

Planning Statement

The Old Dairy, Church Street, Littlehampton

Prepared on behalf of South Coast Properties Ltd

June 2014

CONTENTS

Page No.

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
2.0	THE SITE AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	2
	The Site and Surroundings	
	The Proposed Development	
	Planning History	
3.0	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	4
	The Development Plan	
	National Planning Policy Framework	
	Arun Local Plan	
	Publication Version of New Arun Local Plan	
	Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan	
4.0	PLANNING APPRAISAL	9
	Principle of residential development on the Site	
	Design and character of the area	
	Transport and access issues	
	The Conservation Area	
	Living Conditions	
5.0	CONCLUSIONS	12

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore, on behalf of South Coast Properties Ltd, in support of the accompanying planning application to Arun District Council (ADC) for the development of The Old Dairy on Church Street in Littlehampton.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the demolition of the disused dairy buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide eight new dwellings. The planning application includes full details of the design of the proposed building, together with the associated access arrangements and parking provision.
- 1.3 The Planning Statement summarises the planning context for the Site and the surrounding area and also reviews the consistency of the proposal with planning policy at the national and local levels through an examination of the relevant policies and guidance.

2.0 THE SITE AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Site lies within the urban area of Littlehampton and on the northern side of Church Street, which is the location of the main access. The main part of the site is well enclosed by existing development, which fronts onto East Street (a mix of uses) and Goda Road (residential).
- 2.2 The Site formerly accommodated a dairy and incorporates disused dairy buildings. A 2-3 storey building abuts the access onto Church Street. The site is currently largely vacant.

The Proposed Development

- 2.3 The proposed development would provide for the demolition of the disused dairy buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide eight new dwellings, as follows:
- Two x 2-bedroom houses;
 - Four x 3-bedroom houses;
 - Two x 4-bedroom houses.
- 2.4 The buildings would be accessed by pedestrians and vehicles from Church Street and the development would incorporate a space for turning of vehicles. Each new dwelling would be provided with a dedicated parking space and one further parking space would also be provided.
- 2.5 Rear gardens would be provided to the properties and further soft landscaping would be provided in the front garden/parking areas within the site.
- 2.6 To complement the characteristics of the surrounding area, the former commercial use of the site and the juxtaposition with adjacent properties, the buildings would be of a low rise and traditional approach in terms of their proportions but a relatively contemporary appearance in terms of their materials and detailing.

- 2.7 The Design and Access Statement explains the principals that underpin the design of the proposal, which is informed by the existing sense of place and is intended to integrate seamlessly with the surrounding area. The new buildings are intended to have a high quality of finish, in terms of their proportions, materials and detailing.
- 2.8 Overall, the proposal is intended to provide a wholly sustainable development that is both informed by the established pattern of development in the town of Littlehampton and also genuinely enhances the locality.

Planning History

- 2.9 The applicant submitted a planning application for redevelopment of the disused dairy buildings in October 2013. This was withdrawn on 24 December 2013 following concerns raised by Conservation and Historic Buildings Officers regarding the effects of the development on the Conservation Area. Requests for additional information were also received from the Environment Agency and West Sussex County Council. The application details are:

- LU/298/13 - Demolition of original dairy distribution depot and construction of eleven dwellings and ancillary works.

- 2.10 Examination of the ADC planning register serves to confirm that there are no further very recent planning applications in respect of the site. Historic planning applications considered since the 1990s are as follows:

- LU/24/95 – Change of use of dairy depot to general community purposes with associated parking, including craft workshops, meeting rooms, stores and retention of existing retail, office and residential accommodation – granted 20th November 1995;
- LU/253/01 – Change of use of first and second floors from residential to office use – granted 15th October 2001.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Development Plan

3.1 A range of national and local planning policies and guidance provides the context which has shaped the development proposals. These overall objectives include the promotion of sustainable development; provision for new homes; and the efficient use of previously developed land.

3.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that the determination of a planning application must be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this context, it should be noted that the Development Plan of relevance to the proposal comprises the following document:

- Saved policies from the Arun Local Plan (adopted in 2003).

3.3 Additional policy documents, which would be material considerations, are as follows:

- National Planning Policy Framework (published in March 2012);
- Publication Version of the new Arun Local Plan (published in February 2014);
- Submission Version of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan (published in November 2013).

National Planning Policy Framework

3.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides the national context within which local planning policies should be formulated and local determinations of individual planning applications should be made.

