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PLANNING, DESIGN, AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION

BY

Blumariin Ltd

FOR

Erection of Two Dwellings

AT

Land to the rear of Willow Cottage, Hightown, Ringwood, BH24 3DY

PREPARED BY

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March 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following statement is prepared in support of a planning application which seeks to erect two dwellings on land to the rear of Willow Cottage, Hightown Road, Ringwood.
- 1.2 Planning permission has been granted for the erection of one pair of semi-detached dwellings in place of Willow Cottage and the erection of a single detached bungalow to the rear under reference 18/11649. The permission consolidated two previous permissions with the subject dwellings and permissions having been commenced. The permissions are thus extant.
- 1.3 The Applicant has acquired an adjoining parcel of land which enlarges the site to the rear of Willow Cottage. There is now sufficient space to accommodate an additional dwelling in a manner that is appropriate to the character of the area in terms of layout and design in accordance with principles already established.
- 1.4 The following statement provides a full description of the site and surrounding area and of the proposals. This statement sets out the planning history relevant to the proposal. The history is quite complex however is important in the context of the proposal.
- 1.5 This statement sets out the relevant planning policies and provides a justification for the proposals based on their merits.
- 1.6 This statement demonstrates that the proposals are acceptable in all regards, the proposals represent an appropriate form of sustainable development where there are numerous planning and public benefits against which there are no significant adverse impacts.

2.0 The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is located on the eastern fringes of the New Forest market town of Ringwood. Ringwood is situated on the River Avon which travels along the western elements of the district. Ringwood is located on the western fringes of the New Forest district and just to the west of the boundary with the New Forest National Park. The town has an historic core with surrounding suburban residential development which mostly dates from the late 19th century and over the period of the 20th century as the settlement evolved.
- 2.2 The site is located within the Hightown area of Ringwood which lies to its eastern fringes. Hightown Road leads into Hightown Hill which climbs the escarpment which leads up to the New Forest plateau.
- 2.3 The site is situated within a run of development which fronts onto Hightown Road and Crow Lane. Crow Lane joins Hightown Road close to the appeal site travelling from a southerly direction. Crow Lane sweeps around in a curve to join Hightown Road. Towards the junction Crow Lane diverges to form a perpendicular junction with Hightown Road, opposite the Elm Tree Pub, and curves off eastwards to join Hightown Road with a separate junction. This arrangement provides a triangular green within the junction and there are also wide verges along the various elements of the roads. The arrangement is evident on the location plan. Development is therefore set back from the road and the verges and the triangular green along with the setbacks creates a degree of spaciousness. The rear gardens of the various properties are not evident from the street and this does not add to the spaciousness.
- 2.4 Development along this section of Hightown Road has historically been characterised by a number of modest cottages which have been adapted and enlarged over the years and later post war development in

the form of suburban style residential development. Further to the east beyond the fringes of the settlement as one climbs Hightown Hill the area is characterised by much larger properties on extremely large plots set within woodland.

2.5 The existing Willow Cottage is a relatively modest bungalow which has been extended and altered to include accommodation within the roof. Permission has been granted in outline to demolish this building and replace with a pair of semi-detached dwellings. The previous scheme incorporated the semi-detached dwellings. The property immediately adjoining to the west is a relatively modest bungalow. The property to the east is a large two storey house which appears to be of inter-war origin. This building has been much altered and enlarged and is arranged as two separate self-contained dwelling houses, one to the rear half of the building, referred to as Sunnyside, and one to the front, referred to as Fair oak. In 2011, the Council allowed one & two-storey side & rear extensions at Sunnyside which are currently being built. The revised footprint including the extensions is shown on the enclosed site layout plan.

2.6 Further to the west is a later 20th century infill development referred to as The Cloisters. As one sweeps round into Crow Lane there are a number of former municipal semi-detached dwellings set back from the road and arranged in a regular pattern. Essentially the character is that of a wide variety of residential properties of different ages, scales and design addressing the principal routes of Crow Lane and Hightown Road with additional development in depth. The properties are on plots of varying sizes and shapes with varying setbacks from the road and with varying degrees of planting. To the rear of the frontage development are two housing estates constructed in the second half of the 20th century but in differing decades, I would estimate early 1970's for the estate

immediately behind and late 1980's early 1990's for the development further to the southeast.

