



59-61 West Street, Havant

PLANNING STATEMENT

Conversion of existing joinery building to form 8 flats and demolition of the remaining buildings and redevelopment of the remainder of the site with 16 dwellings (total 24)

DR/JR51041
November 2012

1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 This application is submitted on behalf of Mrs Sarah Mulley, Ms Judith Jones, Mr Julian Jones and Mr Roger Mulley. Mrs Sarah Mulley, Ms Judith Jones, Mr Julian Jones and Mr Roger Mulley have owned the site for a number of years, having historically run businesses from the buildings on site.

1.02 As the Design & Access Statement refers, this application proposes the conversion of the existing joinery building on the site's West Street frontage into 8 flats. In addition the demolition of the remainder of buildings on site and the construction of 16 new dwellings is proposed. This Planning Statement forms part of a suite of documents in support of the Planning Application which include a Design & Access Statement, Noise Assessment as well as the Application Forms and detailed plans.

1.03 The remainder of the Statement is set out as follows:-

- 2.00 Site Description
- 3.00 Proposed Development
- 4.00 Details of Pre Application Discussions
- 5.00 Assessment of Planning Policy
- 6.00 Development Considerations
- 7.00 Conclusions

2.00 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.01 A detailed site description and context is provided within the Design and Access Statement by HGP Architects which accompanies this planning application.
- 2.02 In summary, the site is located on the edge of Havant town centre. The main elements of the site are St Andrews House and the Henry Jones Building.
- 2.03 St Andrews House is 1960s office building (extended in the 1970s) located adjacent to the west of the existing access. The Henry Jones Building is a locally listed former joinery building comprising a triple gabled building along the site frontage to the east of the main access and a later addition to the south of the original building. The portakabin is located adjacent to the eastern boundary the garage/storage block located adjacent to the southern boundary.
- 2.04 To the north of the site is existing residential development. To the east of the site is the converted Black Dog Public House which has now been redeveloped to form residential dwellings. To the south of the site is the Tanneries Industrial Estate. The closest element to the site is a car dealership. To the west of the site is further residential dwellings.

2.05 The wider area is formed of a typical mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses with the predominant use being residential.

2.06 The site is located on the edge of Havant Town Centre, with in easy walking distance of shops and facilities. It is also within walking distance of main bus routes and Havant Railway Station which provide connections to the wider area.

3.00 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.01 The proposed development comprises the conversion of the existing joinery building into eight apartments. This will comprise 6 x one bed and 2 x two bed apartments. A further 16 x 3 bed roomed houses are also proposed on the remainder of the site.
- 3.02 The conversion will be undertaken with minimal external alterations to the building. The proposed redevelopment of the remainder of the site will necessitate the complete demolition of St Andrews House and the newer extensions to the joinery building, as agreed with Officers at the pre-application stage.
- 3.03 It is also proposed to fully landscape the site to provide private and general amenity space for the dwellings, including the retention of the protected Yew Tree on site.
- 3.04 As agreed with officers, parking at a ratio of 1 space per house is proposed. Given the site's sustainable location on the edge of the town centre and close to public transport interchanges, it is not proposed to provide any on-site parking for the flats.

4.00 DETAILS OF PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

4.01 Initial pre-application advice in respect of the proposed development was sought from officers in November 2010. In summary, the advice received was to market the site for 18 months to accord with the employment policies in the Core Strategy. This marketing process was commenced in March 2011.

4.02 A further pre-application meeting with officers and the local councillor was undertaken in April / May 2012. In summary, it was agreed that the provision of a market viability report, together with the details of the marketing of the site to date would be sufficient to address Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy which seeks to retain employment space on site.

