



## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

**Demolition of existing dwellinghouse.  
Erection of detached dwelling, with  
associated parking, amenity space and  
landscaping.**

**Narnia, 8 Lewis Close, Risinghurst, Oxford**

**November 2023**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning statement has been produced by JPPC to accompany a full planning application submitted to Oxford City Council. The application seeks planning permission to demolish the existing dwellinghouse and to erect a single replacement dwelling with associated parking and amenity space at No. 8 Lewis Close, Risinghurst, Oxford.
- 1.2 This statement sets out why planning permission should be granted and includes an assessment of the prevalent planning policies and an evaluation of the planning issues raised by the proposed development.
- 1.3 The application is also supported by a full set of application drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Enza Architects, ecological appraisal, Energy Statement and Arboricultural Assessment. Given the historic significance of the surrounding area, the application also includes a heritage appraisal.

## **2.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

- 2.1 No. 8 Lewis Close is located in a built-up part of Oxford but towards its periphery and contains a variety of properties of differing age, design, height, size, materials and density. The road is largely characterised by large detached and semi-detached dwellings, which are single residences.
- 2.2 The house is relatively inconspicuous in this context, being small in plan form and scale, of tired appearance and largely unaltered since first construction. The property has a large southwards projecting garden, much larger than most of its neighbours. The garden is laid to lawn limited tree coverage.
- 2.3 The application site is not within a Conservation Area, however the site can be considered in context the context of The Kilns (CS Lewis House) and fleetingly could be considered to form elements of the views into and out of that property.
- 2.4 The area has a regular pattern of streets with houses set back from the road with informal landscaping and parking to the front. There are no views through to public open space behind dwellings.

## **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted for the property in 1968. Beyond that, there is no known planning history on the public record.

## **4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The plan form and arrangement of spaces has taken account of the access points, orientation and privacy. Where possible, the principal living accommodation benefits from double aspect windows which ensure high levels of natural light, views out to the rear garden and better integration with the garden at ground floor level.
- 4.2 The large open plan spaces fulfil modern lifestyle requirements with kitchen, dining and living opening out on to the private garden.
- 4.3 The dwelling would be well set back from the highway providing acceptable parking space and turning area that accords with LPA standards. Carefully considered drainage will be provided and will ensure surface water is disposed of in a sustainable manner within the site.
- 4.4 The proposed new dwelling will be able to demonstrate low energy use over its entire life cycle. To assist in minimising energy consumption and to provide more comfortable conditions internally, the building fabric will be used to enhance the environmental performance of the building wherever possible.
- 4.5 Internally, walls and floors will be fabricated from dense, thermally stable materials and the dwelling will therefore be less susceptible to variations in temperature, as well as requiring less energy to heat. This will be complemented by high performance 'A' rated windows and doors, creating a built envelope that conserves energy wherever possible.
- 4.6 The building will be naturally ventilated with openable windows. The principal living accommodation will have larger expanses of openable glazing to allow for controlled natural ventilation.
- 4.7 It is a key objective to maximise the use of natural light and form links to the outside. This has been achieved through the orientation of the new dwelling and the careful consideration of the floor plan layout.
- 4.8 The scheme actively seeks to integrate the external and internal spaces to the new dwelling, with the principal living accommodation opening out onto the amenity space effectively bringing the outside in and inside out. The large expanses of openable glazing to these spaces ensure maximum solar gain internally whilst creating a light and airy feel associated with modern living.
- 4.9 Whilst evidently larger than existing, the space around the dwelling and general density of the site is considered to be reflective of densities on neighbouring sites and by no evaluation an overdevelopment of the plot.

