

Planning Application Comments

Planning Application Number: 16/00472/OUT

Drawing Number(s): D&A Statement 7.9.16

Acoustic Assessment 3.9.19

Proposed Site Plan 29.5.20

Site Name: S Grundon Services Ltd, Merton Street, Banbury, OX16 4RN

Planning Officer: Rebekah Morgan

Date of Comments: 6 July 2020

Comments by: Natalie Harvey

This application is for a proposed residential development of up to 200 units, made up wholly of blocks of flats. Strategic Housing have previously commented on this planning application, most latterly in October 2018. Whilst our previous comments are upheld in principle, our response has been refined with the submission of additional information.

The proposed development is conveniently located near to Banbury town centre, but it has the railway and motorway in proximity, whilst behind the site is allocated for warehousing. In our view these make the area a less desirable location for many of our applicants, as, due to the necessary noise mitigation measures (e.g. non-openable windows, no balconies, noise barrier), the housing environment will have a 'closed-in' feel and may not be suitable. We would therefore need to have further discussions regarding the best allocation of the affordable housing in terms of client groups.

Due to viability issues, it has been agreed with Planning that only 9% of the units will be allocated as Affordable Housing provision. This would equate to 18 units, split 70:30 between rented and shared ownership. Affordable housing should normally be distributed evenly across the site, with clusters of no more than 15 dwellings, of which no more than 10 of the dwellings are rented; however, as this scheme is wholly flats, for ease of management, we would expect a Registered Provider to take on an entire block. To fit in with the above criteria, we would consider one of the smaller blocks.

To ensure the creation of mixed and cohesive communities the affordable housing should be fully integrated with the market housing and be visually indistinguishable. Two-bed flats above the ground floor for rent are not desirable, so we would accept 1-bed flats for rent and 2-bed flats for shared ownership. The block of flats that best suits this criteria is Block C, which has 14 apartments - 9 x 1-bed and 5 x 2-bed.

Site constraints also dictate that all the ground floors are to be undercroft car parking. We would normally expect at least 50% of the rented dwellings to

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meet Approved Document Part M4(2)(2) and be ground floor flats in order to provide maximum accessibility. We would like to know if these can be suitably provided (e.g. there would need to be a lift).

We generally prefer Social Rent, however, as service charges are in addition to social rent it affects the affordability, so we would therefore accept Affordable Rent tenures to ensure the total occupation costs remain affordable. The service charges must also be affordable in the long term for the shared ownership properties.

In terms of space, rented dwellings must comply with the DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard. The size of dwellings is assumed to be Gross Internal Area (GIA) expressed in m².

We also expect that 1-bed dwellings to have a minimum of 1 parking space per unit, and all 2-bed dwellings to have a minimum of 2 parking spaces per unit, however, it is unclear whether this number can be provided, but the available spaces should be allocated.

The Registered Provider taking on the affordable housing units would need to be agreed with the Council.