

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)**

**SITE AT LAND TO THE REAR OF 1 WOODCROFT AVENUE, LONDON NW7 2AH**

**PLANNING APPLICATION BY MR E.McWEENEY**  
**OF MCM CONSTRUCTION SERVICES LIMITED**

CWA REF: 1404  
PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-12717232

**PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

February 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement forms part of the planning application submitted by Mr E.McWeeney of MCM Construction Services Limited for the *'Construction Of A Detached, Single Storey Dwelling, Erection Of Replacement Timber Fencing And Entrance Gates, Installation Of Vehicle Turntable, And Associated Landscaping'* on land at the rear of 1 Woodcroft Avenue, London NW7 2AH.

1.2 The statement, which is provided to assist the London Borough of Barnet ("the LPA") in its assessment of the planning merits of the proposal, should be read conjunction with the following application documents:-

- Site location plan;
- Existing site survey plan;
- Proposed site plan, floor plan, elevation & section drawing no. PL-06;
- Proposed block plan drawing PL-07;
- An Arboricultural Survey & Report dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (as submitted with earlier application 23/0049/FUL); and
- The CIL information form.

## 2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site comprises largely open land to the rear of the garden serving the detached residential property at 1 Woodcroft Avenue which is in use as two self-contained flats. The site has a frontage onto Bunns Lane from which vehicular access is provided via a dropped kerb and a gated entrance. The frontage is enclosed by timber fencing. Land levels within the site are lower than those along the Bunns Lane frontage, and the site includes a ramped hardstanding leading down from the vehicular entrance. The plot is generally open but includes a small shed and a mature tree close to its north-western boundary. Building and other materials are stored on the land.



*View over site from the south-east*

2.2 The surrounding area has a predominantly residential land-use character although there are some commercial uses in the vicinity of the site. The long residential gardens of properties in Woodcroft Avenue lie to the south-west of the site. There are large 3 storey commercial buildings on the north-east side of this part of Bunns Lane, and single storey commercial lock-up buildings and an

associated storage yard to the rear 2 Woodcroft Avenue, on the south-west side of Bunns Lane. The south-eastern boundary of the application site adjoins an area of public open space known as Woodcroft Park.



*View over site towards office development on north-west side of Bunns Lane*

2.3 There are double yellow line parking restrictions along this section of Bunns Lane, and the site is located a short distance to the north of the mini-roundabout junction with Grahame Park Way. The site lies a short distance to the south of the retail, service, and public transport facilities at Mill Hill Broadway.



*View of dropped kerb and entrance gates*

2.4 The application site does lie within a conservation area, and no heritage assets have been identified in the immediate vicinity. The site falls within Flood Zone 1.

### 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The site at 1 Woodcroft Avenue, including the current application plot, has the following relevant planning history:-

- Planning permission was refused on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 under reference: 14/08131/FUL for the conversion of the property into 5 self-contained flats including part single, part first floor, part two-storey rear extension with pitched roof to match existing, and an extension to roof including side and rear dormer windows and roof lights to side elevation to facilitate rooms in roof space; and
- Planning permission was granted on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 under reference 16/7171/FUL for a two storey side extension, and a roof extension including hip to gable on rear elevation, rear dormer window, 2no. rooflights to front and both side elevations to facilitate a loft conversion;
- Planning permission was refused, at appeal (ref: APP/N5090/W/21/3279043), on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022 for the '*construction of a detached double garage and store, and a brick wall and entrance gates to Bunns Lane frontage*'. This application concerned a pitched roof building to be located on the current application site; and
- Planning permission was granted on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 under reference 23/0049/FUL for the '*construction of a detached double garage and store. New front access gates and timber fencing*'. This planning permission, which relates to the current application site, is referred to in this statement as "the Approved Scheme".