## **4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

- 4.1 In accordance with s.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan (including local plans, core strategies and neighbourhood plans) unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise. Oxford City's development plan consists of the Oxford City Local Plan 2035, adopted after the previous grant of planning permission.
- 4.2 National planning policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated July 2021) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (as revised September 2023)**

- 4.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development – for decision takers this means that where development proposals accord with an up-to-date development plan they should be approved without delay. Where no relevant development plan policies exist, or where the policies which are most important are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF provides a clear reason to resist the development proposal or where adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole (Paragraph 11). However, this does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision taking (Paragraph 12),
- 4.4 The NPPF also recognises the role which planning has to play in achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places which, among other objectives, promotes social interaction including opportunities for meetings between people who might not necessarily come into contact with each other. (Paragraph 92).
- 4.5 The NPPF places strong emphasis upon making effective use of land to meet the need for homes and other uses – policies and decisions should encourage mixed use schemes, giving substantial weight to the use of suitable brownfield land within settlements. The development of underused land and buildings is to be promoted where this could be used more effectively to meet the need for housing. Policies and decisions should also support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extension where this would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed and ensures safe access and egress for occupants (Paragraph 120).
- 4.6 The NPPF also seeks to achieve development which makes efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other types of development, as well as the availability of land suitable for accommodating it. Including the scope to promote sustainable travel modes and limit future car use, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character

and the importance of securing well designed, attractive and healthy places (Paragraph 124). Local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in the NPPF. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards) (Paragraph 125c).

4.7 The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process seeks to achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities (Paragraph 126).

4.8 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- Function well, adding to the overall character of the area over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping;
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as higher densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place using materials to create attractive and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create places which are safe, inclusive and accessible (Paragraph 130).

4.9 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and the local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests (Paragraph 132).

4.10 Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment – this should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (Paragraph 190).

### **Oxford Local Plan 2036**

4.11 The following policies of the adopted Oxford Local Plan (June 2020) are considered relevant to this case. The following is an abridgment of the relevant policies which can be found on the Council's website here:

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20067/planning\\_policy/1311/oxford\\_local\\_plan\\_2016-2036](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20067/planning_policy/1311/oxford_local_plan_2016-2036)

**Policy S1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. The site sits on Woodstock Road which is defined by Diagram 2 as a key sustainable travel route.

**Policy H1: The scale of new housing provision**

Provision will be made for at least 10,884 new homes to be built in Oxford over the plan period 2016-2036. This will be achieved by amongst other things promoting the efficient use and development of land/sites, including higher densities and building heights in appropriate locations.

**Policy H4: Mix of dwelling sizes**

Planning permission will be granted for residential development that is demonstrated to deliver a balanced mix of dwelling sizes to meet a range housing needs and create mixed and balanced communities. On a site of this size there is no particular/defined mix to provide.

**Policy HP14 (Privacy, Daylight and Sunlight)**

Planning permission will only be granted for new development that provides reasonable privacy, daylight and sunlight for occupants of both existing and new homes.

**Policy H15 (Internal Space Standards)**

Planning permission will only be granted for new dwellings that provide good quality living accommodation for the intended use.

**Policy H16 (Outdoor Amenity Space Standards)**

Planning permission will only be granted for dwellings that have direct and convenient access to an area of private open space.

**RE2 (Efficient use of land)**

Planning permission will only be granted where development proposals make efficient use of land. Development proposals must make best use of site capacity, in a manner compatible with the site itself, the surrounding area and broader considerations of the needs of Oxford.

**RE4 (Sustainable and foul drainage, surface and groundwater flow)**

All development proposals will be required to manage surface water through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) or techniques to limit run-off and reduce the existing rate of run-off on previously developed sites. Surface water runoff should be managed as close to its source as possible, in line with the drainage hierarchy

**RE6 (Air quality)**

Planning permission will only be granted where the impact of new development on air quality is mitigated and where exposure to poor air quality is minimised or reduced

**RE7 (Managing the impact of development)**

Planning permission will only be granted for development that:

- a) ensures that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected; and
- b) does not have unacceptable transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network; and
- c) provides mitigation measures where necessary

**DH1 (High quality design and placemaking)**

Planning permission will only be granted for development of high quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness. All developments will be expected to be supported by a constraints and opportunities plan and supporting text and/or visuals to explain their design rationale in a design statement proportionate to the proposal.