- 2.7 The element of Hightown Road to the west of the junction with Crow Lane has similar characteristics to the older style frontage development with post war suburban housing estates behind. There are also examples of plot severance, subdivision and development in depth already on other sites within the vicinity for example the rear of 144-150 Hightown Road.
- 2.8 The various housing developments to the south of the site in the latter part of the 20th century demonstrates that the character of the area is continuously evolving. Land to the west of Crow Lane to the north of Crow Arch Lane has recently been developed. Land to the south of Crow Arch Lane is allocated for residential development. The fields to the north of Hightown Road are allocated for a mix of residential and commercial development.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 The planning history of the site is complex however does not need to be rehearsed in full. There have been a number of appeals which were permitted but which were reviewed in respect of habitat mitigation matters.
- 3.2 Planning permission was granted for a pair of semi-detached dwellings on the front of the site in place of the existing Willow Cottage under reference 11/97816 and 15/10860.
- 3.3 Planning permission was granted for a single storey dwelling to the rear of the site under reference 17/10254. Previous applications for development to the rear were refused. The single storey dwelling to the

rear was permitted on appeal. The appeals were challenged in relation to habitats issues. While the appeals were being reviewed a separate planning application was submitted and approved.

- 3.4 Both the permissions for the pair of semis and the dwelling to the rear were commenced by way of material operations.
- 3.5 A Section 192 Certificate application was approved for the balance of the works to complete both of the above permissions on the basis that the planning permissions were implemented and were extant until such times as the buildings were completed in accordance with the approved plans.
- 3.6 As mentioned above, a separate planning application was submitted to bring both permissions under one permission so that they could be developed simultaneously with a shared common layout. That planning application was part-retrospective bearing in mind that the buildings had been commenced. That permission was granted under application reference 18/11649 and remains extant.
- 3.7 It is important to note that the previous proposals for two dwellings to the rear of Willow Cottage were refused on the basis that backland development was considered inappropriate development in character terms relative to the pattern of surrounding development.
- 3.8 The development proposals in that instance were on a much smaller parcel of land than the subsequent approval and the current proposal.
- 3.9 Subsequently following Appeal Inspectors' considerations, planning permission was permitted for the single dwelling on the land to the rear of Willow Cottage. It was concluded that the contemporary design form

and single-storey height to eaves would be appropriate to the character of the area.

- 3.10 This dwelling was permitted on appeal on the basis that subject to the scale the proposal would maintain the garden character of the area.
- 3.11 It follows that, if the site is enlarged, a similar such dwelling on a similar size plot would maintain the garden character of the area and should be permitted.

4.0 The Proposals

- 4.1 As mentioned, the Applicants have acquired additional land to the east of the existing parcel of land. The additional land facilitates the provision of an additional dwelling to the rear of the frontage development in a manner which maintains the garden character of the area. The amount of space to the side of the new proposed dwelling and the site boundary is similar to the relationship of the approved and its boundary.
- 4.2 The history above demonstrates that there is approval for a single dwelling on land to the rear. The current proposal would replace that dwelling with a similar scale dwelling however reconfigured and redesigned and with a smaller footprint. The proposals are therefore for two dwellings on land to the rear albeit there is already approval for a single dwelling.
- 4.3 The proposed dwellings are single-storey to eaves with accommodation in the roof. The roof form in terms of height and volume is not dissimilar to the approved scheme. The current proposals take the opportunity to utilise the space within the roof to form additional accommodation. Each dwelling has a gable to the front to add visual interest and provide better quality accommodation.

- 4.4 The footprint of each dwelling is less than the footprint of the approved scheme due to accommodation being over two floors.
- 4.5 The nature of the proposals is fully understood from the submitted plans and elevations. The merits are discussed further below.
- 4.6 Many aspects of the proposals remain similar to the approved scheme. The access road and general arrangement remains as approved. The overall relationships of the proposals to adjoining properties remain similar to the approved. The main difference is the opportunity to provide an additional dwelling due to the increased amount of land available.
- 4.7 Importantly, the scale of the dwellings is similar to and follows the principles of that already considered to be acceptable.

