
Former Waitrose, Avon Road,
Littlehampton

Planning Statement
(incorporating Affordable Housing Statement)

Prepared by Barton Willmore on Behalf of Ropemaker Properties Ltd

August 2020

**BARTON
WILLMORE**

Former Waitrose, Avon Road, Littlehampton

Planning Statement

Prepared by Barton Willmore on Behalf of Ropemaker Properties Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the following development at the former Waitrose, Avon Road, Littlehampton, BN17 6AT (the 'Application Site' or 'Site'):

'Full planning application for redevelopment comprising residential units and flexible commercial floorspace together with the provision of car and cycle parking, landscaping and associated works (including demolition of existing buildings).'

- 1.2 The submitted proposals have been prepared having regard to the recent appeal decision (W/4000221) and previous pre-application advice provided by Arun District Council.

Planning Application Pack

- 1.3 The submission is accompanied by the following documents, in accordance with the Council's validation requirements:

- * Cover letter, prepared by Barton Willmore;
- * Application forms and Certificates, duly completed by Barton Willmore;
- * Application drawings, prepared by Urban Symbiotics;
- * Design and Access Statement, prepared by Urban Symbiotics;
- * Planning Statement, prepared by Barton Willmore;
- * Heritage Statement, prepared by JLL;
- * Biodiversity Checklist, duly completed by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd;
- * Ecological Impact Assessment, prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd;
- * Bat Survey, prepared by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting;
- * Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd;
- * Transport Statement, prepared by Fore Consulting;
- * Framework Residential Travel Plan, prepared by Fore Consulting;
- * Lighting Statement, prepared by EB7;

- * Noise Assessment, prepared by Hann Tucker;
- * Energy Strategy Update, prepared by Barton Willmore;
- * Local Validation Checklist, duly completed by Barton Willmore; and
- * CIL Form, duly completed by Barton Willmore.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT AND PLANNING HISTORY

Site Context and Description

- 2.1 The Application Site is located within the town of Littlehampton, within the administrative boundary of Arun District Council (ADC), in West Sussex.
- 2.2 The Site extends to approximately 0.6ha and comprises a vacant retail unit (Use Class A1) (formally occupied by Waitrose) situated to the south of Avon Road, and an associated car park located to the north of Avon Road. The Site is bounded by Franciscan Way to the north; East Street to the east; Anchor Springs to the south; and by a motor works and Carpetright unit to the west.
- 2.3 The Site is located within the town centre in close proximity to the pedestrianised High Street which is situated to the south. High Street is characterised by a range of retail uses within a mix of building styles of differing height and varying roof types. By contrast the surrounding area to the north and east is predominantly residential. To the west, beyond the retail/commercial uses bounding the site lies the St Martin's Car Park which is owned and operated by ADC.
- 2.4 The Site is located within the Town Centre Boundary and wider Littlehampton Economic Growth Area (LEGA), which is aimed at accommodating development which reinforces the role of Littlehampton town centre. The frontage of the former Waitrose unit is defined as Secondary Shopping Frontage. Directly to the east of the Site, lies the East Street Conservation Area.
- 2.5 The south eastern part of the Site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and therefore flood risk is an important consideration in the design of the proposals.

Planning History

- 2.6 A previous application LU/3/19/PL was submitted in December 2018 and subsequently refused in August 2019 on grounds including poor design and impact on heritage assets. An appeal was lodged against the decision and an Inspector upheld the Council's decision in May 2020 agreeing that the 'less than substantial harm' on the heritage assets was nevertheless sufficiently harmful to outweigh the development benefits.
- 2.7 There are no other previous applications on the Site considered of relevance to this application.