3.2 Until recently, the application site was occupied by three timber storage

buildings and by a car port supported on low brick walls. The site has a history of being occupied illegally, and being used for dumping. There has also been a problem with rat infestation

3.3 No other relevant planning history has been identified.

#### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The application proposal comprises the construction of a detached, single storey dwelling in the southern corner of the site. The dwelling, which would have a flat (sedum) roof and would be finished in facing brickwork, would be laid out as a studio unit for single person occupation. It would include a main living and kitchen area, an area for a single bed, and a bathroom/WC. The dwelling would be dual aspect, and would also include a large roof light. The open parts of the site to the north-west and north-east of the dwelling would provide a landscaped private garden with a lower level patio adjacent to the accommodation.
- 4.2 The site would continue to be accessed via the existing crossover, and a single parking space would be provided in the form of a vehicle turntable which would be located adjacent to the eastern corner of the dwelling. The site would be enclosed by new timber fencing and gates. Pedestrian access within the site would include a ramp for wheelchair use.
- 4.3 Whilst no details of proposed on-site refuse, recycling and bike storage facilities are shown on the application drawings, there is ample space within the application site for such facilities. It is anticipated that such matters would be conditioned.



## 5. PLANNING POLICY

### *The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)*

- 5.1 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which is defined to include economic, social and environmental elements. Paragraph 60 states that the Government seeks to boost significantly the supply of new homes.
- 5.2 Paragraph 115 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.3 Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 5.4 Paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments 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; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. They should optimise the potential of the site whilst providing a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

### ***The Statutory Development Plan***

5.5 The statutory development plan for the area comprises the London Plan 2021, the Barnet Local Plan (Core Strategy) which was adopted in September 2012, and the Barnet Local Plan (Development Management Policies) which was adopted in September 2012. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### ***The London Plan***

5.6 The following policies of the London Plan, as summarised, are relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-

- Policy GG4 states that to create a housing market that works better for all Londoners, those involved in planning and development must ensure that more homes are delivered, and create mixed and inclusive communities, with good quality homes that meet high standards of design;
- Policy H1 sets out ten-year housing targets for each borough, and requires boroughs to optimise the potential for housing delivery on all suitable sites including small housing sites. For Barnet, the target set out in Table 4.1 requires the borough to deliver 23,640 new homes during the period 2019/20 to 2028/29.
- Policy H2 states that boroughs should pro-actively support well-designed new homes on small sites (defined as sites below 0.25 hectares in size) in order to (i) significantly increase the contribution of small sites to meeting London's housing needs, (ii) diversify the sources, locations, type

and mix of housing supply, (iii) support small and medium-sized housebuilder, (iv) support those wishing to bring forward custom, self-build and community-led housing, and (v) achieve the minimum targets for small sites set out in Table 4.2 as a component of the overall housing targets set out in Table 4.1. Boroughs should also recognise that local character evolves over time and will need to change in appropriate locations to accommodate housing on small sites. Table 4.2 sets out the 10 year targets for net housing completions on small sites including a requirement for Barnet borough to provide 4,340 for the period 2019/20 to 2028/29;

- Policy D3 states that all development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites. The design-led approach requires consideration of design options to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds to a site's context, history and capacity for growth. Proposals should be of high quality, with architecture that pays attention to detail, and gives thorough consideration to the practicality of use, flexibility, safety and building lifespan through appropriate construction methods and the use of attractive, robust materials which weather and mature well.
- Policy D6 requires new housing development to be of an acceptable standard and quality. The sizes of new dwellings should meet the minimum space standards set out at Table 3.1 which requires single bedroom, one person units to have a minimum gross internal area (GIA) of 39 squares metres (units with a bathroom) or 37 square metres (units with a shower). This standard applies to one bedroom, one person dwellings on a single storey. The policy also includes standards for internal storage and external amenity space. A minimum of 5 square

metres of private external amenity space should be provided for 1 to 2 person dwellings;

- Policy T5 requires cycle parking to be provided in accordance with the specified standards including 1 space per studio or 1 person, 1 bedroom dwelling; and
- Policy T6 states that car parking should be restricted in line with levels of existing and future public transport accessibility and connectivity. Policy T6.1 states that the plan's maximum car parking standards should not be exceeded. Sites in outer London with PTAL 3 should provide up to 0.75 car parking spaces for dwellings with 1 to 2 bedrooms.

