

PLANNING STATEMENT (including Contaminated Land Assessment)

**Proposed conversion of existing public house to
wine bar and creation of 2 x 1 bedroom flats**

at

**The Bell Inn, The Bury, Odiham,
RG29 1LY**

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1.0 Introduction

Murray Planning Associates has been instructed by Odiham Bell Ltd to prepare a planning statement to accompany a planning application for the conversion of the existing public house to a wine bar with the formation to 2 x 1 bedroom flats to the rear of the property known as The Bell Inn, The Bury, Odiham.

This statement sets out 1) an assessment of the site context and relevant planning history; 2) a summary of the relevant policy framework; 3) an assessment of the proposed development; followed by 4) conclusions based on the preceding sections.

2.0 Site Context

The site, a public house known as the Bell Inn, is located to the north of The Bury, within a densely built up part of the town of Odiham. The town centre lies a short distance north from the site.

The building is Grade II Listed. The listing record reads as follows:

"SU 73-7450 & 73-7451 ODIHAM THE BURY

17/93 The Bell Inn

8.7.52

- II

C17, C18. A long narrow 2-storeyed timber-framed structure, with its gable (of C18) to the street formed as a continuation of the front of Webb House, of 1 window. The painted brick walling has a parapet (at the eaves level of Webb House), brick dentil eaves. A sash in exposed frame is above a modern casement. Fixed to the wall between the window and the access (in Webb House) is a wrought iron framework to take the hanging sign, containing scroll work. The east wall has exposed timber framing, with painted brick infill, irregularly-spaced casements. Roof of red tiles, 1/2-hipped at each end.

Listing NGR: SU7410250965"

The site currently comprises a long but narrow two-storey building, with the gable end forming the principle elevation facing the street (The Bury). The site adjoins Webb House to the west, which is also a Grade II Listed Building.

Access to the public house is via a covered passage linking the site with Webb House.

The ground floor of the property is set up as a public house with further bar and dining areas located to the rear. In addition, the rear of the ground floor is dedicated to a small kitchen. Facilities such as toilets are provided within an outbuilding in the courtyard to the west of the building.

The first floor provides living accommodation for the landlord, while there is also a basement. The site is currently vacant, with the pub closing in March 2020.

The building itself comprises an attractive two storey property with a painted brick front elevation and small profile clay tiles. The eastern and western elevations are of an older appearance, timber framing construction. The architectural vernacular of the property is therefore mixed between different time periods.

The building itself takes up the majority of the site area, with only a small courtyard to the west being retained as open space. This limits the pub's outdoor space to a few benches located in front of the pub's entrance. There is no parking associated with the property, though a public parking area lies immediately south of the site.

The surrounding area is urban, with a mix of uses (including residential use) apparent within the vicinity of the site. The density of development is relatively high, given the central Odiham location.

Relevant Planning History

The application site has a long and extensive planning history, with a number of planning applications, listed building consents and advertisement consents. The most recent applications being in 2021 for Change of use of public house to form 2 x two-bedroom dwellings with associated internal and external alterations (21/02877/FUL & 21/02878/LBC) together with a proposed change of use of outbuilding into a two-bedroom dwelling with associated internal/external alterations and first floor external balcony (following demolition of external deck/stairs and single storey extension) (22/00234/FUL & 22/00229/LBC).

The applications were recommended approval by the LPA but refused on 23rd December 2022 by the Development Control Committee. Subsequent appeals were lodged but both were dismissed by the Inspectorate on 20th October 2023.

3.0 Planning Policy Assessment

The site is located within the town of Odiham. The site lies within the administrative area of Hart District Council. A review of the Odiham proposals map identifies the site lies within a conservation area. The site lies outside of the town centre boundary. The Bell Inn is Grade II Listed, and there are a number of other Listed Buildings in the locality.

The development plan for the purposes of assessing proposals for this site are the adopted Hart Local Plan (2020), the Odiham Neighbourhood Plan (2017), and national planning policy in the form of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF notes that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 7 advises the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 goes on to advise that sustainable development has three overarching objectives, an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. The provision of new homes forms part of the social objective.

Section 5 sets out guidance relating to delivering a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 69 makes the point that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. As such, local authorities should support the development of windfall sites, giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.

Paragraph 93 advises that planning decisions should plan positively for the provision of community facilities (including public houses), and guard against the unnecessary loss of such facilities and services.

Paragraph 130 lists a number of criteria that planning decisions should comply with. These include ensuring:

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 users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Paragraph 189 advises that for development proposals affecting heritage assets, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. However, the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 202 notes that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy – Hart Local Plan (2020)

In the context of the Hart Local Plan, the site lies within a settlement boundary and within Odiham conservation area. Relevant policies from the Local Plan are looked at in more detail below.