Pre-application discussions

- 2.8 Pre-application advice was originally sought in March 2016 for the mixed-use redevelopment of the Site to provide 56 residential units (Use Class C3), 2No. flexible retail units (Use Class A1 and/or A3) and a 72 bed care home (User Class C2).
- 2.9 The Council responded with formal written advice dated 6th June 2016, which was followed by a meeting with Officers on 6th July 2016 to discuss the advice in more detail. This highlighted the following key matters:
- * The proposed uses including residential use, care home and retail were acceptable;
 - * Redevelopment of the Site was welcomed as the conversion of the existing building was unlikely to satisfy design aspirations for new development in this location;
 - * Introduction of a new active retail frontage along East Street (that would improve the character of the frontage abutting the Conservation Area) was supported.
 - * The proposed scale and massing of the proposed new development was considered out of keeping with the adjoining 'domestic scale' and the mainly pitched roof buildings and the proposals would benefit from greater vertical visual separation;
 - * Impact on heritage assets as the proposal fails to preserve or enhance the adjacent conservation area; and
 - * The proposals lacked provision of sufficient landscaping and amenity/open space.
- 2.10 Further design changes were presented to the Council in February 2017 and September 2017 and the Council responded with formal written advice dated 10th November 2017. This continued to welcome the proposed demolition of the former Waitrose building but maintained concerns as to the scale, design and fenestration, principally of the northern building.
- 2.11 This advice has been revisited as part of these new proposals and this new application seeks to address the issues raised.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the Site comprises:

- * Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (July 2018);
- * Littlehampton Neighbourhood Development Plan (November 2014)

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), is also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

3.3 The NPPF was published in February 2019 and sets out the Governments objectives for achieving sustainable development.

3.4 The NPPF outlines a series of considerations against which development would need to be assessed. In terms of the development proposals the relevant Chapters are:

- Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development;
- Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy;
- Chapter 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres;
- Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport;
- Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land;
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places; and
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

3.5 Chapter 2 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 confirms there are three overarching objectives in achieving sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These are considered at Section 5 below.

3.6 When making planning decisions, Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that planning permission

should be granted where development proposals accord with the Development Plan. Paragraph 11d) states that for decision taking, where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.

3.7 Chapter 5 of the NPPF highlights that to support the Government's objectives of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. In accordance with Paragraph 73, local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:

- a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or
- b) 10% where the local planning authority wishes to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan, to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year; or
- c) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.

3.8 Chapter 7 of the NPPF seeks to ensure the vitality of town centres. Paragraph 85 sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption. Planning policies should, *inter alia*:

- a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters;....
- f) recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

3.9 Chapter 9 of the NPPF highlights that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be

focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making (Paragraph 103).

- 3.10 Chapter 11 of the NPPF highlights that 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. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land (Paragraph 117).
- 3.11 In cases where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land, it is especially important that decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and to ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site (Paragraph 123).
- 3.12 For City and Town Centres and other locations which are well served by public transport, the NPPF encouraged the use of minimum density standards which *"should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate"* (Paragraph 123).
- 3.13 Chapter 12 of the NPPF highlights that 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, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history *'while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)'* (Paragraph 127).
- 3.14 Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states 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 benefit of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.15 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published in March 2014 and provides more detailed guidance to support the interpretation of the NPPF.
- 3.16 The PPG reinforces the NPPF in terms of the need for Local Planning Authorities to consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on individual town centres, and how the planning tools available to them can support necessary adaptation and change (ID: 2b-001-20190722).
- 3.17 The PPG recognises that residential development, in particular, can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres, giving communities easier access to a range of services (ID: 2b-001-20190722).
- 3.18 This is pertinent to the application proposals.

Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (July 2018)

- 3.19 The Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in July 2018 and sets out the vision for Arun to 2031 and beyond. The Arun Local Plan (ALP) 2018 contains the policies against which planning applications will be assessed and replaces all policies (with the exception of those relevant to the South Downs National Park) within the Arun Local Plan 2003.
- 3.20 Littlehampton town centre is recognised alongside Bognor Regis as offering major opportunities that could be unlocked through the regeneration of key development sites and promoting a mix of activities including shopping, entertainment, employment, education and housing in order to bring new vitality to the town centres. Both centres have defined 'Economic Growth Areas' (see Policy EMP SP2 below) which are a focus for employment, retail, leisure, housing and communities services growth (Paragraph 3.37).
- 3.21 The Application Site is located within the Littlehampton town centre boundary, as defined on the adopted Policies Map, and the existing entrance to the Waitrose store is defined secondary shopping frontage. The Site also falls within the Littlehampton Economic Growth Area (LEGA).
- 3.22 The following policies are considered to be of relevance to the Proposed Development:

- 3.23 **Policy SD SP1** (Sustainable Development) – echoes the NPPF’s presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires the Council to work pre-actively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.
- 3.24 **Policy SD SP1a** (Strategic Approach) seeks to *inter alia*: promote the growth and regeneration of the main towns of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton through the development of key sites; provide for housing needs by delivering 20,000 homes of an appropriate scale and tenure; encourage the effective use of previously developed land; and support development which protects, conserves and enhances built heritage.
- 3.25 **Policy SD SP2** (Built-up Area Boundary) requires development to be focussed within the Built Up Area Boundaries as defined on the Policies Map.
- 3.26 **Policy EMP SP1** (Strategic Economic Growth) seeks to promote the regeneration of the main town centres, including Littlehampton, especially in the Economic Growth Areas (EGAs); and **Policy EMP SP2** (Economic Growth Areas) will support development in the Littlehampton EGA which increases the vitality of the town centre.
- 3.27 **Policy RET SP1** (Hierarchy of Town Centres) seeks to focus development for major retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development in the Town Centres, including Littlehampton. It is noted that this range of activities will promote economic resilience for the vitality of the centres.
- 3.28 **Policy H SP1** identifies a requirement to deliver 20,000 new homes in the District over the period 2011-2031. Taking in account completions and commitments (6,970 homes) this leaves a residual requirement for 13,130 new homes, the majority of which is intended to be met by the strategic site allocations (10,750 homes). There is also a commitment to allocate non-strategic sites (defined as less than 300 dwellings) in order to deliver at least 1,250 new homes. Consultation on the Non-Strategic Sites Allocations DPD is expected in Spring 2019.
- 3.29 For developments of 11 units or more, **Policy H DM1** (Housing Mix) requires a balanced mix of market and affordable dwelling sizes including family sized accommodation based on the most up to date SHMA recommendations. It is however recognised in the supporting text that factors such as proximity to public transport and services, place and site characteristics will determine what is a suitable dwelling mix at any particular location (Paragraph 12.2.4). The tenure mix for development schemes will be negotiated on a case by case basis having regard to viability considerations.
- 3.30 For developments of 11 residential units or more, a minimum of 30% affordable homes (75% rent/25% intermediate housing) is required under **Policy AH SP2** (Affordable

Housing), subject to viability. All applications that include residential development must include an Affordable Housing Statement (contained within this document).

- 3.31 **Policy D SP1** (Design) requires development proposals to make efficient use of land but also reflect the characteristics of the site and local area in their layout, landscaping, density, mix, scale, massing, character, materials, finish and architectural details. For major development, a context appraisal, context plan and analysis of the site will be required alongside a Design and Access Statement.
- 3.32 Under **Policy D DM1** (Aspects of Form and Design Quality) the Council will have regard to a range of design considerations in determining planning applications including *inter alia* character, appearance/attractiveness, impact, adaptability, layout and density. With respect to the latter it is noted that higher densities will be more appropriate in the most accessible locations.
- 3.33 **Policy D DM2** (Internal Space Standards) refers to the Nationally Described Space Standards for guidance on appropriate internal space standards.
- 3.34 **Policy ECC SP1** (Adapting to Climate Change) supports development which is located and appropriately designed to adapt to impacts arising from climate change.
- 3.35 All new residential and commercial development is expected to be energy efficient under **Policy ECC SP2** (Energy and Climate Change Mitigation) with all major development producing 10% of total predicted energy requirements from renewable or local carbon energy generation on site, subject to viability.
- 3.36 All development should be designed to maximise the impact it can make to producing health communities under **Policy HWB SP1** (Health and Wellbeing). This may include, for example, providing or contributing to infrastructure to encourage physical exercise.
- 3.37 Housing development will be required to contribute towards new recreation and leisure facilities either on-site or through a financial contribution under **Policy OSR DM1** (Protection of open Space, Outdoor and Indoor Sport, Community, Arts and Cultural Facilities).
- 3.38 The Council will support development that is designed to reduce the need to travel by car under **Policy T SP1** (Transport and Development). It is also necessary for developments to incorporate appropriate levels of parking in line with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) guidance and to be supported by an effective and deliverable Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Provision for appropriate levels of cycle and pedestrian

facilities to meet WSCC standards is also required under **Policy T DM1** (Sustainable Travel and Public Rights of Way).