3.5 The NPPF sets out the three interdependent dimensions of sustainable development, which are economic (contributing to a strong and responsive economy by providing sufficient land of the right type in the right place); social (supporting vibrant communities and creating a high quality built environment); and environmental (enhancing the environment, using resources effectively and moving towards low carbon solutions).

3.6 The principle of sustainable development underpins the way in which the NPPF stresses the importance of delivering new homes and building a strong, competitive economy. Furthermore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, contained at Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, establishes the following provisions:

- Planning applications that accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay;
- Where a development plan is silent or out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse effects would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

3.7 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out the Government's 'Core Planning Principles', which include:

- Providing development that is shaped by local people;
- Finding ways to improve the places within which people live;
- Objectively identifying and meeting the housing needs of a given area;
- Supporting thriving communities and recognising the character of different areas;
- Seeking to secure high quality design and good living conditions for residents;
- Developing land of lesser environmental value first;
- Conserving heritage assets.

3.8 The NPPF sets the strategic context within which proposals for new homes should be considered. Specific provisions of particular relevance to the proposed development are as follows:

- Paragraph 47 seeks to "boost significantly the supply of housing" and requires Local Planning Authorities to meet the full objectively assessed needs;
- Paragraph 50 provides for a suitable mix of new residential dwellings based on demographic trends and community needs.

3.9 The NPPF also sets the strategic planning policy context for the following considerations:

- *Design:* Paragraph 56 attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 57 stresses the importance of planning positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development. Paragraph 59 advises that local design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription and should concentrate on guiding scale, density, massing, height, landscaping, layout, materials, access arrangements. Paragraph 60 states that planning decisions should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness without attempting to impose architectural styles that stifle originality.
- *Transport:* Paragraph 61 seeks to address the connections between people and places and Paragraph 34 provides that developments that generate significant movements should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes will be maximised. Paragraph 17 seeks to make the fullest possible use of opportunities for walking and cycling.
- *Parking:* Paragraph 39 advises that parking standards should take account of accessibility, mix and local opportunities for public transport.
- *Heritage Assets:* Paragraphs 126-141 seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Account should be taken of the setting of heritage assets (including Conservation Areas) and the desirability of ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution towards character and distinctiveness is noted.

Arun Local Plan

3.10 As noted above, the saved policies of the Arun Local Plan form the Development Plan which applies to the Site. Nevertheless, the plan period only extends to 2011 (and also significantly pre-dates the NPPF) and therefore the policy content in respect of new development proposals (particularly new residential development) is not up to date. In these circumstances, Paragraph 215 of the NPPF provides advice with respect to the weight that can be afforded to the provisions of the Arun Local Plan, as follows:

"Due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the framework, the greater the weight that may be given".

- 3.11 In terms of spatial planning designations, the Proposals Map confirms that the Site lies well within the Built Up Area Boundary of Littlehampton and sits just to the east of the identified Principal Shopping Area. The site is also located within a Conservation Area.
- 3.12 The following policies have been saved by ADC and are intended to apply to residential development within Littlehampton:
- Policy DEV23 provides for residential conversions within the urban area of Littlehampton, subject to consideration of floorspace and living conditions;
 - Policy DEV17 seeks affordable housing provision in connection with developments of more than 25 homes or 0.8ha;
 - Policy GEN4 provides for appropriate access and transport arrangements in connection with new development;
 - Policy GEN8 provides for appropriate facilities and infrastructure in connection with new development;
 - Policy GEN9 provides for appropriate drainage arrangements in connection with new development;
 - Policy GEN10 requires adequate flood risk mitigation measures for development within the urban area;
 - Policy GEN12 requires appropriate provision of on-site car parking.

Publication Version of New Arun Local Plan

- 3.13 The Publication Version of the new Arun Local Plan (February 2014) echoes the broad provisions of the adopted plan in terms of factors including the built up area and environmental considerations (for example in the context of Policies SD SP2 (built up area boundary); D SP1 (design); D DM1 (aspects of form and design quality); and HER DM3 (Conservation Areas). It also incorporates new provisions in respect of affordable housing (Policy H SP2) and space standards (Policies D DM2 and D DM3).
- 3.14 The Publication Version of the Local Plan excludes details on housing allocations alongside other sections such as transport, stating the information will be added into the document 'at a later date' once agreed by Full Council. It is noted that the previous version of the Local

that a minimum of 200 dwellings shall be provided in Littlehampton, in addition to 'strategic allocations', to be identified in the relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.15 The initial draft of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan allocated the Dairy site for up to 15 dwellings (mainly 2 and 3-bedroom houses). Whilst the 'Submission Plan' version of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan, published in November 2013, does not include a formal allocation, it is understood that the reason is due to the fact that the proposal is already at an advanced stage of the planning process. Pre-application discussions between the applicant and Littlehampton Town Council have confirmed that the principle of the residential redevelopment of the site is supported.

