

**Planning Statement to accompany the
Planning Application for**

4 New dwellings & Associated Landscaping

At
The Old Coal Yard
North End Road
Yapton
West Sussex
BN18 0DN



*This planning statement has been provided to help the local authority analyse
the planning application for the construction of 4 dwellings on the site*

Stephen Jupp, MRTPI, Chartered Town Planner

ASSESSMENT OF CONTEXT [Extracts from YNP]

This site totals 0.18 hectares and is currently a disused former coal yard, therefore is a brownfield site. The site is slightly outside the main settlement area of Yapton village but would form another residential cluster similar to that which is sited immediately to the south along North End Road (B2132). The site is surrounded by residential development on all sides apart from a small part of its western boundary which is adjacent to open countryside. Despite being away from the main settlement area, the site is still approximately one kilometre from the centre of the village. There is footpath access for this entire distance, making it possible to walk into the village. Vehicular access could be provided from North End Road.

The site is within an area that is considered to have medium to high landscape capacity to support development. This, coupled with the fact that it is effectively an infill site between existing built development, means that it is unlikely that any development is likely to have an unacceptable impact on the adjacent countryside to the west. However, it is considered prudent for there to be appropriate landscaping to be provided on the western boundary.

The site is considered to be suitable to accommodate 4 dwellings. This density is reflective of the site's setting slightly away from the settlement whilst also recognising the potential provided by a brownfield site.

Context

North End Road is mainly a residential lane with an eclectic mix of Vernacular cottages and post war housing. The properties are a mixture of one and two storey dwellings with many of the two storey dwelling having their roof space converted to habitable.



Yapton Gates Cottages - Immediately to the north of the site.

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Housing to the immediate south of the site.

The site is rectangular shaped measuring approximately 54m x 32m – it has an area of 1780m.sq. Our proposals have 4 units illustrated. Which provides a density comparable to others in the vicinity.

On site there is currently a disused coal yard that we assume was associated with the railway. There are some tired storage units/ sheds on site that have had various uses over their history. There are no signs of contamination on site. However, should planning be granted we would welcome a condition relating to site investigations to prove this. But, given the lack of evidence on site we feel that it is not required at this stage. The previous applications on the site dealt with the same issue in this manner.

Access to the site is via the main road - it is close to the railway crossing and we have been diligent in the design of the junction [see attachments] and have also provided more car parking than would be normal for this site due to the desire to avoid cars parking on the street.

Due to the nearby railway stations [Barnham & Ford], and bus stops the site enjoys excellent public transportation links by both bus and rail. The site has been linked to the existing pavement network as illustrated on the plans.



Artistic Impression of Proposals.

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PLANNING POLICY

Introduction

A key role of the planning system is to regulate development and use of land in the public interest. At the heart of the planning framework is the statutory Development Plan which seeks to guide the decision making process. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, where the Development Plan contains relevant policies that an application for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the Development Plan for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 comprises the saved policies of the Arun District Local Plan 2003 and its emerging replacement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF was published in March 2012 and is a key part of the Government reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible. It provides a *“framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities”* (Paragraph 1). The main aims are to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development.

The Framework makes reference to presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14 and 15). Where the development plan is absent, Local Authorities should grant permission unless; impacts significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework, or specific Framework policies indicate that development should be restricted. This is to ensure that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay.

In terms of housing, (paragraph 49) relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The Framework recognises that the provision of new homes through unidentified ‘windfall’ sites can play a useful and important role in contributing to a Council’s overall housing supply.

There is a strong emphasis upon good design and promoting healthy communities throughout this document. Housing developments should, *“Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities”* (paragraph 50).

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They should aim to establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site by incorporating a mix of uses (community facilities, green and other shared/public space), create safe and accessible environments to minimise crime and disorder, whilst reflecting the identity of the local surroundings and making the development visually attractive (paragraph 58).

However, paragraph 65 notes that *“Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design.”*

Paragraph 58 makes reference to the importance of good design which involves; establishing a strong sense of place, creating a safe and accessible environment, optimising the potential of the site, incorporating green and other public space, whilst also ensuring developments are visually attractive and add to the overall quality of the area.

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that *“local planning authorities should avoid new **isolated** homes in the countryside”*, unless they are for specific reasons, none of which are relevant here. However the same paragraph says that housing in rural areas should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 64 also refers to good design and that design which fails to *“take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area”* should be refused.

Assessment of Scheme Against Framework

The emphasis of the *Framework* on ‘sustainable development’ arises regardless of whether or not a Council is able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing.

The *Framework* also recognises that the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through a number of small sites coming forward. The proposal represents a small-scale development which meets a specific local need.

The *Framework* has a strong emphasis on good design (paragraph 50); it states that developments *“Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities”*. Further, development proposals should create a strong sense of place, be safe and accessible and reflect the identity of the area.

