

DESIGN AND ACCESS / PLANNING STATEMENT

1a Springfield Road, Gillingham, ME7 1YJ

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement accompanies an outline application for demolition of the existing garage and construction of a 3 dwelling terrace, with associated change of use to residential. The proposed houses have been designed to respond to the existing setting and improve the local street scene.

As the application is outline, only the criteria of access, scale and layout are to be considered, with appearance and landscaping remaining as reserved matters. Whilst those last two design elements will not form part of any approval, the submitted scheme is presented in detail to show the full design intent and evidence how the building's appearance could successfully suit the setting.

It should also be noted that there is a concurrent outline application submitted on a site on the opposite side of the road for a single detached dwelling. Both applications are independent of each other.

2.0 SITE

The No 1A Springfield site is currently a garage and has been such for numerous years. Since the early 1990's the site has been occupied by Rainham Coaches, but the company has since been sold on and in doing so the use of the site has become redundant. Importantly, a garage site is out of context to the area, which is surrounded by terraces of residential homes. Likewise the existing building is an unattractive industrial styled unit that does not respond to the urban rhythm. It's large footprint is situated to the rear of the site and so it has an overly dominant impact onto the gardens of the surrounding properties. The coming and going of commercial vehicles also has a negative impact onto the adjoining homes, meaning a residential use here is far more fitting and sustainable.

The proposed site boundary measures approximately 457msq, so it is a considerable area. The main entrance to the site for both pedestrians and vehicles is directly off Springfield Road where the industrial double gates are wide enough to accommodate large coach vehicles. All of the parking area to the front of the existing building is hard standing. The boundary details change as they turn round the site but are mainly made up of brick or concrete block walls topped with fence and barbed wire. It is fair to say the existing building and site does not make a positive contribution to its context.

The existing site has no trees or planting, nor are there any in the surrounding gardens that would be impacted by the current proposals.



The 1a Springfield Road Site.

Springfield Road is a dead end road running north to south off Railway Street. The vast majority of street scene is made up of 2 bed 2 storey terrace houses, some of which have rooms in the roof. Most of the homes are in yellow brick with red brick banding, under red tile roofs. Some of the homes have also had their facades rendered. Each of the homes has on street parking, which is unallocated.

In terms of location, the site is ideally located for nearby amenities. To the north of the road Hilly Fields Community Park is situated, giving locals a large break out space to enjoy. To the south, Railway Street runs directly to Gillingham Railway Station, which is just a short stroll away. Gillingham High Street and all of its amenities are also located at the same short distance.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY AND POLICY

A search was carried on the Local Authority Planning database and found no planning applications of note or relevance to the site.

In terms of Planning Policy, we have referred to the current and adopted Medway Local Plan to clarify the situation regarding any special designation of the area, site or building. This research reveals the following:

- The site has no specific designation identified on the Local Plan Policies Map.
- The site lies within a general residential area, within the confines of the town boundary.
- The site does not currently fall within a Conservation Area.
- The site does not fall within an Area of Special Residential Character.
- The surrounding buildings are not nationally or locally listed.

Therefore, the planning policy for an application upon this site and of this nature is a simple summation. Policies at both local and national level still promote maximising the development potential of this brownfield site.

The previous approvals within the local context have established that development of this type and scale is appropriate to the location. This application is therefore planning policy compliant, as is detailed within the design section of this statement.

5.0 ACCESS AND PARKING

Public Transport-

Gillingham mainline station is only 0.4 miles away, so about an 8 minute walk. Numerous main bus routes also run to nearby roads and from the station itself.

Shopping-

The surrounding roads and nearby Gillingham High Street and has numerous shops catering for the needs of the local community with a selection of supermarkets, newsagents, take away food outlets, restaurants, pubs and specialist interest shops. There are also a number of commercial units located off Railway Street.

Schools-

Within the immediate area and easy walking distance there are several primary schools. In addition, and also within walking distance, there are a number of secondary schools and other secondary schools within the Medway area are easily accessible by public transport as outlined above.

