

POLICY ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Site Location

LAND AT BROADMOOR COTTAGE, RUSKIN ROAD, BANBURY

Project

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND ERECTION OF SIX RESIDENTIAL
DWELLINGS IN THE FORM OF FLATS**

Applicant

MR B EDWARDS

Date

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The site comprises an area approximately 0.1705 ha in extent located generally to the south of the town of Banbury close to the outskirts. Immediately to the southwest is the education establishment of Wykham Park Academy. To the east of the site is the residential development of Wykham Place.
- 1.2 Temporary buildings for education purposes were permitted on this site in 2008 where an abandoned house is located.
- 1.3 Nationally there remains a national shortfall in housing provision exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The district is part of a group of Councils supporting housing needs in Oxford but examination of the suitability of the area for major development determined that more sustainable locations existed closer to the city.
- 1.4 The area is not yet subject to a Neighbourhood Plan.

2. The Location

- 2.1 The site comprises generally flat land enclosed by trees. The land had been encroached upon by scrub on its western and eastern side but this has since been removed: trees are located close to the western boundary which is defined by a chain link fence. The northern and southern boundaries are similarly defined but the eastern boundary is demarked by a post and wire fence.
- 2.2 The existing plot access comprises gravel, tarmac and concrete. The access is located to the south-eastern corner of the plot and runs parallel to a public footpath that together leave Ruskin Road just before the entrance to the school grounds.
- 2.3 The dwellings in the adjoining Wykham Place, a number with hipped roofs, are set well forward in their plots away from the boundary where their gardens meet with the development plot. Dwellings in the immediate vicinity are primarily two storey traditional forms on a rectangular footprint in a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings. The existing, now disused, dwelling on the site is two-storey beneath a 30° pitched roof of brown concrete tiles and in poor order having been extensively vandalised.

- 2.4 There are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity and the site is not located in a Conservation Area or landscape designated nationally or locally as one deserving of specific recognition or particular protection. There is a low risk of surface water flooding in the vicinity but not in respect of the site.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 This development comprises the demolition of the existing two storey dwelling which has suffered from significant and prolonged vandalism and its replacement with six 2 x bedroom flats in a single structure around a central entrance. At ground floor each flat would have access to a private patio area while first floor units would each enjoy a balcony of the same size. A combined refuse and recycling area is located close to the turning head. The roof pitch is set to match the existing development on the site.
- 3.2 Two parking spaces are proposed to serve each dwelling and these are set out along the length of the drive. A turning area is located close to the flats. The drive/parking turning area will comprise permeable surfacing.
- 3.3 The proposed complex will have pitched roofs clad in brown tiles. Wall finishes would be of facing brick the precise colour to be agreed with the LPA. Windows and doors would be of white UPVC while rainwater goods would be black in colour.
- 3.4 A mains water supply would be available. Foul water would discharge to the public main. Surface water would be addressed by soakaways.
- 3.5 The application is accompanied by the following drawings.

HN -116-01 - Location Plan being at a scale of 1:1250 and an OS extract

HN -116-02 - Existing Site Survey

HN -116-03 - Existing Floor Plans

HN -116-04 - Existing Elevations

HN -116-05 - Proposed Site Plan

HN -116-06 - Typical Flat Layout

HN -116-07 - Proposed Ground Floor Layout

HN -116-08 - Proposed First floor Plan

HN -116-09 - Proposed Roof Plan

HN -116-10 - Proposed Elevations

HN -116-11- Proposed section

HN -116-12 – Specification Sheet 1

HN -116-13 – Specification Sheet 2

HN -116-14 – Specification Sheet 3

4. Design Considerations

- 4.1 The proposed **use** of the property will be as six residential units with private amenity areas, parking and turning area as described in this statement and as illustrated on accompanying plans.
- 4.2 The **amount** of development, the subject of this application, is as illustrated in the accompanying plans and set out in detail in part 3, of this explanatory statement.
- 4.3 The **layout** of the proposed development derives directly from access location, This layout ensures the provision of adequate car parking and private amenity space to serve each dwelling unit. Consideration has been given to the amenities of neighbouring dwellings to the east and the preservation of privacy. The proximity of trees, the location of the neighbour's sheds and the use of a skylight will ensure privacy.
- 4.4 The **scale** of the development is, appropriate to the plot size, the immediate setting, and to the character of the area recognising the change in character being a transitional site between the residential development to the east and the academy buildings to the west.
- 4.5 Little additional **landscaping** is proposed as it is expected that landscaping will be to the taste of the future occupiers and kept simple for maintenance purposes. Existing trees will be retained.
- 4.6 The **appearance** of the proposed dwellings will reflect modern interpretations of traditional forms already found in the area and the massing of neighbouring dwellings to the east. A traditional rectangular footprint is the basis for the development and materials common to the area are to be utilised.