Assessment of compliance

Policy SD1 – This policy relates to sustainable development and confirms the Council will apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development provided the development proposal accords with relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Policy NBE8 – this policy relates to the historic environment and advises that development should conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance. The policy goes on to state that proposals which would lead to the loss of, or harm to, the significance of a heritage asset and/or its setting, will not be permitted.

The current use of the site as a public house has not proven to be viable in its current form, with the pub closing in March 2020 and remaining vacant since. The long-term future of the Listed Building is currently at risk and a viable alternative use should be granted at the earliest opportunity to safeguard this heritage asset.

It is thought the building was originally constructed with a domestic element to its use. While it is acknowledged the public house use has been longstanding at the site, it is nonetheless relevant to note that the building was originally intended with residential use in mind.

The heritage statement goes on to note that the physical alterations required to facilitate the change of use are wholly minor in their scale, while all historical features of interest in the building will, in the most part, be retained. The main physical change (a new party wall) is considered to be the most sensitive way of subdividing the building offering a 'light touch' whilst still achieving the applicants proposed new layout.

The proposals will result in a the front of the building being changed to function as a wine bar, this will ensure the use as a drinking venue will be retained with the layout overall improved. The rear half of the building will be converted to form 2 x 1 bedroom flats. The applicants consider the new smaller scale drinking establishment and proposed residential use will ensure a viable long-term future for the site. Furthermore, given the Listed Building was originally designed with residential use in mind, the proposed residential use element would not be out of character with the building, or indeed the wider surroundings both historically or in the present day. Indeed, this proposed split use for the site respects both the public house and residential historic uses at the site.

The development proposal have been designed specifically to enhance the setting and special character of the property, while providing a viable long term use for the site. The proposal therefore complies with Policy NBE8.

Policy NBE9 – this is a general design policy that applies to all development proposals in the district. The policy lists a number of criteria that development should comply with, including ensuring that development promotes, reflects and incorporates the distinctive qualities of its surroundings in terms of the proposed scale, density, mass and height of development and choice of building materials. Other factors, such as suitable landscaping should also be integral to the development’s layout and overall design.

The development proposal does not make any significant external alterations to the building. All existing signage will be retained with the building remaining in near identical appearance to that of the current building from the principle elevation (the south facing elevation to The Bury).

The change of use to residential is compatible with the prevailing form of the surroundings and is therefore compatible with the character of the area in this respect. Odiham centre is characterised by retail and eating/drinking establishments with residential uses either above or to the rear. The proposal will also result in the decluttering of the courtyard, and new landscaping to convert this space to two private amenity outdoor spaces.

It is considered the proposal will provide an attractive mixed use development that will enhance the existing environment. Given the limited external changes to the building, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy NBE9.

Policy INF5 – this policy relates to community facilities and seeks to ensure community facilities will not be lost, unless the Council is satisfied that a suitable replacement facility is provided, or where a replacement facility is not proposed,

that there is no longer a need for the community facility, or that the premises that houses the community facility ensures that the use is no longer viable.

The proposals will ensure that the community facility provided by the building as a drinking establishment will be retained. The current layout for the pub compromises its ability to operate as a viable business. The proposals will provide a modified and improved layout for this area of the building that will assist in its long-term ability to function as a drinking establishment. It is considered the complies with Policy INF5.

Odiham & North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

A review of the Odiham & North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan reveals only Policy 6 relating to Odiham Conservation Area is relevant.

Policy 6 seeks to ensure that development will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Part (ix) of the policy specifically referred to The Bury, and advises that:

Development in The Bury shall respect the existing mix of scale of buildings surrounding The Bury and the strong sense of enclosure that adjoining buildings provide to the public open space;

The Heritage Statement provides greater detail on the conservation area and its setting. The proposed alterations are shielded from views within the conservation area and thus the development will not detract from the setting of the conservation area. Due regard should also be given to the improvement in aesthetic of the courtyard/covered passage area.

On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with neighbourhood plan policy 6.

4.0 The Proposed Development

Amount

The proposed development comprises the conversion of existing public house to wine bar and creation of 2 x 1 bedroom flats. Only minor external alterations to the building are proposed (that will be visible to the public realm), and therefore the building will remain of near identical appearance to the existing building.

The site lies on a plot of approximately 0.02 hectares. The floorspace is predominantly spread across the ground and first floors (providing a total of around 145sqm). The wine barn proposed at the front of the building will have a floor area of 66.6sqm with the two residential flats to the rear having a floor area of approximately 110sqm.