- 3.39 **Policy HER SP1** (The Historic Environment) supports proposals which conserve or enhance the historic environment which includes Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings as designated heritage assets. These are given the highest level of protection and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. **Policy HER DM1** (Listed Buildings) and **Policy HER DM3** (Conservation Areas) set out the Council's approach to proposals which may affect such heritage assets respectively.
- 3.40 Development is required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity under **Policy ENV DM5** (Development and Biodiversity) and to protect existing habitats on site. Where there may be evidence of protected species on a development site, a detailed survey is required to support a planning application.
- 3.41 **Policy W SP1** (Water) encourages the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems in new development and development which reduces the risk from flooding. Under **Policy W DM1** (Water Supply and Quality), development will be permitted where sufficient water supplies can be provided prior to occupation.
- 3.42 **Policy W DM2** (Flood Risk) sets out the criteria against which development in areas at risk from flooding will be considered; and **Policy W DM3** (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) requires development proposals to incorporate SUDS, appropriate to the size of development.
- 3.43 **Policy WM DM1** (Waste Management) requires new residential development to ensure that kerbside collection is possible for waste vehicles and, where appropriate, make provision for communal recycling bins and safe bin storage areas available to residents of flats.
- 3.44 **Policy QE SP1** (Quality of the Environment) requires all development to contribute positively to the quality of the environment and does not have a significantly negative impact upon residential amenity or the natural environment.
- 3.45 **Policy QE DM1** (Noise Pollution) requires residential development likely to experience noise from nearby roads must be supported by a noise assessment.
- 3.46 **Policy QE DM2** (Light Pollution) requires proposals which involve outdoor lighting to be accompanied by a lighting scheme.
- 3.47 **Policy QE DM3** (Air Pollution) requires all major development proposals to assess the likely impacts of the development on air quality and to mitigate any negative impacts by

inter alia ensuring development is located within easy reach of public transport services; maximising provision for cycling and pedestrian facilities; and including electric charging points.

3.48 The Council will support proposals which provide or contribute towards the infrastructure and services needed to support the development, adopting the approach set out under **Policy INF SP1** (Infrastructure Provision and Implementation).

3.49 **Policy INF SP2** (New Secondary School) requires all development which generates a need for secondary school places (where there is an identified deficit) to make an appropriate financial contribution.

Local Plan Evidence Base

Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (February 2020)

3.50 The Council published its most up to date assessment of housing and economic land availability in February 2020, replacing the previous version published in November 2018.

3.51 The Application Site is identified alongside the adjacent St Martin's Car Park (owned and operated by Arun District Council) as a 'developable' site with potential for residential use as part of a mixed-use development (Ref: PS12).

Brownfield Land Register Part 1 (February 2019)

3.52 The Council's Brownfield Land Register (Part 1) comprises all brownfield sites that meet the criteria set out in the Brownfield Land Regulations. These sites have been assessed by the Council as being appropriate for residential development.

3.53 The Application Site is listed (Ref: PS12) with potential to accommodate up to 75 dwellings.

Littlehampton Neighbourhood Development Plan (LNDP) (November 2014)

3.54 The Littlehampton Neighbourhood Development Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Application Site and sets out the vision and objectives for addressing key priorities within Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes a need to contribute towards meeting the demand and need for new homes and targeting development to previously used sites within the built up area.

3.55 The following policies are considered of relevance to the Proposed Development:

- * **Policy 1** (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development);
- * **Policy 2** (A Spatial Plan for the Town);
- * **Policy 3** (Housing Supply);and
- * **Policy 22** (Design of New Development).

- 3.56 Policy 3 (Housing Supply) commits to the provision of at least 200 homes over the period 2014-2029 (above existing commitments) on sites allocated within the LNDP (under Policy 4). The Application Site is not allocated for residential development within the LNDP.
- 3.57 Policy 3 states that there will be a presumption against proposals for which provision has not been made in the Neighbourhood Plan, or that are not windfall schemes. This is considered out of date in the context the adopted Arun Local Plan (July 2018) which identifies a need to allocate additional non-strategic sites which may include sites within the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan area and it should not be for the Neighbourhood Development Plan to prejudice strategic priorities.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 A full description of the proposals is provided in the Design and Access Statement (DAS), prepared by Urban Symbiotics, which accompanies this submission. A summary of the proposals is provided below.
- 4.2 The Proposed Development involves the demolition of the former Waitrose building on the southern part of the Site and the erection of two new buildings providing 144 sqm GIA of modern, flexible commercial floorspace (Use Classes A1 and/or A2 and/or A3 and/or D1) at ground level, with part two and part three storeys of residential use (Use Class C3), (referred to in the DAS as Buildings 2 and 3). Together the buildings provide 25 residential units. On the northern part of the Site, comprising the former Waitrose car park, a third residential building (Use Class C3) is proposed, comprising 25 apartments (referred to in the DAS as Building 1).
- 4.3 A total of 25 car parking spaces are proposed (including 2 disabled spaces and 8 EV charging spaces) to serve the 3 buildings. In addition, there is also secure storage for up to 45 bicycles with 8 additional cycle spaces proposed externally (outside Building 2). Waste storage facilities are proposed in all buildings.
- 4.4 The proposed flexible commercial floorspace is located in Building 3, which front onto East Street. This will create an active frontage and help to better integrate the Site with the nearby High Street. This will deliver a significant improvement on the existing blank façade of the former Waitrose building which currently occupies this position and provide an enhanced surrounding for the adjacent East Street Conservation Area.

