the window at the rear is not the only window relied on for light. Also, in terms of outlook, the window in the extension currently looks directly onto the side elevation of the garage. The letter suggests that, although there will be two storey built form located to the rear of the extension, it is considered that on balance the proposed outlook from the rear window on the existing extension is acceptable.

The letter then points to the SPD's guidance on the minimum requirements for garden sizes, which is 60 sqm for a 3 bedroom house. It is also recommended that back gardens should be a minimum of 10.5m in length, when it backs onto other garden areas. The letter noted that the pre-application scheme had demonstrated that a garden of 10.5m in length can be accommodated in relation to the rear garden when taking the measurement from the main (first floor) elevation of the proposed dwelling. The letter notes that, although the length of the garden to 76A Segars Lane (having regard to its extension) is less than 10.5 metres in length, the majority of that garden is over 10.5 metres in length, and on balance the letter suggests that this is acceptable, as there will not be any impact on the privacy of the existing occupiers of 76A Segars Lane or the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling.

The letter states that, for a three bedroom property, two car parking spaces are required.

The letter advises that the applicant should use sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water from the additional impermeable surfaces resulting from the proposals. We anticipate that drainage details will be governed by condition.

The letter notes that there are a mixture of types and styles of properties located within the area, and therefore there is some flexibility in terms of design. It notes that the building line along Sandbrook Road follows the line of the road, and the side elevation of 76A Segar Lane does not follow the same line. It is therefore recommended that the front elevation of the proposal reflects the front elevation of the existing garage, to ensure that the proposal fits in with the street scene and complies with Local Plan Policy EQ2 'Design'.



The letter notes that the area is characterised by low brick walls with shrubs planted behind, along Sandbrook Road. It is recommended that this is replicated for the proposed dwelling and retained for the existing dwelling at 76A Segars Lane.

In overall conclusion, the letter notes that the proposed dwelling is an acceptable use in the area, but recommends that the front elevation of the dwelling is located no further forward than the front elevation of the existing garage.

The Proposal

The application proposal responds to the above pre-application feedback. In most respects, it is very similar to the scheme presented at pre-application stage.

In brief, it is a modest 2 storey 3-bedroom house, accessed via Sandbrook Road with 2 curtilage parking spaces, bin and cycle storage and a rear garden of 143 sqm (more than double the minimum size). As noted on drawing ref: L04B, its depth achieves the policy requirement of 10.5 metres.

To respond to the pre-application request, the front façade of the house has been set back into the site to correspond with the existing garage.

The design of the house is traditional in style, but with contemporary flourishes / detailing. It will be constructed in brick, with red roof tiles, in keeping with the mix of house types in the local area.

To accommodate the frontage parking, part of the existing boundary wall need to be removed.

Landscaping details have not been provided at this stage, and we anticipate that those will be governed by condition.

Assessment against Policy

Compliance with NPPF (and the National Design Guide)

The NPPF confirms that is an important material consideration.

Fundamentally, it promotes sustainable development. It seeks to '*significantly boost*' housing supply, and recognises how important small and medium sized windfall sites are in delivering this.

This development will assist Sefton to meet its target and to '*boost significantly*' its housing supply.

The NPPF suggests that there are three core strands / roles relating to sustainable development : ***economic, social and environmental***. We consider each in turn below.



In terms of its *economic* role, the proposal will assist in supporting sustainable economic growth, through the provision of a quality new home and contributing to the growth and evolution of this part of Ainsdale.

The proposal will help to sustain local construction jobs, generate a New Homes Bonus payment, and a Council Tax payment (all of which are accepted by Inspectors at appeal as constituting economic benefits).

The new household would be expected to spend a significant proportion of their household income in Sefton. Much of that will be spent in local shops and on local services. This in turn will have positive knock on effects for employment in the local area, supporting the supply chain of firms benefiting from household expenditure, and consequently the spending of salaries of those employed as a result of spending by new residents.

On the above basis, we suggest that there can be no question that this scheme will deliver small scale economic benefits to Sefton.

Socially, the proposal will address the need for more housing in Sefton.

The provision of sufficient good quality housing goes to the heart of any good and strong society, and is undoubtedly an important social benefit.

The NPPF makes it clear that planning should be a proactive process to deliver the homes the country needs. Of particular relevance to this application, paragraph 68 highlights that small and medium sized sites (such as this) can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites, it advises that LPAs should, *inter alia* :

*‘support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – **giving great weight** to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.’*

In considering *environmental* benefits, due regard has been paid to both national and local policies that emphasise the need to deliver high quality urban design and architecture. The site as it currently stands is unprepossessing and offers little positive character.

The proposal responds and will contribute positively to local character, introducing a high quality new building of similar size as other buildings close by, adding visual interest and reflecting local distinctiveness. In these regards, the proposal reflects and responds to the townscape / streetscape context and presents an appropriate, thoughtful and respectful design solution in terms of its height, scale, siting, massing, and its relationship with existing buildings and spaces.

Whilst full details of landscaping have not yet been prepared, we anticipate that a condition will be attached requiring such details. There is clearly scope to accommodate an extent of new trees, shrubs and other vegetation, which will be selected not only for its visual ‘softening’ appearance, but also to enhance its contribution to biodiversity based on ecological advice.



Overall, therefore, we contend that the proposal represents sustainable development, which will contribute *economically, socially and environmentally*.