### *The Core Strategy*

5.7 The following policies of the Core Strategy, as summarised, are considered to be relevant:-

- Policy CS1 sets out the Council's 'place shaping strategy' that seeks to concentrate new development in appropriate locations;
- Policies CS3 and CS4 set out the Council's expectation for supplying a sufficient number, mix and choice of new homes in appropriate locations across the borough; and
- Policy CS5 seeks to ensure that new development respects local context and distinctive local character, and creates places and buildings of high quality design. Development should be safe and attractive.

### *Development Management Policies (DMP) DPD*

5.8 The following policies of the DMP DPD, as summarised, are considered to be relevant:-

- Policy DM01 requires all new development to represent high quality design. Proposals should be based on an understanding of local characteristics, and should preserve or enhance local character and should respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surroundings buildings, spaces and streets. Neighbour amenity should be protected;
- Policy DM02 sets down a series of development standards, and Policy DM03 requires new development to reach the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design; and
- Policy DM17 states that the safety of all road users will be taken into account when considering development proposals.

### ***Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)***

5.9 The Sustainable Design & Construction SPD was adopted by the Council in October 2016, and lays down a series of detailed requirements relating to the design of new development. These requirements relate, inter alia, to internal space standards, amenity space standards, separation distances and the protection of living conditions for adjoining occupiers, accessible housing, and sustainable design including energy and water usage.

5.10 The Residential Design Guidance SPD was adopted in October 2016, and provides detailed guidance on townscape character protection, standards of residential

design and layout, and the protection of existing assets including trees. New development should respect local character but respecting character does not necessarily mean replication. Development will be refused where it would be harmful to local character including any loss of important trees. High quality and durable materials, appropriate for the setting of the scheme, should be used.

## 6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### *Amount of Development*

- 6.1 The proposed single storey dwelling would have a gross internal area of 39 square metres. The proposed dwelling would be served by a single parking space, and by a private garden area in excess of 120 square metres.

### *Principle of development*

- 6.2 The application site comprises a separate plot to the rear of the residential curtilage of 1 Woodcroft Avenue. The Approved Scheme established the acceptability, in principle, of independent development at the application site. The Approved Scheme represents the applicant's 'fall-back position' which will be implemented if planning permission is not granted for the proposed new dwelling.

### *Living conditions*

- 6.3 The dwelling would be located within an established residential area, and its size would comply with the nationally described space standard of 39 square metres (GIA) for a one person dwelling with a bathroom, and with London Plan Policy D6. Satisfactory built-in storage is included within the proposed layout. The proposed dwelling would be dual aspect, and a good standard of outlook would be provided over its extensive private garden curtilage. The dwelling would also experience satisfactory levels of daylight and sunlight, and additional light from the sky would reach the main living area through the large roof light. Given the dwelling's single storey form, the presence of boundary fencing, and the substantial separation distance to the closest windows serving the flats at 1 Woodcroft Avenue, the prospective occupier of the proposed dwelling would experience an entirely acceptable level of privacy.

- 6.4 The location and footprint of the proposed single storey dwelling would be the same as the single storey garage building permitted under the Approved Scheme. The proposed dwelling would be located at the rear of its plot, approximately 21 metres away from the closest residential properties at 1 and 3 Woodcroft Avenue. It would also be located approximately 12 metres away from the boundary with the garden of no. 1, and would be set away from the garden boundary with no.3 by approximately 2 metres.
- 6.5 As a single storey structure largely concealed by boundary fencing, the proposed dwelling would not be a significant visual presence in the locality, and would self-evidently not materially obstruct daylight, sunlight or outlook when viewed from within the adjacent gardens or the closest neighbouring accommodation. Any very limited visibility of the new dwelling would be further mitigated by its relatively remote location well away from the main garden areas close to the other residential properties in Woodcroft Avenue, and by the somewhat lower ground level on which it would be situated.
- 6.6 The application site is located within a predominantly residential area. Its use for residential purposes would be consistent with this established character, and would not be a source of material disturbance for nearby residents. This is a suburban area in which properties are relatively closely-spaced. The proposed small dwelling would have a low level of occupation, and any limited noise impact arising from residential occupation and the use of the garden would be mitigated by the separation distance to existing neighbouring accommodation, and by boundary fencing.
- 6.7 For the above reasons, the proposed dwelling would provide accommodation of a satisfactory standard for prospective occupiers, and would not result in any material harm to the living conditions of nearby residential occupiers.