In this case, the development focuses on good design and reflects the identity of the area. The design process has included a full assessment of architectural characters in the proximity of the site and as such has been designed to reflect the surrounding built form. More significantly the design of

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the proposed dwellings represents a high quality design.

Sustainability

As detailed above the previous coal yard use of the land has the effect of making the land fall within the definition of “previously Developed Land” [PDL].

In this regard its development gain support from the Framework in terms of being a more sustainable use of land as opposed to land which is not previously developed.

In this regard paragraph 55 indicates that promotion of sustainable development in rural areas can be achieved by locating housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example development within a small group of housing may support services in a nearby village – provided that isolated homes in the countryside are avoided. Moreover where the development would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting is a cited example for constituting special circumstances, which would justify new isolated homes.

It is also our case that the site is in a sustainable location.

There is a primary school within a short distance to the south.

There is a bus stop very close to the site and the proposed footway would link the site to it. This provides a local service [66] to Bognor Regis, Barnham and Westergate where the nearest secondary school is located and also connects to the more strategic south coast service [700] in the village.

There is also a railway station at Barnham and Ford and public houses are within a mile. There are two doctor’s surgery and shops within 1km, in the village centre.

These facilities and connections are all within suitable walking and cycling distances. The school and bus stops being within 1 - 2 minutes cycle ride and also within walking distance (1-5 minutes). The village centre is within 10 minutes cycle ride of the site (18 minutes walk according to NP Inspector).

In terms of a cluster of housing located close to a village, I submit that the evidence demonstrates that the site is well connected. Whilst some journeys involving walking and that waiting for buses may not be convenient for all, the Framework makes clear the object of policy is to ensure that people have a real choice how they travel and to encourage journey lengths to be minimised. There is a choice of travel. I consider therefore the site is sustainable in transport terms.

Therefore paragraphs 14 and 55 of the Framework are satisfied.

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Paragraph 7 establishes three dimensions of sustainable development: economic; social and environmental. The economic dimension relates to building a strong and competitive economy; the social dimension relates to supporting strong and vibrant communities; and the environmental dimension relates to protecting and enhancing the environment.

It is clear that in this case the proposal satisfies the three dimensions of sustainable development and therefore the provisions of paragraph 14 apply, namely that there is a presumption of granting planning permission.

Yapton Neighbourhood Plan

The application site was included within the Yapton NP Submission Draft under Policy SA5 wherein it was proposed to allocate the site for 4 dwellings.

The reason for its inclusion was that it was effectively a brownfield infill site between existing built development and would therefore be unlikely to have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding countryside.

When Arun District Council considered the Submission Plan they did not make any adverse comment as to the inclusion of this site for small scale housing.

However in the Report by Independent Examiner, Richard Ashcroft, it was recommended that the site be removed as an allocation.

This was addressed on page 22 of the report and in paragraph 5.33 the inspector makes it clear that the deletion was proposed solely to ensure consistency with the concerns with regard to the Maypole Field site which is nearby. However the inspector continued:

That said the sites are of a very different scale. Any development proposals that may come forward on the Old Coal Yard site will stand to be determined against the wider elements of the development plan for Yapton that will eventually be captured in the Arun District Local Plan.

He also commented that the site was a former disused former coal yard; had an untidy appearance; and, is bounded by residential development to the north and south.

It is my understanding that the NP Group were unhappy with the suggested removal of the Coal Yard as an allocated site and made representations to Arun DC in this regard. However they were advised that to include the site,

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contrary to the Inspectors recommendation, would delay the adoption of the NP. For this reason its inclusion was not pursued.

I interpret the Inspectors various comments as comprising an indication that this small site, when viewed against the Yapton NP policies taken as a whole would represent an acceptable form of development.

The question therefore is what do the wider elements of the Yapton NP indicate?

The third Housing objective [sic para 3.3] of the NP is critical. It is to *“encourage small-scale residential developments that are sympathetic to their surroundings”*.

The sixth, and final, Housing objective is also critical, stating: *“ensure that new housing developments utilise brownfield before greenfield sites.”*

Policy BB1: Built-up Area Boundary indicates that new development will be focused within the built-up area boundary and that development outside that boundary will be permitted if it relates to an additional allocation for housing in accordance with policy H1.

Policy H1 seeks to provide a buffer of 20% over and above the minimum housing requirement [of 100 units] in order to allow for flexibility and consumer choice. Additional housing will be provided if the identified housing sites do not proceed. In this regard the Cinders Lane site [allocated for 60 units] is known to have complicated land ownership issues and the access is narrow and improvements to it will be over third party land.

Assessment of Scheme Against Yapton NP

On this basis I consider that redevelopment of this brownfield site for housing would comply with Housing criteria 3 and 6. On this basis, taking the Yapton NP as a whole, compliance with the NP would be achieved.

Planning permission should therefore be granted.

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