

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement accompanies this application for outline planning permission for the erection of one dwelling on land at Flint Acre, Toddington Lane, Littlehampton. In submitting this application, approval is sought for the access, scale and layout. Appearance and landscaping are proposed as reserved matters although indicative elevations are included to demonstrate the type of dwelling that would be considered appropriate for the site.
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that planning permission was refused for a dwelling on this site in 2013 (LU/43/13) for two reasons: the first relating to the height and position of the dwelling on the site and the second relating to the principle of residential development in this location. There has been a material change in circumstances since that application was determined with the adoption of the Arun Local Plan in 2018 which extended the built-up area boundary to include the surrounding area as a strategic housing site. The application site now falls within this defined built-up area.
- 1.3 This application proposes an alternative layout and scale of development to that previously refused and this statement seeks to demonstrate that the form of development now proposed is appropriate to its context and can be accommodated on the site without harm to the character of the area or existing residential amenities. This statement also comprises a heritage statement, considering the impact of the proposed development on the setting of nearby designated heritage assets.
- 1.4 Planning permission was granted for a dwelling north of the application site in 2013 but this has not been implemented (LU/42/13).

## **2. The Site and Its Surroundings**

- 2.1 The site the subject of this application is located just to the east of Toddington Lane where it turns 90° to the north of the railway line. It currently forms part of the curtilage to the existing dwelling known as Flint Acre which is a single/1½ storey dwelling in flint, render and timber boarding located on the western side of its plot. There is a large ornamental pond within the garden. The application site is located towards the front of the site, adjacent to the road, to the south east of the existing dwelling and south of the pond.
- 2.2 The area is one of very mixed character and is undergoing further rapid change. The cluster of buildings to the west of the application site are semi-rural in character with two listed buildings constructed in flint with flint boundary walls and mature

landscaping. The adjoining property immediately to west of the site, is single storey and rendered whilst there are modern dwellings on the south side of the lane, three of which are recently constructed. There are recent residential developments further to the west both north and south of Toddington Lane and the glasshouse buildings associated with the nurseries to the east have been demolished in preparation for more residential development as part of the strategic allocation.



Google Aerial Image of Site and its Surroundings

- 2.3 The site is accessed by a private lane which meets the public highway at its junction with Toddington Lane. The lane is a public footpath (no. 3096). Between the lane and the application site lies a ditch which is banked on its north side and contains hedgerow shrubs.

### 3. The Application Proposal

- 3.1 The application proposes the erection of a single dwelling on the site with access from the existing drive serving Flint Acre. A parking and turning area is proposed on the west side of the dwelling in addition to an integral garage within the dwelling. To the east of the dwelling will be the garden area.

- 3.2 The dwelling is proposed to be predominantly single storey with accommodation within the roof space at first floor level served by dormer windows and roof lights. The indicative elevations show how a dwelling can be designed which addresses the road frontage but also avoids windows on the north elevation closest to Flint Acre to protect its residential amenities. The indicative floor plan shows a three-bedroom dwelling of 210 sqm.



Indicative Front Elevation

#### 4. Planning Policy Considerations

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which comprises three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental. It states that the three objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).
- 4.2 In paragraph 10 it states, "So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development". Paragraph 11 confirms that for decision taking, where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The policies of the development plan are considered out of date where the LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer). The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing and therefore its policies for the supply of

housing must be considered out of date and the 2020 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results confirms that Arun District Council is now a “presumption” Authority.

- 4.3 The Government’s objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes and paragraph 68 states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. It states that local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions - giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. Paragraph 70 states that LPAs should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area. The emphasis is therefore on inappropriate development and not an embargo on all garden land development.
- 4.4 Part 11 of the NPPF encourages the effective use of land and paragraph 117 states “Planning policies and decisions should promote an 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.” Paragraph 122 also encourages the efficient use of land taking into account, amongst other matters, the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens).
- 4.5 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with design and paragraph 124 states “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” It also seeks to ensure that developments are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and optimises the potential of a site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development.
- 4.6 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”
- 4.7 Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 193 states “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” It goes on to state that any harm to the significance of the asset should require clear and convincing justification.