### ***Character & Appearance***

- 6.8 The application site is situated in an area of mixed character with two-storey residential development predominating on the south-west side of this part of Bunns Lane, and taller commercial blocks being the main built-form on the north-eastern side of the road. The application site is currently used for the unsightly storage of building materials, and the site has also attracted the illegal dumping of waste.
- 6.9 The Approved Scheme established the acceptability, in visual amenity and townscape character terms, of single storey development at the application site. The proposed dwelling would not be materially visible from outside the site given that (i) the land level on which the dwelling would be located is lower than street level, and (ii) the site is to be enclosed by new timber fencing of approximately 2 metres in height. The relatively open and spacious character of the locality would not be undermined because unobstructed views would continue to be provided above fence level across the application site. The proposed dwelling would therefore not be a visually intrusive or disruptive element within the local townscape. It should also be noted that the height and footprint of the proposed dwelling would not be materially different to the garage building permitted under the Approved Scheme.
- 6.10 In relation to the proposed replacement timber fencing, it should be noted that this would be identical to that permitted under the Approved Scheme.
- 6.11 For the above reasons, the proposed dwelling would not be a source of harm to the character of the local townscape, and the overall impact of the scheme can be regarded as beneficial in visual and general amenity terms.

### ***Trees and Landscaping***

- 6.12 The application is accompanied by the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment which was previously submitted with the application for the Approved Scheme. This documentation indicates the position of various trees adjacent to the north-western and south-eastern boundaries of the site, and confirms that the proposed single storey building would have no impact on the root protection and long-term health of the trees in question. The proposed vehicle turntable would be installed at approximately pavement level (i.e. above the existing sloping hardstanding), and would require only a limited depth of excavation. As in the case of the Approved Scheme (condition 7), it is anticipated that tree protection measures would need to be approved prior to the commencement of development.
- 6.13 The scheme proposes various hard and soft landscaping measures in the vicinity of the new dwelling. These are indicated on the proposed drawings, and it is anticipated that a planning condition would require the approval of these details (as in the case condition 10 applied to the permission for the Approved Scheme) prior to first occupation of the proposed dwelling.

### ***Use***

- 6.14 The application site is used for informal, open storage of building materials although the site is located within a predominantly residential area on the south-western side of Bunns Lane. The Approved Scheme permits the use of the site for commercial garaging and storage but, in the context of their scale and location, these are not 'protected uses' in planning policy terms. The application site effectively has brownfield status following the grant of planning permission for the Approved Scheme.

6.15 The proposed dwelling, which would provide a new small home in a sustainable location close to local facilities, would make a small but worthwhile contribution to housing supply and choice, and this benefit weighs in favour of the proposal.

***Access & Parking***

6.16 Although the site appears to have been served by vehicle entrance gates and a dropped kerb for many years, the Approved Scheme established formally the principle of permitting vehicle access into and out of the site. However, it should be noted that the Approved Scheme would be likely to generate a higher number of vehicle movements than the current proposal for a small dwelling.

6.17 Bunns Lane is subject to a 30 mph speed limit. A good standard of vehicle and pedestrian visibility is available in both directions from the existing site entrance (dropped kerb and gates) which would be retained to serve the proposed dwelling. No highway safety objection was raised by the LPA with regard to the Approved Scheme.