5.0 The Development Plan

- 5.1 The Development Plan is comprised of the New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 part 1: Planning Strategy, the Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management and saved Core Strategy policies. Relevant principal policies in determining this pre application request consist of:

Local Plan Part 1

Policy STR1 – Achieving sustainable development, located development in sustainable and accessible locations, provide a mix of dwelling types by size, tenure and cost to address local housing need.

Policy STR4 - The settlement hierarchy, identifies Ringwood as a town with a wide range of employment facilities and services. These are the most sustainable locations for additional development.

Policy STR5 - Meeting our housing needs, providing for at least 10,420 additional homes over the plan period, including smaller scale development contiguous to existing settlements.

Policy ENV1 - Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites.

Policy ENV2 - The Southwest Hampshire Green Belt, determining applications in accordance with national Green Belt policy.

Policy ENV3 - Design quality and local distinctiveness

Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality

Policy HOU1: Housing type, size, tenure and choice, addressing the diversity of housing needs of local people

Policy HOU2: Affordable Housing, new development of 11 or more dwellings to provide for affordable housing.

Policy HOU5: Rural exception sites and community led housing schemes, permitting affordable housing outside of settlement boundaries.

Policy IMPL1: Developer Contributions

Policy IMPL2: Development standards

Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management

Policy DM2 - Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity

Policy DM3 - Mitigation of impacts on European nature conservation sites.

Policy DM20 – Residential development in the countryside.

Local Plan Part 1:Core Strategy 2009

Saved Policy CS7 Open Spaces, sport and recreation, requires sites of 0.5 hectare or more to provide for informal open space on site.

- 5.2 In addition to Local Plan policies a number of Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant. These are not listed here but the proposal has had regard to the SPDs.

6.0 National Planning Policy Framework

6.1 The Framework (December 2023) states that the main purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The relevant sections of the Framework applicable to the application proposal have been identified below.

6.2 Paragraph 8 states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: -

- an economic objective – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure

- a social objective – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- An environmental objective – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.3 Paragraph 10 of the Framework sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 advises that for decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Paragraph 11 d) then advises that where there are no relevant development plan policies or where the development plan is out of date, planning permission should be granted. That is, unless:

- i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

6.4 Section 5 of the Framework is concerned with delivering a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 60 makes clear that to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it

is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.

- 6.5 Paragraph 70 emphasises the important contribution that small and medium sized sites can make to meeting an area's housing requirement. It states that support should be given to the development of windfall sites and that great weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. The NPPF introduces an emphasis that small sites should be brought forward.
- 6.6 To ensure a supply of deliverable housing sites, paragraph 77 requires that local planning authorities identify a five-year supply of deliverable sites against their housing requirement set out in strategic policies, or against their local housing need, where those policies are more than 5 years old. A buffer is also required. That buffer is a minimum of 5%, increasing to 10% where the supply of sites is to be identified through an annual delivery statement and 20% where there has been significant under delivery over the previous three years.
- 6.7 Para 79 sets out the policy governing the Housing Delivery Test. Where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the past 3 years the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies with full weight.
- 6.8 Paragraph 85 confirms that the Government is committed to ensuring that significant weight should be placed on the needs to support economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. It goes on to state that the approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

6.9 Paragraph 115 is clear that in respect of the highways impacts of development, planning permission should only be refused on these grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or there would be severe cumulative effects.

6.10 Section 11 of the NPPF sets out the policies to ensure effective use is made of land. Paragraph 123 states that local planning authorities should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Policies and decision making policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

6.11 Paragraph 124 seeks to ensure that efficient use of land and appropriate density are secured on development land. The NPPF states;

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)

It is clear that substantial weight needs to be given to the delivery of existing sites within the urban area.

6.12 Section 12 of the Framework is concerned with achieving well designed places which is identified in paragraph 131 as being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is reaffirmed as being a key aspect of sustainable development which creates better places in which to live work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

6.13 Paragraph 135 establishes that planning policies and decisions should 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 uses; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

6.14 Paragraph 134 states that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take available opportunities for

improving character and quality of an area and the way that it functions. Where design accords with clear expectations in plan policies, however, the design of a development should not be used as a valid reason to object to the development.