The wine bar will continue to be access via the original side entrance for the pub with the proposed reconfiguration to form the two dwellings will create one property at ground floor level and one at the first floor.

The proposals will retain a sensible balance between built and unbuilt space both from the public realm and across the site as a whole.

This balance will:

- Retain the character and appearance of the building with no significant external alterations
- Provide a courtyard garden to the western side of the built form for each dwelling
- Ensure each dwelling is provided with separate means of access and acts independently of the other, despite being part of the same building

Layout

The proposed layout has been entirely determined by the existing built form on site, and the need to find a viable long-term use for the Listed Building.

Accordingly, the proposal does not seek to provide any new floorspace. Instead, the layout focuses on a simple conversion of the existing floorspace into a wine bar and two dwellings. The divide between the bar and the two dwellings being a new party wall on the line of the existing southern most chimney stack.

Internally, the layout requires minor alterations (which are detailed in the heritage statement) and deemed acceptable so far as not having an impact on the Listed Building.

Externally, the site is currently devoid of soft landscaping features, and the proposed layout seeks to enhance the landscape setting of the site by providing a new landscaped courtyard area to the west of the built form.

The layout also seeks to provide both bin and cycle storage buildings for each dwelling.

Scale

Given the proposed development utilises an existing building and seeks no additional floorspace, the scale of development relates solely to the existing built form at the site. This comprises a two-storey building with a narrow street frontage that extends back the entire length of the site.

By utilising the existing building, the design seeks to avoid any overdevelopment of the plot and provide a level of development that is sympathetic to the site and its surroundings, while also ensuring the proposal maximises the site's development potential in accordance with national and

local planning policy guidance, as well as providing a viable long-term use for the Listed Building.

Landscaping

The site is entirely hard landscaped. The main landscaping opportunity at the site is the courtyard to the west of the built form, though this area is entirely enclosed by other built development.

Nonetheless, the proposed removal of a number of outbuildings and enclosures in this area, and the introduction of some new planting to provide two private amenity areas is considered to result in a landscape enhancement across the site.

Appearance

The existing building is Grade II Listed and is therefore an important element of the street scene.

As already stated, the development proposal does not seek to alter the external appearance of the building, other than the removal of existing signage relating to the public house. The front elevation of the building will not be changed, while the only (visible to the public realm) external alteration relates to the replacement of a first floor window on the east facing side elevation. The two proposed porch areas on the western elevation will not be publicly visible.

There will be no alterations to the front of the building ensuring that the elevation street scene will remain unaltered.

Accessibility and Parking

The nearest public transport to the site consists of a bus service running between Basingstoke and Alton. The services stops along Alton Road (west of the site). The bus service provides an hourly connection during the daytime (excluding Sundays).

The site does not have the ability to provide any off-road parking to serve the proposed development. However, given the highly sustainable location, and the reduction in traffic generation as a result of the loss of the pub to two dwellings, this is considered acceptable.

Each dwelling will be provided with a cycle parking facility.

It should be noted that the council's highways officer has not objected to the lack of parking during previous applications and the Inspector confirmed when determining the recent appeals at the site that:

"this issue that lack of designated parking does not constitute a reason to refuse the appeals."

Contaminated Land Assessment

The site is not known to be contaminated and a such holds low risk for future contamination through the proposals. The proposed development involves the basic subdivision of an existing building with little to no demolition required to undertake the works. As such it is not considered the proposals would cause any contamination risk.

5.0 Conclusions

The site is located within the town of Odiham, close to the town centre. The site comprises a Grade II Listed Building located within Odiham conservation area. The proposed development comprises converting the former public house at the site into a wine bar and two residential units.

The development proposal is acceptable in principle in accordance with the relevant development control policies in the Local Plan, and aligns with the policies contained within the revised National Planning Policy Framework, which promote increased housing delivery and the provision of a wide choice of high quality homes in sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, as well as ensuring Listed Buildings are kept in a viable long term use.

The proposals provide the most viable option for the building whilst maintaining a community use, putting this heritage building to a mixed use that will ensure its upkeep, longevity and maintenance. The property sits amongst other residential dwellings and would not be out of keeping with the character of the locality. The proposed alterations to the Listed Building are small in scale and will not harm the character and appearance of the building. The development proposal will also not adversely impact the setting of the Listed Building nor detract from the setting of the conservation area. There would be little noticeable difference in appearance of the site from the public realm.

In summary, it is considered that the detail and evidence detailed above and in the accompanying documentation provides sufficient justification to demonstrate that the development proposal is compliant with all relevant national and local plan policies. The development would secure a viable long-term use for the Listed Building in accordance with local plan policy NBE8.

We therefore conclude that the application should be supported by the Council and approved granted.