Medical / Clinics-

Many doctors and dentist surgeries and clinics are conveniently located in the immediate area within easy walking distance of the site. The nearest hospitals is Medway which is only 1.2 miles from the site.

Recreation And Leisure-

As already mentioned, the site is particularly well located for easy and safe access to nearby open spaces and parks providing a range of leisure facilities to serve a wide age range of children and adults sporting and recreation activities. Apart from the local park, Gillingham Football Club is also less than a 10 minute walk away.

Site Access and Parking-

The proposed dwellings access and parking is consistent with the existing homes on the road. Front doors will be located off the pavement and there will be on street parking. The loss of the existing garage will mean there will no longer be the need for large commercial vehicles to enter the site and the on street frontage will now be available for the parking of residents cars.

The Council's adopted policies also seek to encourage greater use of public transport, walking, biking and other 'low carbon footprint' methods of transport and reduced dependency on motor cars, which is entirely suited for a site location such as this.

Each dwelling is provided with a garden shed, which will double as a cycle store for at least 2 cycles per home. In terms of refuse storage, each of the 3 homes has a large rear garden space with gates to allow refuse to be taken out for on street collection on the appropriate day. This is consistent, or an improvement on, the existing collection policy for the rest of the road.

6.0 DESIGN

Whilst this is only an outline application, the design process and the level of detail of the drawing package, shows how a fully considered scheme could be implemented. As such this section still explains the proposed aesthetic to evidence how the buildings could be appropriately finished to suit and improve the Springfield Road context.

The total width and frontage of the site has allowed for each of the homes to be wider than its existing neighbours to allow for more generous internal space. The massing of the properties still reflects the general rhythm of the road, taking the ground floor back further than the first floor level and providing gable ended rear facing roof forms to the rear. Placing the homes to the front of the site, is the natural solution and will allow No.2 Springfield Road to have far better outlook, with the large industrial garage now being removed from its boundary.

The existing ridge height along the road is replicated in the proposed scheme, so there is no sense that these buildings are oversized or too high.

Separation distances from the building and its windows are also in excess of minimum guidance to ensure there is no opportunity for overlooking. Roof lanterns to the ground floor living space are also provided to ensure good levels of natural light.

The terrace consists of 2 x 2 bed 4 person homes and 1 x 3 bed 5 person home. All of the internal areas for each room are in excess of the local and government minimum guidelines. Garden sizes and lengths are also well over acceptable limits.

Each of the homes has a ground floor that comprises of an open living/dining room with large glazed doors to the private garden space. Kitchens are located fronting the street side, and a separate WC is also provided. At the centre of dwelling is a single staircase, providing access to the bedrooms, including one Master Bedroom with an ensuite. The internal arrangements are laid out to provide efficient and attractive living spaces.

Given this is an outline submission, appearance is still a reserved matter, but the proposed indicative materials palette still replicates the existing street scene, with yellow brick walls with red banding under a red tile roof. The submitted CGI 3d visuals give a clear idea of how the design intent could work and would make a positive contribution to the road.

Landscaping is also still a reserved matter, and the submitted drawings only indicate a standard rear garden space that is typical to the area. The existing garage/yard clearly makes no contribution to biodiversity, so any natural planting will improve this situation. We would expect that any landscape detail to be submitted within the reserved matters would propose a mix of native and nectar rich species to encourage insects, biodiversity and sustainability.

8.0 SUMMARY

This application has been well considered and is designed to ensure a sustainable and visually attractive scheme that will...

- Create 3 new dwellings with good space and living standards, design and architectural merit, in a location that is ideally located to a large range of local amenities.
- Be an appropriate infill 'brown field' development adhering closely to the guidelines set out in the Local Plan .
- Make a positive contribution to the character and variety of residential property in the area.
- Demonstrate good building and landscape design qualities.
- Achieve a significant improvement in the quality of the immediate environment for all neighbouring residential properties.
- Be respectful of neighbouring properties and cause no detrimental harm to those properties, their occupants or their living conditions.
- This application represents a clear opportunity for betterment in Springfield Road.