- 4.7 The **access** is gently sloping between parking areas and front doors and main access drive.

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

- 5.1 This policy guidance forms the current mainstay of the planning system for the nation and places emphasis on the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is described at paragraph 8 as comprising three dimensions requiring that the planning system has three overarching objectives:

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

b) **a social objective** – to support 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

c) **an environmental objective** to contribute 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.

- 5.2 Paragraph 11 establishes that a presumption in favour of sustainable development runs through plan making and decision taking. Where development is in accordance with an up-to-date Development Plan, permission should be granted without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, LPA's should grant permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides 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.

- 5.3 Paragraph 47 advises that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan and paragraph 59, that the government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes.
- 5.4 Paragraph 78 sets out that to promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of communities recognising that development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
- 5.5 Paragraph 117 of the Framework encourages the 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.
- 5.6 Paragraph 122 establishes that efficient schemes should take into account:
- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
 - b) local market conditions and viability;
 - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
 - d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and,
 - e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 5.7 The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development creating better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 5.8 Paragraph 127 makes clear 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 users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

5.9 Paragraph 130 advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take advantage of the opportunities available to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

5.10 Paragraph 153 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:

a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and

b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Cherwell Local Plan – Part 1

5.11 The plan seeks to focus development on the towns of Banbury and Bicester while limiting growth in rural areas and strictly controlling development in the open countryside.

Strategic Objectives are established to create the building of sustainable communities.

SO 6 seeks to ensure new development maintains and enhances the local identity of Cherwell's settlements.

SO 7 sets out to meet the housing needs of all sections of the Cherwell community.

SO 12 promotes making the best use of land in sustainable locations.

Policy PSD 1 reiterates the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy BSC 2 considers the effective and efficient use of land and the reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings in sustainable locations.

BSC 5 sets out the developments comprising 'Area Renewal' will be supported in particular that small scale redevelopment/renewal proposals resulting in improvements to the existing housing stock will be granted planning permission.

ESD 1 addresses Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change by location, reduction in travel needs, incorporating renewable energy systems, maximising passive solar heating opportunities and minimising flood risk.

ESD 2 sets out that while not requiring an Energy Statement because the site is less than 10 dwellings, an energy hierarchy applies.

ESD 3 requires that all new residential development incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development. Specific attention will be necessary to water efficiency.

ESD 6 establishes steps to be taken with regard to Sustainable Flood Risk Management including the avoidance of areas at risk of flooding and the control of discharge rates from any site.

ESD 7 promotes the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems to manage surface water run-off.

ESD 10 considers the Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and includes the protection of trees.

ESD 15 seeks to complement and enhance the Character of the Built Environment through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design.

Banbury Vision and Master Plan

5.12 It is evident that Banbury faces a number of challenges and the publication seeks to address those challenges under the headings of:

Promote Banbury as the regional service centre of choice for the wider region;

Establish a strong economy;

Reduce congestion and improve accessibility;

Create a vibrant and attractive town centre;

Create a high-quality environment and distinctive place to live and work; and,

Promote opportunities for local people.

Although identifying the need to protect the heritage and natural assets of the town environment the plan also allocates areas of new housing and employment.

Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need

- 5.13 The plan considers the allocation of land to meet Oxford's housing need in the surrounding districts. Examination of the opportunities offered by Banbury found that the area was ill-suited to meet that need.

Cherwell Residential Design Guide SPD

- 5.14 Based upon the guidance found in part 3, the site comprises a 'small infill site'. Standards are set out covering a broad range of issues. Details of housing design are set out in considerable detail and have been given full consideration in the preparation of this development proposal.