- 6.15 Section 14 of the NPPF deals with climate change and flood risk.
- 6.16 Paragraph 173 requires a site-specific flood risk assessment where appropriate. Footnote 59 confirms that a site-specific FRA is not required for sites in flood zone 1 where the proposals would not introduce a more vulnerable use.
- 6.17 As a matter of course, a FRA should not be required for a replacement dwelling in flood zone 1.
- 6.18 Paragraph 168 sets out the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.
- 6.19 Section 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) advises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and biodiversity.
- 6.20 Paragraph 179 explains the importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity. An ecology survey including bat survey is included as part of this application concluding no harm to protected species and setting out enhancements to be incorporated within the proposed development.

7.0 Planning Considerations

- 7.1 Planning legislation requires that planning applications and appeals must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless

material considerations indicate otherwise or the policies contained within the plan are inconsistent with the provisions of the NPPF.

- 7.2 Additionally, if the relevant policies are considered out of date, for whatever reason, then Paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework becomes engaged and planning permission can be granted unless the site is within a protected area where there is a clear policy reason for refusing permission or there are adverse impacts and only then if these are such that they significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposals.
- 7.3 As such the Local Plan is therefore the starting point for decision making. Proposed development which accords with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. Proposals need to be assessed against the Development Plan as a whole. If proposals accord with the majority of policies but there is friction with others, then the Council must consider what weight is to be attached to the various objectives and policies to which the proposals accord and to the features that cause friction with others. Notwithstanding this, if any infringement of policy, minor or otherwise, can be offset by the use of other measures then these should be used rather than a refusal of planning permission which could otherwise have been allowed. Clearly it is up to the decision maker what weight needs to be attached to particular matters; the decision maker will however have to demonstrate that their approach is well considered, justified and reasonable in all other respects.
- 7.4 The principle of residential development in the land to the rear of the site is acceptable and in accordance with planning policy. The site lies within a defined settlement boundary where residential development is encouraged and directed subject to site specific physical planning considerations. The matters to consider therefore revolve around detailed design and layout in relation to the functional requirements of

the development and appropriateness to character and adjoining property.

- 7.5 The principle of development in the land to the rear of Hightown Road has previously been considered acceptable subject to the scale and the garden character of the area being maintained.
- 7.6 A single dwelling single-storey to eaves in a generous plot was considered acceptable at appeal.
- 7.7 The approved single-storey dwelling is situated directly to the rear of the approved two-storey pair situated on the site frontage. That scheme included a side garden which was previously not available for earlier schemes. It was the inclusion of the side garden and the single storey to eaves scale that led the Inspectors to conclude that the garden character of the area remains.
- 7.8 The current proposed scheme has acquired additional land which facilitates the provision of an additional dwelling and a similar amount of side garden maintaining the garden character to both sides of the pair of dwellings.
- 7.9 Since the previous decision the area has continued to evolve. The land to the north between Hightown Road and the A31 is allocated for a mix of housing and commercial development. Land to the south and west at Crow Arch and Crow Lanes has also been allocated for residential development. The allocations are to meet an identified housing need and identified continual under delivery of housing to meet that need.
- 7.10 The site lies within an existing residential suburban area. The additional dwelling will have negligible impact on the overall character of the subject street block. Such impact can be considered in specific, but also much wider, terms. In site specific terms there is minimal adverse impact. In wider terms there will be negligible impact in the context of the wider evolving urban area.

- 7.11 The critical housing shortage does mean that when land does become available within the existing urban areas opportunities should be taken to deliver such land unless there are significant adverse impacts. In specific terms, the addition of a further bungalow with spacious garden to the side will have a negligible impact in visual terms on the character of the area. In terms of the wider evolution of Ringwood and significant urban expansion the proposals for a single dwelling should be seen as acceptable.
- 7.12 The presumption in favour of sustainable development applies with full weight in the current situation. Significant weight should be applied in favour of the proposals unless there are significant adverse impacts. The tilted balance applies.
- 7.13 Furthermore the NPPF places a specific emphasis on the promotion of brownfield land, small sites and windfall development. There is a specific requirement for such sites to be developed.
- 7.14 In the current case there are no significant adverse impacts. Indeed, there are no adverse impacts. The additional dwelling will have an additional presence however this is appropriate in the context of the surrounding residential area.
- 7.15 In terms of residential amenity, both new dwellings do not have any adverse impact on any adjoining property. The separation distances along with internal configurations ensures there are no opportunities for loss of privacy or overlooking. The principal aspect from the first-floor accommodation is to the north and good separation to the two properties to the north meeting acceptable standards. There are no rear facing windows at first floor level.
- 7.16 The scale of the proposals is similar to that already considered acceptable in character terms and has no impact on any adjoining property by reason of dominance or overbearance.