- 4.8 For the purposes of this application the development plan consists of the Arun District Local Plan 2018. The most relevant policies of the Local Plan are:

**Policy SD SP1** – Sustainable development - this confirms the positive approach that the Council will take reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

**Policy SD SP2** – Built up area boundary - development will be permitted within built up area boundaries subject to consideration of other policies in the plan.

**Policy D SP1** – Design - this encourages proposals to make efficient use of land whilst reflecting the characteristics of the site and surrounding area.

**Policy D DM1** – Aspects of form and design quality - sets out the matters that the Council will have regard to and includes character, appearance and impact and density.

**Policy D DM2** – Internal Space Standards - requires appropriately sized internal space using the Nationally Described Space Standards as a guide.

**T DM1** – Sustainable Travel and Public Rights of Way – encourages new development to be able to access alternative modes of transport.

**QE SP1** - Quality of the Environment - requires that all development contributes positively to the quality of the environment and will ensure that development does not have a significantly negative impact upon residential amenity, the natural environment or upon leisure and recreational activities enjoyed by residents and visitors to the District.

**Policy HER SP1** – The Historic Environment – the policy does not support development that prejudices the setting of a designated heritage asset.

- 4.9 The Arun District Design Guide SPD 2021 was adopted in January this year. For a single plot such as this the section on infill proposals (section P) and residential outdoor amenity (section H.04) are the most relevant.

## 5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The site lies within the built-up area boundary and therefore, in accordance with policy SD SP2 of the local plan and the advice in the NPPF that seek to guide development towards sustainable locations, the site is suitably located to accommodate residential development. The key issue is whether the scale and layout of the proposal is suitable for the site and will be in keeping with the character of the area and respect the character of existing residential properties. It is also necessary to consider whether the access is suitable to serve the development. Finally, the impact of the development on the significance of nearby designated heritage assets will also need to be assessed.

### **Layout and Scale**

- 5.2 As previously described, the character of the area is very mixed but Flint Acre and the properties to the west retain a relatively spacious layout compared to the new development opposite and in the general locality. As a result, the pattern of development is informal, with some backland development, but nevertheless it is a cluster of dwellings, in close proximity to one another, now situated within the built-up area. Flint Acre is well related to the adjoining properties but its large curtilage extends eastwards and, without undermining the more spacious setting of the immediate locality, could accommodate additional development to make more efficient and effective use of the land.
- 5.3 The application proposes the siting of just one detached dwelling to reflect the form of development on the north side of the lane. Whilst located at the front of the site, it will have a spacious setting with a good distance to Flint Acre itself and to the road frontage, particularly as there is a ditch and landscaped bank between the application site and the road. The dwelling will address the road frontage with sufficient space for parking and turning to its west side and private amenity space to the east. The garden will have a depth of 19m exceeding the minimum guidelines set out in the Arun Design Guide.
- 5.4 The scale of the dwelling proposed is a chalet style with a height of 6.7m. This reflects the scale and form of Flint Acre and Old Byrne House, both of which have chalet elements with dormers within the roof slope. The illustrative front elevation demonstrates that a dwelling can be designed to complement local vernacular and be in keeping with the existing properties on the north side of the lane. A dwelling can also be designed without windows in its north elevation where it is closest to Flint Acre. The amenities of the existing dwelling can therefore be preserved.
- 5.5 The previous proposal was refused on its height and positioning on the site which would result in a prominent form of development. This proposal is much more modest in its scale and is located further from Flint Acre maintaining the spacious character of this part of the lane. It also has to be acknowledged that the planning status of the area has changed since the previous decision and the site is now in the built-up area where the principle of development is acceptable. Nevertheless, the scale and layout of the dwelling has been reconsidered to ensure that it reflects the characteristics of the site and surrounding area in accordance with Policy S SP1 and the principles set out in the Arun Design Guide for infill development. It is submitted that the proposal achieves the balance between the efficient use of land and local character which is at the heart of sustainable development.