5.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 This section identifies the key issues associated with the Proposed Development and justifies the proposals in planning terms. A summary of the relevant planning policy is provided in Section 3.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The Application Site is previously developed and has been vacant and underutilised for a number of years. The Site is located within the Littlehampton Town Centre Boundary and wider Littlehampton Economic Growth Area, which is aimed at accommodating development which reinforces the role of Littlehampton town centre. The most sustainable area to accommodate development.
- 5.3 The NPPF seeks to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses (Paragraph 117). Paragraph 118 of the NPPF indicates that planning decisions should give significant weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified uses and to promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 5.4 Arun District Council cannot demonstrate a five-year developable housing supply as required by the NPPF. Therefore, policies pursuant to the delivery of housing in the Local Plan are considered out of date. This position is accepted and acknowledges within the Officers' report to the previous application which states:

"Additional housing is supported in this location and given the Council's lack of a 5-year supply of housing planning permission should be granted".

- 5.5 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is therefore relevant, requiring decisions to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In accordance with Paragraph 11 d ii), for decision making this means where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

5.6 Within this context, the application proposals should be defined as sustainable development for the following reasons:

- **Economic Role:** the proposals will increase the attraction of Littlehampton Town Centre, increasing footfall and spending within the Town Centre and encouraging further investment. The introduction of a residential population will also have spin-off benefits through increased spending and expenditure generation. The proposals will also generate temporary job creation through the construction phase of the scheme.
- **Social Role:** the proposals will encourage Town Centre living which will allow for a more vibrant Littlehampton Town Centre. The Proposed Development will help contribute towards creating a strong, vibrant and healthy community by meeting local housing needs through a variety of housing type and size and enhance the accessibility of the local area. This will lead to a wider cohesive and inclusive Town Centre environment
- **Environmental Role:** the proposals will maximise the use of this key redundant previously developed site, which will enhance the attraction of the locality. The proposals will contribute to the surrounding area by improving the quality of this site, through the provision of new sustainable buildings, public realm and landscaping. It will also encourage use of non-car modes through the provision of homes within a town centre location.

5.7 The scheme, once complete, is expected to deliver the following significant benefits to the Site and wider locality:

- Secure redevelopment of a redundant and vacant Site in a key town centre location, which was last in use in 2015.
- Delivery of a modern, sustainable development in an accessible location.
- Provision of modern, flexible commercial floorspace to respond to changing market conditions.
- Provision of the type and range of residential accommodation required to suit the local residential market and this Town Centre location. The introduction of a new residential population will also increase footfall, vitality and natural surveillance to the benefit of the wider Town Centre.

- The addition of 50 new homes in Littlehampton will be a positive contribution towards addressing the housing needs of the District, which currently does not have a 5-year land supply of housing. This will include the provision of 30% of the units for affordable housing.
- 5.8 The Site is also identified within the Council's evidence base and Brownfield Land Register as a 'developable' site, suitable for residential development.
- 5.9 The principle of the Proposed Development is therefore considered acceptable in the context of the overarching objectives of the NPPF and the Development Plan to meet the need for new housing in the most sustainable locations, making the most effective use of previously developed land and supporting the vitality and viability of town centres.
- 5.10 The recent appeal decision also confirms that the principle of demolishing the empty supermarket premises and developing residential and commercial uses (fronting East Street) is acceptable.