- 7.17 The proposed layout utilises the existing and same access drive and parking arrangement as already considered acceptable. The proposals provide two parking spaces per dwelling with parking and manoeuvring to meet requirements.
- 7.18 To summarise, the proposals are appropriate to character. The low density and spacious character are retained. The proposals provide good quality accommodation within spacious plots with good size gardens. The functional requirements of the dwellings are provided. There is no impact on any adjoining property.
- 7.19 The proposals meet the planning requirements for new residential developments.

Trees

- 7.20 There are no trees within the application site. There are no trees within the area to the rear which will be affected by the proposals. The willow tree to the front of the neighbouring site is not affected by the proposals. This tree is to be retained. The access into the site is existing and does not require alteration as part of the proposal.
- 7.21 There were no requirements in relation to the willow tree from previous applications.

Drainage

- 7.22 The previous approved scheme provided infiltration drainage which was to be dealt with by way of condition. The access roads will be constructed of permeable surface materials. The area of landscaped and permeable surface is large and will allow sufficient surface water drainage.
- 7.23 Previously these matters were dealt with by condition in relation to the extant planning permission. There is no reason why these matters cannot also be controlled by condition as part of the current proposal.

Biodiversity

- 7.24 The site lies to the west of the New Forest National Park much of which is designated as a special protection area.
- 7.25 The development of the site has no direct impact upon any protected area due to separation distance and position in the midst of a suburban built-up area.
- 7.26 The site is not within close proximity to any priority habitats or locally designated sites.
- 7.27 The application is accompanied by a completed biodiversity checklist. The proposals will not affect any legally protected or other notable species.
- 7.28 The previous approvals impose conditions requiring mitigation in relation to indirect effects, e.g. recreational pressure, to be dealt with prior to commencement. The same conditions can be imposed on any new grant of planning permission.

Flood Risk Assessment

- 7.29 The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and is considered to be at the lowest risk of flooding from any source.
- 7.30 The EA Flood Map shows that a very small element of the existing access drive into the development is within Flood Zone 2. The access drive is clearly existing and approved in respect of the various approvals for the site. The access can be provided as part of the approved development.
- 7.31 There is no increase in flood risk as a result of the proposals. The site where the house is to be developed is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore a Flood Risk Assessment is not required in respect of the proposed development.

- 7.32 The small element of the existing access identified as Flood Zone 2 does not result in inappropriate development in an area at risk of flooding.
- 7.33 The NPPF Flood Risk Policies seek to avoid, if possible, flood risk to people or properties, The proposed dwellings will be in Flood Zone 1 and will therefore not result in flood risk to people or property. The siting of the dwellings will be in an area at the lowest risk of flooding and therefore the flood risk policies are satisfied.
- 7.34 The aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. Again, the site is already at the lowest risk of flooding and the Sequential Test is not required.
- 7.35 The proposals will not increase the flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.36 Therefore whilst there is a small element of the site affected by being in Flood Zone 2, this area is an existing access. There is no development affecting any land which is at risk of flooding.
- 7.37 The Sequential Test does not need to be applied due to the land to be developed being not at risk of flooding.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The proposals take the opportunity of providing an additional dwelling facilitated by the acquisition of additional land.
- 8.2 The scale of the proposed dwellings matches the extant approved scale which was considered appropriate to the greater character of the area.
- 8.3 The low-density nature and large plots are also appropriate and maintain the character of the area.
- 8.4 There are no adverse impacts. There are no significant adverse impacts what would outweigh the presumption.

- 8.5 The proposals represent sustainable development, and the presumption applies with full weight. Significant weight should also be applied to the provision of additional family housing for which there is an identified need and acknowledged under supply.
- 8.6 The proposals are well designed and do not result in harm. Planning permission can therefore reasonably be granted.