4.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL

4.1 This section summarises the main planning considerations in relation to the proposal and discusses the extent to which the proposal is supported by the planning policy context and other material considerations.

4.2 The main planning considerations are as follows:

- Principle of residential development on the Site;
- Design and character of the area;
- Transport and access issues;
- The Conservation Area;
- Living Conditions.

Principle of Residential Development on the Site

4.3 The pre-application feedback from ADC has confirmed that residential development on the upper level within the Site is acceptable in principle.

4.4 ADC's position accords with that adopted within the NPPF, together with the 'built up area boundary' policies contained within the Arun Local Plan.

Design and Character of the Area

4.5 The Design and Access Statement records the careful analysis and care that has gone into the creation of a high quality design for the proposal, which has been properly informed by the character of the area. A detailed evaluation has been undertaken of the Site's individual characteristics and specific surroundings, in order to create a proposal that seeks to be the best possible solution for the Site.

4.6 The Design and Access Statement, submitted in support of the application, serves to explain the assessment of the Site which has informed the proposal. It also discusses the proposal in the context of issues of amount; layout; scale; landscaping; access; and appearance.

- 4.7 It should be highlighted that the proposal has been refined in response to the pre-application feedback received and feedback received in relation to the 2013 submission. These refinements have included a reduction in the total number of units, an increased provision for garden areas and a more contemporary design of the proposed buildings.
- 4.8 The mix of sizes of residential units is considered to be appropriate to the locality.
- 4.9 Given the relatively small number of proposed dwellings, it is understood that ADC will expect affordable housing provision to be made through a S106 contribution towards off site provision.

Transport and Access Issues

- 4.10 The Transport Statement reviews the accessibility of the site to town centre facilities. The pre-application discussions undertaken in connection with the site have also informed the design of the proposed access arrangements.

The Conservation Area

- 4.11 The proposal would protect and enhance the character of the overall Conservation Area, because:
1. It would result in the redevelopment of the dairy buildings, which are of undistinguished design and currently represent something of a localised eyesore;
 2. As detailed within the Design and Access Statement, the proposal represents a high quality of design, which complements the established character of the contextual streetscene.
- 4.12 Given the above considerations, it can be concluded that the proposal accords with relevant cultural heritage policies, including the provisions of Paragraphs 126-141 of the NPPF and draft Policy HER DM3.

Living Conditions

- 4.13 The proposed layout would safeguard the living conditions of existing residents in the locality, by reason of the extent to which the new development is 'set in' from the curtilage boundary by garden and landscaping areas.

- 4.14 In addition to the incorporation of rear gardens to each new house (with garden depths within the development of a similar order to other similar properties in the locality), each new property would incorporate a landscaped area to the front of the property, which would assist in the 'greening' of the new streetscape. Plots 1, 2, 7 and 8 are particularly generously provided for in terms of rear gardens.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 To conclude, the proposal would enable the delivery of important planning benefits, which should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of planning permission when the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied. The planning benefits include:
- a. Enhancement of the Conservation Area through the replacement of disused dairy buildings of undistinguished design with a small new development of high quality appearance;
 - b. The delivery of eight new homes, within the built up area boundary and in accordance with the general approach of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan;
 - c. The efficient use of previously developed land in close proximity to the Principle Shopping Area within the town.
- 5.2 The changes to the scheme, following feedback on the 2013 submission, provide for greater amenity space for residents by reducing the number of dwellings. Design quality is also significantly higher, reflecting a more contemporary vernacular that complements the historic commercial use of the site and enhances the Conservation Area. Concerns raised by the Environment Agency and West Sussex County Council in relation to the 2013 submission have been addressed by the completion of technical assessments as required.
- 5.3 The pre-application stakeholder discussions (and the local planning policy context) serve to confirm that residential development on the Site is acceptable in principle. Feedback from the Conservation and Historic Buildings Officers in April 2014 confirms that the revised scheme takes on board their advice and improves upon the 2013 submission.
- 5.4 Given the careful and positive way in which the design of the proposal has been shaped and refined in preparation for this resubmission, it can now be concluded that the benefits of the proposal can be afforded overriding weight in this instance.
- 5.5 The proposal would meet the requirements of the Government and ADC for the future of the locality and it is concluded that planning permission should be granted.