Residential Mix / Tenure (Affordable Housing Statement)

- 5.11 As detailed within Section 4, the Proposed Development will deliver 50 additional homes on previously developed land in accordance with Policy SD SP1a, and will contribute towards meeting the Council's overall housing needs as detailed within Policy H SP1. The proposed residential units will comprise a mix of 19 x 1 bed, 21 x 2 bed, and 10 x 3 bed apartments. This is an improvement in residential mix compared to the previous proposals that provided 1 and 2 bed units only.
- 5.12 In accordance with Policy AH SP2, 30% (15 units) on site would be provided as affordable housing. Flexibility is sought as to the form these affordable units would take as at this stage, as it is presently unknown as to whether all proposed units will be for market sale or alternatively, be managed by a PRS [rental] operator.
- 5.13 The residential mix was not a reason for refusal of the previous application and these proposals are therefore also considered acceptable in that context. While the Council did consider the previous scheme to inadequately provide affordable housing, it is understood this was because it was not understood the proposals were providing policy compliant levels. The subsequent planning appeal confirmed that sufficient affordable housing was being provided. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in terms of residential mix and tenure pursuant to Policy AH SP2.

Design

- 5.14 The major reason for refusal of the previous proposal (and the dismissal of the appeal) was the design and scale of the proposals and the associated impact on the surrounding heritage assets. This revised scheme seeks to respond to the issues raised and balance the opportunities of the Site and its highly sustainable location, with the need to respect the surrounding townscape and its characteristics.
- 5.15 In general terms this has involved significantly reducing the scale of the development by reducing heights to 2-3 storey (in line with the prevailing height in the area); breaking up the building to the south into two separate buildings with a link between that leads to an amenity area (and the footpath to Franciscan Way beyond); and setting back the buildings from the roads.

Density

- 5.16 The Proposed Development comprises 50 units across 0.6ha which equates to an approximate density of 83 units per hectare (compared to the previous proposals of 138 units per hectare). This is considered appropriate given the location of the Site in an area with good access to public transport and in close proximity to a range of local services and facilities, and the scale of the existing Waitrose building.
- 5.17 The NPPF is clear that planning decisions should support the effective use of land. Paragraph 123 states: *"Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site"*. The Inspector considering the Appeal noted the relevance of this to Arun (at paragraph 10 of the Appeal Decision) where a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated.

Character and Appearance

- 5.18 As detailed within the Design and Access Statement, close attention has been paid to the local context including the proximity to the adjacent conservation area and heritage assets.
- 5.19 The proposed vertical articulation and façade treatments seek to breakdown the massing further and take forward previous advice of Design Officers that noted [in the previous application consultation response]: *"Elevations are characterised by strong vertical elements with front gable ends that reflect similar forms along East Street and High*

Street...these help to break-up the proposed massing of each building and create variation building line and roofscape...".

- 5.20 It is considered that this articulation of the elevations provides an appropriate interest to the scheme. The use of predominantly pitched roofs replicates the character of the surrounding areas roofscape.
- 5.21 The materiality of the scheme has been inspired through the vernacular architecture of the surrounding area of the Site. Full details of the contextual analysis which has informed the design approach are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 5.22 Arising from the above, it is concluded that the revised proposals provide an appropriate design, form, siting, scale and relationship with neighbouring buildings which is proportionate to the Site, is suitable for its intended function, is appropriate to its context within a town centre location, and makes effective use of previously developed land. As such it is concluded that the proposals are compliant with Policy D SP1 and D DM1 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Amenity

- 5.23 Local Plan Policy D DM1 requires developments to have minimal impact to users and occupiers of nearby property and land. For example, by avoiding significant loss of privacy and outlook. The proposed scheme follows the principle of the previous proposals with balconies which were found to be at risk of being overlooked by existing buildings, have been recessed into the facade.
- 5.24 A lighting strategy has also been developed that ensures light spillage is minimised. Further information is provided in the accompanying Lighting Assessment by EB7.

Heritage

- 5.25 There are no statutory listed buildings located within the Site boundary, however a number of listed buildings are situated within its immediate vicinity. In addition, the Site is situated immediately adjacent to the Littlehampton East Street Conservation Area and shares the majority of its eastern boundary with the western edge of the conservation area.