6.18 The new entrance gates would be electrically-operated to allow for remote opening from a vehicle arriving at the site. As in the case of the Approved Scheme (see condition 4), a Maintenance Agreement for the gates would need to be approved by the LPA prior to first occupation. The position of the proposed dwelling, allied to the provision of a vehicle turntable, would allow for a vehicle to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. A Maintenance Agreement could also be provided, by way of planning condition, for the proposed vehicle turntable.

6.19 The site has a PTAL of 3. The scheme would provide a single on-site car parking space, and space for secure and covered cycle parking. The latter could be conditioned. The quantum of proposed car and cycle parking would comply with London Plan standards.

6.20 Level access to the proposed dwelling for pedestrians would be provided from the adjacent highway via the proposed ramp. Refuse and recycling collection would be from Bunns Lane.

6.21 For these reasons, it is evident that the application scheme would pose no threat to highway safety or to the free flow of traffic on Bunns Lane, and that no additional pressure would be placed on local on-street parking. The scheme provides an appropriate standard of access for the occupier of and visitors to the proposed dwelling.

### ***Sustainability Statement***

6.22 The proposal would meet the applicable requirements of the Sustainable Design & Construction SPD in terms of:-

- Compliance with applicable internal space standards;
- The quantum and arrangement of outdoor amenity space;
- The provision of satisfactory living conditions for a future occupier, and the protection of neighbours' living conditions;
- Disabled access including compliance with applicable Building Regulations (Part M) requirements;
- Renewable energy and water usage including compliance with applicable Building Regulations (Part L) requirements;
- Sustainable drainage through the incorporation of a sedum roof;
- Refuse and recycling storage (it is anticipated that these details would be subject to a planning condition);
- Covered and secure cycle storage (it is anticipated that these details would be subject to a planning condition); and

- The protection of existing trees, and the opportunity to provide landscaping and biodiversity enhancements within the extensive open parts of the site.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The application scheme proposes the construction of a small single storey dwelling on a site which currently benefits from planning permission for the construction of a garage and storage building of essentially the same footprint and bulk in the same location. The Approved Scheme not only represents the applicant's fall-back position but also formalises the acceptability of the subdivision of the original plot of 1 Woodcroft Avenue.
- 7.2 The application site's general suitability for residential use is confirmed by the predominantly residential character of the surrounding area. More specifically, the proposed new dwelling would provide a satisfactory internal and external living environment for its future occupier in terms of the size, layout and aspect of the accommodation, and the size of the private garden. The new dwelling and its curtilage would not be materially overlooked from adjacent dwellings or gardens. Similarly, the proposed single storey development would have no material impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in terms of impact on daylight, sunlight, privacy, outlook or noise.
- 7.3 The Approved Scheme confirms that a new single storey building can be accommodated within the site without detriment to the character or appearance of the street-scene or the wider locality. The new dwelling would not be generally viewed from outside the site.
- 7.4 The application proposal would make satisfactory provision for car and cycle parking within the site. The scheme would make use of the existing dropped kerb access, and incorporates a turntable which would allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear. The Highway Authority raised no objection to the Approved Scheme which would generate a greater number of vehicle

movements than the current residential application proposal.

- 7.5 The proposed development offers an opportunity for landscape and biodiversity enhancements within the site, and the new dwelling would meet the latest standards of sustainable design and construction.
- 7.6 The proposed new dwelling would deliver a small but worthwhile contribution to local housing supply and choice, and would make effective use of degraded land which no longer forms part of the residential curtilage of 1 Woodcroft Avenue but which is used for unsightly open storage. The application scheme would constitute a preferable form of development to the Approved Scheme in land-use planning terms.
- 7.7 For the above reasons, the application scheme would comply with the development plan including with London Plan Policies GG4, H1, H2, D3, D6, T5 and T6, Barnet Core Strategy Policies CS1, CS3, CS4, and CS5, and Barnet Development Management Policies DM01, DM02, DM03 and DM17. The proposal also represents sustainable development consistent with the expectations of the NPPF.
- 7.8 This practice therefore looks forward to the early and favourable determination of this planning application.

**CHRISTOPHER WICKHAM ASSOCIATES**

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