Planning permission will only be granted where proposals are designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development

**M3 (Motor vehicle parking)**

In Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) where development is located within a 400m walk to frequent (15minute interval) public transport services and within 800m walk to a local supermarket or equivalent facilities planning permission will only be granted for residential development that is car-free. In all other circumstances maximum parking standards apply: being one space per dwelling.

**M5 (Bicycle parking)**

Planning permission will only be granted for development that complies with or exceeds the minimum bicycle parking provision as set out in Appendix 7.3. This means 3 spaces per dwelling for 3+ bedroom houses.

Bicycle parking should be, well designed and well-located, convenient, secure, covered (where possible enclosed) and provide level, unobstructed external access to the street.

## **6.0 PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDARATIONS**

### **Principle of Development**

- 6.1 The site is presently in use for residential purposes as would remain the case under the proposal. But the development provides an improved use of the site's potential, making better use of available land whilst paying regard to the local context.
- 6.2 One x 4 bedroom family home will be provided which is considered an appropriate development for the site given the size of the plot and highly sustainable location in which it sits with excellent links to the City Centre where

there is a wide range of services, facilities and job opportunities. The predominant character of the area is large villa-style properties, which the proposal will sit comfortably amongst.

- 6.3 The site is in an extremely accessible location with the nearest bus stop within 200m serving Oxford. There are cycle routes which lead directly into the City Centre within approximately 20 minutes and access into the centre by car can be made in a similar time period.
- 6.4 Policy seeks to focus development on previously developed land, and to secure the most efficient use of such land at the maximum density possible, consistent with the context. The proposed development achieves this in an appropriate way with sufficient provision for amenity to serve the proposed occupiers and protection of neighbours' amenities. The development is considered to have maximised the potential of the site, bearing in mind the on-site and off-site residential amenity and design and form requirements. The proposed development would be consistent with the NPPF in that it would make efficient and effective use of previously developed land in a manner compatible with its surroundings.
- 6.5 The provision of a much improved family house in this location should be encouraged, especially as this is the predominant character of the area and most readily achieves a scheme that respects the scale, form and use of its neighbours.
- 6.6 The proposal is in keeping with the character of development in the vicinity and makes better use of the land than the existing single dwelling, making best use of the land it is served by. The plot proportions are in line with other detached dwellings in the vicinity. The higher density of development to be provided on the site is commensurate with the character of other developments within the immediate vicinity and would therefore appear as appropriate within this urban fringe context. The density would not be excessive as the scale of the house is proportionate to the plot size and provides a good sized 4 bedroom family home.
- 6.7 Whilst the size of the dwellings exceed minimum space standards, these standards are intended as a tool to control the creation of substandard sized houses and are not meant to stem the supply of larger properties with better circulation and habitable space.
- 6.8 The proposal will also provide economic and social benefits, including a boost to the local economy during construction. It is evident therefore that the proposed development is sustainable in terms of the environmental, economic and social dimensions set out in the NPPF.
- 6.9 The development seeks to achieve a high quality environment and has been progressed following a detailed analysis of the site's opportunities and constraints. The discussion below considers the relevant design and access issues.



## **Amount**

- 6.10 The development site measures approximately 1,500 sqm in area. The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing house, which has not been altered or extended since its construction, and to be replaced by one new house of exemplary design.
- 6.11 The dwelling would provide 4 bedrooms over two storeys of contemporary form and would be provided with excellent access to private amenity space to the rear of the building, exceeding the footprint of the house with ease.
- 6.12 The proposal is considered to be acceptable when measured against local plan policy, as well as paying regard to the site context which is principally larger family housing. The provision of a 4 bedroom unit also ensures that there will be no loss of family units as is required by policy.