- 5.26 The Officer's Report on the previous application states that *"The application site contains a building that is architecturally significant and forms a large part of the street scene. The former supermarket building does not relate positively in character and form with the surrounding built characteristics of the Conservation Area... Therefore, the demolition of the existing building and the concept of redeveloping the site can be seen to be a positive impact"*.
- 5.27 The Inspector considering the Appeal also noted that the building *'and level of disuse already has a negative effect on the setting of the listed building [Avon House]'*
- 5.28 This provides an important context for the assessment of impact of the setting of heritage assets.
- 5.29 In accordance with the NPPF, a detailed Heritage Statement has been prepared which assesses the significance of identified heritage assets, including an assessment of the contribution made by setting on their significance; and assesses how this may be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 5.30 In assessing the effects of the Proposed Development, the Heritage Statement concludes that *'the replacement of the current supermarket building with a high-quality, well considered scheme will significantly improve the surrounding townscape of Avon House, replacing a dilapidated area which currently detracts from the surrounding context. The materiality of the proposed residential blocks, particularly building 2 and 3 responds to the use of traditional materials throughout Littlehampton. The introduction of a mixture of red and yellow brick of the two buildings reflects the character of the area and adds visual interest and variety to the development. Brick patterning has also been introduced to reflect the fine grain and texture of buildings such as Avon House, providing a modern interpretation of flint. Overall, the proposed set of three buildings is a significant improvement on the existing situation'*
- 5.31 Overall, the Heritage Statement concludes that the application proposals will preserve the significance of the designated heritage asset. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the NPPF and adopted Development Plan.

Flood Risk

- 5.32 As set out within the Flood Risk Assessment, the south eastern part of the Site is located partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3, indicating a medium to high probability of flooding from tidal and/or fluvial sources. The remainder of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 denoting a low probability of tidal and/or fluvial flooding.

- 5.33 The remainder of the Site would be at risk of flooding during the future 1 in 200 year event for the year 2115 due to sea level rise caused by climate change. To mitigate against this risk, all more vulnerable residential finished floor levels would be set at 5.20m AOD, 310mm above the future flood level, in accordance with planning policy.
- 5.34 The risk of flooding from fluvial, groundwater and artificial sources has also been assessed and found to be low. There is a risk of pluvial (surface water) flooding in East Street just beyond the south east boundary of the Site with the potential for flows to exceed the kerbs in extreme events. Flood resilience measure would be incorporated to mitigate the potential risk to the retail units proposed at this location.
- 5.35 Surface water from the Proposed Development would discharge to the surface water sewer located within Avon Road, as per the existing situation. As works to Avon Road would only comprise minor resurfacing and the drainage would be retained as existing, this has been excluded from the proposed drainage strategy.
- 5.36 The existing runoff rate for the Site (excluding Avon Road) has been calculated to be 61.5 l/s. It is proposed to restrict discharge to 10 l/s, providing a betterment of 84%. Based on this restriction, a total of approximately 253m³ of attenuation storage would be required.
- 5.37 Building 1 and Buildings 2 and 3 are separated by Avon Road and so two separate drainage catchments have been designed for ease of operation and maintenance. Catchment 1 (south) would require 113m³ of storage and Catchment 2 (north) would require 89m³ of storage, which would be provided in a geo-cellular attenuation tanks in each plot, in addition to permeable surfacing, small integrated swales, and rain gardens.
- 5.38 The Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development has a low probability of flooding from tidal, fluvial, pluvial, groundwater and artificial sources, and confirms that surface water runoff can be managed sustainably to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. In this respect, the proposals are therefore considered to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF and the adopted Development Plan.

Highways and Parking

- 5.39 As detailed within the accompanying Transport Statement, the Site benefits from a very good level of accessibility to local facilities and sustainable modes of transport.

- 5.40 Access to the Site will remain largely as existing with vehicular access provided from the existing one-way arrangement along Avon Road.
- 5.41 It is proposed that a total of 25 car park spaces (including 2 No. disabled spaces and 8 EV charging spaces) will be provided for the apartments. There are no car park spaces proposed for the commercial space.
- 5.42 The level of parking proposed at the development is lower than the required demand identified by the West Sussex Residential Parking Demand Calculator. However, the previous proposals included the same ratio of parking (1 space per 2 units) and this was acceptable to the Council given the Site is highly accessible by more sustainable modes of travel than the private car.
- 5.43 Additionally, the Site will be subject to the implementation of a Residential Travel Plan which will provide measures aimed at further reducing car journeys to the Site.
- 5.44 It should also be stressed of course that anyone purchasing a property would be acutely aware as to whether a parking space is provided for that particular property. It is unlikely that someone owning a car would purchase a property at the development if a designated parking space was not provided. That is, any properties without a parking space will likely attract prospective residents who do not own a car and whose intentions are to make full use of the site's highly accessible location and to choose to travel by non car modes, thereby further promoting sustainable travel and consequently reducing demand on the highway network.
- 5.45 Secure storage for up to 53 cycles is also provided (26 within Building 1, 8 at Building 2 and 19 in Building 3).
- 5.46 In terms of potential impacts on the highway network, the Proposed Development is projected to generate an immaterial level of trips, particularly by vehicular modes (and far less than traffic flows associated with the Site's former use as a Waitrose store). The level of additional trips would not have a discernible impact upon the local transport network.

