

# **PLANNING STATEMENT (including Contaminated Land Assessment)**

**Proposed conversion of outbuilding to two  
bedroom dwelling**

**at**

**The Annexe – 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 annexe building associated with The Bell Inn, The Bury, Odiham into a two bedroom unit.

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 focus of the application relates to a large outbuilding to the rear of the site. The outbuilding comprises a red brick structure with a half hip roof, covered in clay tiles. The outbuilding provides approximately 80 sq m of floorspace.

Access to the outbuilding and the courtyard to the rear is via a side passage to the west of Webb House. The passage is wide enough to allow vehicular access, terminating in a courtyard north of the outbuilding.

The outbuilding is currently not in active use, but has in the past been used separately from the pub as a general store room and gym. The original purpose of the building is not clear, though the form of the building suggests it was originally a coach house or stable. The building is in a reasonable state of repair, but risks falling into disrepair unless a viable use for the building can be found.

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 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022 by the Development Control Committee. Subsequent appeals were lodged but both were dismissed by the Inspectorate on 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

The outbuilding itself is not a Listed Building, but lies within the curtilage of the Bell Inn, a Grade II Listed Building. Webb House adjoins the site to the south and is also Grade II Listed, while there are other Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site. The outbuilding is noted as being a 'positive building' within the Odiham Conservation Area Appraisal.

It is thought the building was originally constructed as a stable or coach house associated with the inn.

The alterations that have taken place within the building to facilitate the change of use to storage and a function room has affected the character of the interior of the building, to the extent that there is limited evidence of the building's original use surviving. However, the first floor retains more original features.

The outbuilding is considered of wholly limited architectural and historic interest in its own right. The external works required to facilitate the residential use of the outbuilding are relatively minor, to the extent that it is concluded the proposed development will not affect the building's individual heritage value or the contribution it makes to the Bell Inn.

A residential use of the outbuilding would represent the most viable long term use for the building, especially given the public house will continue through its conversion to a wine bar. The development proposal will therefore 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. The roof will be refurbished and retiled, with new conservation rooflights added (5 in total). An existing door will be replaced with a window on the north elevation, while a new window will be installed in place of the hay loft opening on the west elevation. The cart doors on the west elevation will be retained, but new glazing will be added behind.

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. The building is set back from the road frontage, and while the building is still publicly visible (the passageway acts as a public footpath providing access to the High Street), the limited alterations to the external appearance are not considered to detract from the building itself, nor the wider surroundings.

It is considered the proposal will provide an attractive residential 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 change of use of an existing outbuilding belonging to a public house that has now ceased trading. The change of use will enable a new two bedroom dwelling to be created.

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. Further detail relating to the proposal is contained within the separate design and access statement prepared by the scheme architect.

The outbuilding comprises approximately 81 sq m of floorspace. The floorspace is spread evenly across the ground and first floors. Access to the site will be derived via the external entrance door to the north courtyard. A small section of wall will be demolished to facilitate the new access.

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 eastern side of the built form
- Ensure the dwelling is provided with an appropriate means of access
- Provide a comfortable living environment with adequate living space to conform to the national space standards for residential development

## 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 building. Accordingly, the proposal seeks only to provide a very small area of new floorspace in the form of a ground floor extension into the eastern courtyard. Instead, the layout focuses on a simple conversion of the existing floorspace into a single dwelling.

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 character and appearance of the outbuilding. Externally, the site is currently devoid of soft landscaping features. The proposed layout seeks to provide a new courtyard area to the east of the built form. A small amenity space is to be formed at first floor level whilst any possible overlooking has been minimised by setting back the accessible space from the boundaries.

The layout also seeks to provide both bin and cycle storage for the dwelling. A new point of access will be created in the north-eastern corner.

## 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.

The converted building would introduce some new elements of soft landscaping into the courtyard, resulting in a landscape enhancement on the site. The application is accompanied by a biodiversity enhancement plan which shows the additional new planting opportunities for the proposals.

The proposal preserves the existing landscape setting, and through the introduction of small areas of new soft landscaping the baseline position will be enhanced.

## Appearance

The existing building is of some merit, being considered as a positive building within the context of the Odiham Conservation Area. The building is also within the curtilage of a Grade II Listed Building. However, the building is also set back from the road frontage, so is only visible to users of the public footpath to the west of the site. As already stated, the development proposal does not seek to drastically alter the external appearance of the building, other than some minor alterations such as the installation of new rooflights.

Other alterations, such as new glazing in place of a door and the hay loft opening are the only other external alterations that would be visible to the public realm. The proposed changes to the site frontage are not considered to detract from the overall appearance of the site, while the use of the site as residential echoes the prevailing use in the surroundings.

### 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 an outbuilding adjacent to The Bell Inn, a Grade II Listed Building also located within Odiham conservation area. The Bell Inn ceased trading in March 2020, and the site is currently vacant.

The proposed development comprises converting the outbuilding into a two bedroom dwelling. 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.

The proposal does not require substantial alterations to the external appearance of the outbuilding. The building is recognised as having a positive impact on the Conservation Area, and the proposal ensures that the resulting development does not detract from the surroundings. The change of use of the site to residential use would secure a long-term future for the Building. The proposed alterations to the 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 Bell Inn, nor the adjacent Listed Building (Webb House), 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.