## **Layout and Scale**

- 6.13 The proposed layout respects the established pattern of development in the area with the frontage of the proposed dwellings orientated towards Lewis Close with a sloping roof towards the road and gable forms being the predominant feature of the houses. The principal amenity space will be provided to the rear as is the norm in the area, with fleeting, largely non-existent views through to the private garden space.
- 6.14 The dwelling would be served by an unmodified vehicular access with car parking to the front via a combination of integral and driveway parking, with the plot benefitting from sufficient space available to ensure vehicles do not overhang the public highway. In fact, in this instance the spaces will be set behind the site entrance area, thereby ensuring parking does not dominate the front appearance of the site.
- 6.15 The scheme has been carefully designed to ensure that the scale of the building accords with the character of the area and would not cause potential detrimental impact to the amenities of existing neighbouring properties in terms of overbearing or overlooking. Specifically, by designing the eaves and ridge heights so that they complement rather than compete with neighbouring houses.
- 6.16 It is acknowledged that the proposed building will be larger than that at present, however the site is, when compared to others, clearly under-used and capable of accommodating additional mass and scale. This has not been done at the expense of local character, as the space around the dwelling is very similar to neighbours, including the set back off the boundaries, to retain the important gaps between buildings which characterises the area.
- 6.17 The applicant does however have the ability to extend the existing dwelling to each side using permitted development rights for single storey extensions, which provides a valid fallback and case for why development should be reasonably accepted at a greater plot width and depth coverage.

- 6.18 The massing and scale of the building is similar to that of many of the other larger scale buildings on Wychwood Close and Kiln Lane, which share characteristics of being the peripheral edge, transition to larger more spacious houses.
- 6.19 Whilst compared to the existing property there is a perceptible difference in the roof height, in terms of the wider character of the streetscene, the ridge and eaves heights of buildings along the road vary and are generally higher, but in this case the proposed building would be consistent with the general scale of buildings in this area.
- 6.20 The submitted drawings needn't include reference to the adjoining properties and their windows due to the degree of separation, offset from boundaries and screening. Suffice to say, the proposed development would not breach the 45 and 25 degree code of practice for sunlight and daylight standards as set out in the Local Plan and as such the proposal would not have a significant harmful impact on those adjoining properties. The depth of the new building would extend to the rear beyond that of the existing property, however the additional depth would not have any harmful impact on the adjoining houses given the relatively secluded location.
- 6.21 In terms of overlooking, no windows are proposed in the side elevations of the upper floors of the building aside for obscure glazed openings to serve bathrooms and one secondary window to a bedroom. To the front, en suite windows are again obscurely glazed. The proposed (minimal) ground floor windows on side elevations would be suitably screened by the existing boundary treatments as shown to be supplemented by new planting (on the landscape plan), including a 1.8 metre close boarded fence, and would not adversely overlook any existing openings. No unacceptable overlooking would occur from the rear windows.
- 6.22 To the rear, windows only realistically have the ability to view the rear end of the garden and nature reserve beyond – it is common for there to be a degree of mutual overlooking between gardens when arranged in a linear form. Other than for maintenance purposes, a condition can be attached to any planning permission to prevent the flat roof area of the single storey element being used as a raised balcony area.
- 6.23 In light of the above, it is considered that the scale of the proposed development is in keeping with the massing and height of existing buildings, which are contributory factors to the established character of the area. The development would not have an unreasonable adverse impact upon the privacy or amenity of adjoining properties in terms of overbearing, loss of light or overlooking into habitable rooms.
- 6.24 The Local Plan also includes a requirement for dwellings suitable for family occupation to provide adequate private amenity space for residents. There would be adequate amenity for the future occupiers as the house would be

provided with its own private large rear garden that easily exceeds the size of the dwelling. This provision would meet the minimum requirements for family dwellings and would provide for appropriate amenity commensurate with the size of the house.

- 6.25 The internal layout of the dwelling would ensure occupiers would be provided with ample internal circulation and living space and the property would be adequately lit. The gross internal areas exceed the minimum national floor space standards and therefore ensure a good environmental standard for the dwelling.

### **Appearance**

- 6.26 Varied architectural styles, sizes, ages and materials surround the site and the character of the area and reference points for the revised design are discussed earlier within this statement. The Applicant proposes to construct a dwelling that reflects and respects the architectural traditions found within and surrounding this part of Risinghurst but with a commendable contemporary twist to add variation and interest.
- 6.27 The development will employ high quality materials to allow it to assimilate comfortably with its surroundings.
- 6.28 The site is not within a conservation area, nor is it near any listed buildings or within an area designated as having a special character in itself, albeit the significance of CS Lewis' house is given appropriate attention with the accompanying heritage appraisal. It is considered that the proposal would accord with guidance in the NPPF in respect of design and with the relevant design policies of the Local Plan.