### Access

- 5.6 It is proposed to utilise the existing access which currently serves Flint Acre. The previous application for a dwelling on this site similarly proposed a shared access and no objection was raised by the Highway Authority to that arrangement. In its consultation response, WSCC confirmed that the road is not adopted but, as a public footpath, is maintained to footpath standard. It went on to state that *"The visibility on to this footpath appears to be suitable to support this development and the visibility on to Toddington Lane, being the nearest public highway, is also suitable. It is not anticipated a significant intensification will arise from a development such as this; nevertheless both access-ways are adequate."* It is submitted that, as this proposal also relates to just one additional dwelling being served by the existing access, there is no material difference to the previous proposal in terms of the access arrangement and therefore should be considered acceptable.

### Heritage

- 5.7 To the west of the application site lies two listed buildings: Toddington Farmhouse (Grade II) and the Dovecote at Toddington (also Grade II). The Dovecote is part of the property immediately to the east (known as Old Byrne House) and lies on the far western side of the plot. The Dovecote is described as *"To East of farmhouse. Dated 1699. 2 storey square building framed to North and South by C19 farm buildings. West and East fronts dressed with squared knapped flints. Brick gable ends with weatherboarded tips. West front has opening above central door framed by date bricks thus: 16 - opening - 9, A over 1 T, 9. East front has 2 dove openings with slab-rests in front and a further dove-rest on the North-East corner. Interior chalk built. Tiled roof."* The remainder of Old Byrne House comprises former agricultural buildings and a more modern addition with flat roofed dormers in the roof slope at its eastern end, closest to the application site. The property as whole lies within its own clearly recognised residential curtilage separated from the application site by two access drives.
- 5.8 Toddington Farmhouse is to west of Old Byrne House and is described as *"South wing C16 or early C17. 2 storeys. 2 windows. Flints with red brick dressings, quoins and stringcourse. Crow-stepped gables and chimney breasts at the ends, East chimney breast much wider than the West; modern shafts. Casement windows, modern on ground floor with timber mullion and transoms wider segmental arches, C17, on 1st floor. 6 panel door with fluted pilasters to gabled projection. 2 small blocked original mullion windows in West wall. Slate roof. C19 North wing in similar style. 2 storeys. Brick. 4 windows, ground floor under segmental arches. 2 crow stepped gables to North."* This property has its own clearly defined residential curtilage bounded by flint walls and mature landscaping and has no visual relationship with the application site.

- 5.9 The most significant buildings in the locality are therefore the Farmhouse, Dovecot and to a lesser degree, the former farm buildings which together appear to have originally been part of a farmstead. The modern additions to Old Byrne House and to Flint Acre itself, have diminished the significance of the listed buildings and their setting as a cluster of historic agricultural buildings. The settings are further compromised by the modern surrounding developments of commercial property and modern housing. The application site lies to the east of this group and is sufficiently separated from the more significant heritage assets and what remains of their setting, to avoid any harm. It is therefore concluded that the proposal does not affect the significance of the nearby designated heritage assets or their setting.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This application proposes a new dwelling on land within the built-up area where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This policy background is materially different from that in 2013 when an application for a dwelling on this site was refused and therefore the second reason for refusing that application falls away.
- 6.2 The policies of the Local Plan set out the development management criteria against which the details of the proposal should be assessed. This application proposal responds to those policies by ensuring that the scale and layout of the dwelling respects the particular characteristics of the area by maintaining the more spacious layout typical of adjoining plots and reflecting the form of the dwellings on those sites. It provides suitable amenities for future occupiers whilst maintaining the amenities of existing occupiers. It does not affect the significance of nearby designated heritage assets.
- 6.3 The site is in a location where the proposal will meet the social, economic and environmental roles of sustainable development and the land should be used more efficiently and effectively as a result. It has been demonstrated to be development plan compliant and on this basis, it is requested that planning permission be granted.