6. Planning Analysis

- 6.1 The Local Plan and associated SPD apply standards according to scale and location. This small infill plot is located within the town rather than the countryside and within an area acknowledged as resulting from development during the late 20th Century. This site is unusual with open space on two sides and the grounds of an academy to the north and west and clearly separated in character and layout from the established residential development to the east. It is evidently a transition site and being of such individual characteristics is capable of accepting a development form that does not replicate the traditional approach to layout demonstrated by neighbouring dwellings. The site provides the opportunity for a more efficient and effective use of land that would be difficult to achieve in a traditional layout.
- 6.2 Set at sufficient distance from the town centre such that constraints do not arise from any heritage asset consideration. Located within walking distance of the town centre, the site is well placed to take advantage of existing bus routes and the towns services and facilities, indeed so much so that further housing land allocations have been made for the land to the southwest of the site. Bus routes for the 489 and B1 pass nearby and provide access to the town. Notwithstanding the opportunity to walk, cycle, or use public transport, a full provision of parking is made in line with guidance for unallocated parking and every four units of parking are separated by new planting to improve the visual amenities of the area.

- 6.3 The presence of the academy nearby allows for a building of greater mass to sit comfortably in its company without adverse impact upon the characteristics of the built environment notwithstanding that a single dwellinghouse would be replaced by a larger development of six dwellings. Being within the town and enjoying a residential history, regardless of the more recent but no longer required education use of the site, the location is suitable in principle and in practice to provide for additional dwellings to meet the needs of local people. While the general location provides for a mix of housing, detached, semi-detached and terraced, this flattened development would increase the range of dwellings in the area creating further opportunity for new households.
- 6.4 Taking into account physical constraints and matters directly related to the successful integration of the development into the area, the trees present at the western edge of the site cannot be disregarded. Trees of value, contributing to the essential qualities of the location and wider area are to be retained and protected as part of the development. Areas of overgrowth have been removed from the site boundaries with care taken to ensure that responsibilities under the Wildlife Acts were recognised and addressed. Service trenches and drains will be reused and foundations micro-piled with ground beams to avoid pressure on tree roots there being sufficient root areas unaffected to avoid concerns for ground compression and consequent loss of water and air to root systems.
- 6.5 Much of the proposed development will have south facing elements to facilitate passive solar gain. There will be an open aspect to balconies and patios without giving rise to concerns of overlooking or privacy loss.
- 6.6 The building forms are based upon interlocking rectangular elements to create an overall individual form that nonetheless incorporates traditional elements and features. Windows have a vertical emphasis and roof forms are foreshortened to create identity to the pairs of flats and proportions similar to a traditional individual dwelling. Shallow roof pitches are avoided with simplicity of the elevations and the avoidance of hipped roofs. Simple facades are produced with largely uninterrupted roof forms such that the character of the district is reflected in this creative design. Although the Design Guide indicates the desirability of apartment buildings being indistinguishable from individual houses the efficient development of this singular site dictates an alternative approach that, while reflective of and incorporating individual dwelling proportions, adapts to the site's shape and constraints.
- 6.7 Materials will be those common to the area with brown tile and brick such that while the overall two storey design reflects the change in the character of the area the materials provide further visual grounding and a link with existing dwellings nearby.

- 6.8 It is evident that the development will be sustainable and should be permitted. Sustainability is judged, as already identified, by three measures: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.
- 6.9 In consideration of paragraph 8 of the NPPF, this is a sustainable location through its location within the settlement and through the availability of public transport; it is therefore in principle, suitable for residential development. It would meet the economic objective by providing homes in the right place where they would help support local services and provide employment by this means and also directly during the period of construction; the dwellings would meet a social objective by providing new housing to meet an identified need for new homes and again support local services. The development would meet environmental objectives by creating dwellings reflecting the established dwelling forms in the area, be of the correct materials, and make best use of land.
- 6.10 The LPA is committed to achieving high quality buildings and places, and ensuring that the distinctive character of the district is retained. The development of the site will maintain the character of the area and provide housing to meet an established need. The development would represent an efficient and effective use of land and satisfies the environmental objective.
- 6.11 It appears likely that that a Section 106 Planning Obligation may be required to address matters such as the following:
- Education Infrastructure contributions,
- Travel; and,
- Waste collection.
- 6.12 If any additional contributions are required the cooperation of the LPA in the early identification of such matters would be appreciated.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development provides an opportunity to increase the range of available housing.
- 7.2 The dwellings proposed will provide homes in a sustainable location well served by public transport and well related in terms of services and facilities, employment and education.

- 7.3 There are no adverse impacts upon the amenities of neighbouring dwellings through overbearing, loss of light or privacy. In terms of acceptable forms of design, the proposed dwelling will reflect the traditional form based upon a rectangular footprint and utilise materials common to the area.
- 7.4 The development would not result in any harmful impact upon the local landscape, being set appropriately within a recognised settlement and retaining positive landscape features. Good design and the careful use of materials will ensure that the dwellings will blend well with their surroundings.

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