### **Energy Efficiency**

- 6.29 The application is accompanied by an Energy Statement. It describes the energy conservation measures which have been taken in terms of the design of the development and the energy conservation measures which would be incorporated to ensure a 40% carbon reduction. We conclude that the development would be consistent with the requirements of the Council's policies therefore.

### **Access Considerations**

- 6.30 The existing dwelling has a driveway that accommodates many parking spaces. The proposed development provides off street parking space for the dwelling in accordance with Local Plan maximum parking standards given its edge of settlement location. The access to the integral garage and need to provide turning space means there is a constant and perhaps appreciable reduction in vehicle parking capacity, and as such, a benefit to highway safety and the aims of Policy M3.

6.31 The site frontage continues to benefits from good visibility on a road where traffic is very light and a dead end. Whether entering or exiting the site in a forward gear, the site benefits from a relatively straight road with excellent visibility of on-coming traffic.

### **Bins and Cycle Storage**

6.32 Storage facilities for bins would be provided to the rear of the integral access with level and paved access to the public highway on collection days. It is discretely sited to avoid detracting from views of the property from public vantage points.

6.33 Ample covered cycle storage (4 spaces) will also be provided and situated in an accessible location within the integral garage.

6.34 The proposal therefore wholly satisfies the requirements of local plan policy in respect of requirements for waste storage and recycling.

### **Landscaping and Trees**

6.35 A tree survey accompanies the application undertaken by Venners Arboriculture. The report concludes that the size and location of the trees to be retained means that they will not be a constraint to the proposed re-development.

6.36 The assessment finds that the development proposal would not have a detrimental effect upon views of trees, nor impact on any root protection area. As such, it is considered that the proposals are compatible with the existing and potential future influence of local trees. As such, no significant tree loss would occur as a consequence of the proposed development.

6.37 It is shown on the site and landscape plans that new tree planting will be undertaken which it is considered will grow in harmony with the proposed development.

### **Ecology**

6.38 The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Windrush Ecology. The analysis consisted of a desk study and site survey and activity surveys.

6.39 The report finds that the habitats present on the site are unlikely to support important animal species.

6.40 In respect of bats, there are no known previous reports of bats at the site and the building has been inspected and concluded that, the site has low bat roosting potential.

6.41 In conclusion, the appraisal finds that the proposed development is unlikely to impact significantly on wildlife and there will be no significant loss of habitat in the area, subject to the recommendations in relation to “careful working”.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 This statement provides an appraisal of the prevailing planning policies and an assessment of the planning, design and access issues raised by the proposal to demolish an existing dwelling and to replace it with 1 no, detached 4 bedroom dwelling and associated parking and landscaping.
- 7.2 The proposal would make efficient and effective use of previously developed land in an appropriate way in a sustainable location which is encouraged by current planning policy. The NPPF provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that developments which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.
- 7.3 The proposal would meet the Council's sunlight and daylight standards and would not unduly overbear on or overlook neighbouring properties. It would not have any significant impact on the neighbouring house and occupants. In both internal and external standards, the house would meet appropriate the Council's policies. Sufficient private amenity space for the residents would be provided.
- 7.4 The width, height and scale of the building would follow the general pattern of development in the area. Given the policy aspiration to retain family units the proposal would accord with this requirement.
- 7.5 No significant trees would be lost.
- 7.6 An appropriate number of car parking spaces of sufficient dimensions would be provided. Appropriate facilities can be provided for residents to store cycles and bins, with cycle space within the private rear gardens.
- 7.7 It is considered that the proposed development would be appropriate for the site in its context and would be a logical complement to the area. The proposal would accord with the Development Plan and would not cause harm to the amenities of nearby properties or the character of the area.
- 7.8 Given the compliance with policies and the sustainable nature of the development, the presumption should remain in favour of the proposal being permitted.