Sustainability

- 5.47 The energy strategy for the Proposed Development is based on the previous Energy and Renewable Strategy Report that accompanied the previous application proposals. Low energy passive design measures and efficient building services to reduce carbon emissions are proposed. Measures include:

- * Glazing g-value specified to control solar heat gain. The final glazing selection should be chosen to maximise access to daylight within the limit of the given maximum g-value allowed, thereby reducing the use of electric lighting, and instances of high internal temperatures in summer.
- * Building fabric specifications have adopted low U-values, with a high resistance to heat transfer, reducing space heating requirements
- * High efficiency gas-fed community heating system for space heating and domestic hot water
- * High efficiency mechanical ventilation systems with heat recovery (MVHR)
- * Low energy electric lighting systems
- * Photovoltaic panels

5.48 In accordance with Development Plan Policy WCC SP2, provision for on-site renewable energy can be provided through photovoltaic panels on the roof of each building.

Ecology

5.49 The previously submitted Ecological Impact Assessment is less than 2 years old and remains relevant. It does not identify any potential Important Ecological Features that are anticipated to be affected by development. As such the proposals are unlikely to result in significant ecological effects and an assessment of effects is not required.

5.50 The Proposed Development will provide the following ecological enhancement measures in line with Development Plan Policies ENV SP1 and ENV DM5 to conserve and increase the ecological value of the Site:

- * The provision of a variety of habitats to provide floristic diversity (e.g. lawns, trees, shrub planting and herbaceous planting) and the use of native species or species of benefit to wildlife within the Development's landscape scheme. Detailed landscape plans for the Development will be provided at the post-planning stage assumed to be secured via a planning condition;
- * The provision of a green roof garden to provide suitable foraging opportunities for local fauna such as bats, bird and invertebrates; and
- * Artificial habitats for bats and birds to enhance the Site for these species group.

Open Space

- 5.51 Unlike the previous proposals, open space will be provide as part of the proposals between the Buildings around Avon Road. This will provide additional amenity to the public in the location and soften the existing built environment.
- 5.52 In accordance with Development Plan Policies HWB SP1 and OSR DM1 the proposals will also make a contribution towards recreation and leisure facilities in the form of a financial contribution to be secured by S106.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The revised application proposals seek to address the previous concerns of the Council (reflected in the subsequent appeal decision) through the reduction in scale and height of the proposals.
- 6.2 It is considered that these proposals comply with all relevant planning policies contained within the adopted Development Plan. Furthermore, the proposals are considered to embrace the Government's overarching aim of achieving sustainable development as set out within the NPPF.
- 6.3 In land use terms the proposals are entirely consistent with the Council's overarching Strategy for the District, which seeks to direct mixed use development towards town centres such as Littlehampton which are highly accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes and offers a range of services within walking distance.
- 6.4 The Site's proximity to nearby heritage assets has been considered and assessed and the proposals are considered to preserve the significance of designated heritage assets.
- 6.5 The Proposed Development lies within a flood risk area however the design response ensures that there will be a low probability of flooding from tidal, fluvial, pluvial, groundwater and artificial sources, and confirms that surface water runoff can be managed sustainably to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- 6.6 The proposals will not have a discernible impact on the local highway network and whilst the level of car parking provision falls below the requirements of WSCC, it is important to emphasise that the Site is highly accessible by more sustainable modes of travel than the private car and there are a wide range of facilities and attractors that are within convenient distance to the Site given its location within Littlehampton Town Centre. Consequently, it is likely that a high proportion of trips to the Site would be undertaken on foot, by cycle or by public transport.
- 6.7 The proposal will incorporate a range of passive design and energy efficiency measures throughout the site, including on-site photovoltaic panels in order to reduce the regulated CO2 emissions in line with the Council's policy.
- 6.8 Given the above, we consider that no material planning reasons exist to preclude the grant of planning permission.