We therefore hope that this application will be welcomed by the Council in respect of its deliverance of its agenda seeking sustainable development and much needed quality homes. It is an accessible, windfall site, close to housing and local amenities, and capable of building the community in a balanced, cohesive and sustainable manner.

The application is also consistent with the remainder of the NPPF. It will help to deliver the housing objectives set out in the NPPF, which confirms that a key aim of the Government is to ensure that everybody has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.

The NPPF also promotes good design, and suggests this is fundamental to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. It encourages developers to make effective use of land and existing infrastructure, in particular vacant sites such as this.

Here we refer to the *National Design Guide*. This explains (at §8) that the underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities. §21 suggests that a well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including:

- the layout;
- the form and scale of buildings;
- their appearance;
- landscape;
- materials; and
- their detailing.

§39 states that well-designed places are:

- based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
- integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
- influenced by and influence their context positively; and
- responsive to local history, culture and heritage.

§41 reiterates that well-designed development proposals are shaped by an understanding of the context that identifies opportunities for design, as well as constraints upon it. It suggests that this should be proportionate to the nature, size and sensitivity of the site and proposal :

'A simple analysis may be appropriate for a small scale proposal.'



Crucially, §43 states that :

‘... well-designed places do not need to copy their surroundings in every way. It is appropriate to introduce elements that reflect how we live today, to include innovation or change such as increased densities, and to incorporate new sustainable features or systems.’

We see no conflict with any of the above policy objectives of the design guide. As we note elsewhere, the local area does not possess a fixed or uniform character, aside from its overwhelming focus on residential uses. There is a wide variety of house types, sizes, styles, ages, heights and materials, and an array of boundary treatments.

The proposed scheme has been influenced by that very mixed context, and is based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, including our own proportionate baseline studies that formed our design starting point and helped to influence the design and layout.

However, §43 of the National Design Guide did not appear by accident. It tells us that applicants and their architects do not need to copy their surroundings in every way, and that it is perfectly appropriate to introduce elements that reflect how we live today, innovation and change. It specifically mentions increased densities. That is precisely what this application is proposing.

Turning back to the NPPF, and as noted earlier, §68 notes that small and medium sized sites – such as this one - can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites, NPPF encourages local planning authorities to :

*‘support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving **great weight** to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.’*

The application site is of course a windfall site.

As such, the scheme complies with the NPPF and should be approved accordingly.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In determining this application, regard must be had to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, we maintain that the proposal complies with the development plan.

The development plan (for the purposes of this particular application) is the *Sefton Local Plan* (adopted in April 2017).

Policy MN1 confirms that windfalls form an important part of Sefton’s housing supply. If the predicted level of windfalls does not come forward, then the Council cannot provide sufficient housing to match its needs. This is a windfall site and as such responds to the intent and objective of Policy MN1 to deliver the correct number of homes the Borough needs.



It is also worth highlighting that the supply of housing is a minimum threshold and not an upper ceiling. All councils are charged with ‘boosting significantly’ their supply, and one would anticipate that councils are even more eager to support good quality, sustainable housing schemes at a time of global economic uncertainty and recession.

Turning to other policies, we explained earlier how the proposal is sustainable in economic, social and environmental term. It therefore complies with policy *SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development* and also *Policy SD2 Principles of Sustainable Development* which confirms that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

There is no conflict with policy *HC1 ‘Affordable and Special Needs Housing’* because that relates only to developments of 15 dwellings or more.

The scheme raises no conflict with *Policy HC3 ‘Residential Development and Primarily Residential Areas’*. This states that residential development will be permitted in such Areas where it is consistent with other Local Plan policies.

The proposed design and layout are of good quality. The architectural composition / materiality is bespoke to this site. It does not seek to copy (the National Design Guide confirms that there is no need to slavishly copy), but it does take clear references from other houses in the local context. In those terms we contend that it is compliant with *Policy EQ2 ‘Design’*.

The application is also consistent with *Policy EQ3 ‘Accessibility’*. This requires new development to adhere to key principles. It is accessible by both bus and rail, and close to local services and facilities.

There are other relevant policies in the development plan, such as those relating to car and cycle parking, and general development control matters (interface distances, consideration of amenity and suchlike). We contend that there is no conflict with any of those policies. The layout and design have been formulated with close attention to these policies and all Council standards are achieved and in some cases exceeded (such as the rear garden which is more than double the minimum requirement), and there is no conflict with any.

Accordingly it is our contention that the development is sustainable and compliant with both the Local Plan and NPPF.

Concluding Comments

We have explained how and why the proposal represents sustainable development, with a range of small scale economic, social and environmental benefits.

We have explained why we consider the scheme compliant with the development plan and the NPPF / National Design Guide as material considerations.

The application promotes residential development on an unprepossessing windfall site in the heart of a residential area.



A good quality design is proposed, which takes references from what is a very mixed local context.

The building will not be incongruous or overly dominant.

All of the Council's design standards – interface distances; garden requirements; parking spaces; room sizes – are achieved and in some cases exceeded.

The proposal will not harm the amenity of adjacent residents, and will sit neatly within the streetscape.

The proposal will assist – in its small way – to boosting Sefton's housing supply at a time of economic downturn, using an accessible windfall site.

We therefore commend this policy-compliant scheme to the LPA and urge its positive determination.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt and validation of the application, and please do not hesitate to contact Richard Gee at the above offices if further information is required.

Yours sincerely
for Roman Summer Associates Ltd



Richard Gee
Director