4.03 This response from officers was as follows:

“The formal response is that the relevant policy is DM3 on the protection of existing employment and tourism sites. This sets out the minimum requirements for an active and exhaustive marketing process to demonstrate that a site is no longer fit for purpose as an employment site. The site includes 1,705 m2 of existing employment floorspace and can be defined as a major site (i.e. over 1000m2). The policy requires 18 months marketing for major sites. A degree of flexibility may be appropriate in regard to the period of marketing as the floorspace figure is close to the

threshold for major and minor sites. Also by the time the application is actually submitted the period of marketing would be closer to 18 months. It is also recognised that the site is in a mixed use area and is would not be compared to proposals within a wholly commercial area. The market report prepared by Vail Williams addresses the criteria of DM3 as follows:

- Marketing details have been submitted for 12 months beginning April 2011. This is below the requirement for major sites.*
- Photographs have been provided of the marketing boards.*
- Reference is made to interest in the site but a full enquiry log has not been provided.*
- Newspaper adverts have been provided*
- Proof of internet advertising has been provided*

In summary the report is close to meeting the policy requirements. The main shortfall relates to the lack of enquiry log."

4.04 The Inquiry log now forms part of the marketing report which accompanies the application.

5.00 ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

5.01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted as planning guidance in March 2012. The overarching theme to the document is to achieve 'sustainable development'. Maintaining and sustaining the economy is a key requirement. One of the Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17) is to pro-actively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units that the economy needs. The proposed development is located within an urban area in a City Centre location within walking distance of a variety of facilities, bus routes and rail services and should therefore be considered sustainable. The site comprises previously developed land which should be utilised efficiently to avoid any pressure on greenfield land.

5.02 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF states that planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

- 5.03 The NPPF also sets out the requirement for Councils to ensure an adequate supply of housing over the plan period (paragraph 47). Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is inherent throughout the NPPF.
- 5.04 Furthermore, Councils should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities (paragraph 50).
- 5.05 The application site is located in a sustainable location, as described above and within the accompanying Transport Assessment. Through the inclusion of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes, with the latter being family houses, the proposed development provides a wide choice of house types. Affordable housing will also form part of the proposed development.

Core Strategy

- 5.06 The Havant Borough Core Strategy was adopted in March 2011.
- 5.07 The site is located within the urban area and within the Black Dog Conservation Area. The proposed development has been designed in consultation with officers and is inkeeping with the character of the area. Its improved design is therefore a significant improvement to the conservation area and therefore would accord with **Policy CS11**.

- 5.08 Chapter 6 of the Core Strategy is concerned with promoting housing in Havant Borough. This includes identifying enough space for 6,300 homes, with a mixed of dwelling types and houses and including an appropriate level of affordable housing.
- 5.09 **Policy CS9** seeks to encourage new housing development to contribute to the target as discussed above. It aims to deliver, on average 30-40% affordable housing on sites of 15 dwellings or more. Development of sites at suitable densities, depending on location and access to public transport should be encouraged.
- 5.10 The spatial distribution of new housing which is set out in table 6.1 indicates that the vast majority of new floor space is located in Havant, Waterlooville and Leigh Park.
- 5.11 Whilst the policy stance is to protect existing employment sites, the Council recognises in paragraph 3.24 that there is a need for flexibility in order to respond to changes in business requirements. Any proposal to redevelop an existing employment site for non employment uses must provide robust and credible evidence on viability and marketing that the site is no longer fit for purpose as an employment site. The criterion which must be met is set out in **Policy DM3** discussed below.

5.12 **Policy CS4** concerns town, district and local centres. This policy identifies Havant and Waterloooville as the district's principal town centres. The site is located within walking distance of Havant Town Centre, bus routes and two railway stations.

5.13 Specific guidance on the protection of existing employment is set out in **Policy DM3**. The policy aims to protect existing employment uses unless it can be demonstrated through a marketing process covering at least 18 months that existing employment uses are unviable. Where existing employment uses are to be lost then it is recognised that other forms of development can provide employment opportunities. Only if another type of economic development cannot be found which provides similar quality and quantity of employment opportunity, will other uses then be considered. Despite marketing the site for 19 months, it has not been possible to find an alternative occupier. It is therefore considered that in accordance with this policy, the proposed residential development of the site should be favourably considered.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

- 6.01 The application site is located within the urban area which ensures that it will accord with **Policy CS17**.
- 6.02 To accord with Core Strategy **Policy DM3**, the site has been marketed for commercial uses for in excess of 18 months. This has involved displaying an agent's board on the site and marketing through a variety of media such as the press and company website. A marketing report accompanies this application.
- 6.03 The Marketing Report sets out that there has been limited interest in the site from potential occupiers and certainly no firm interest that has resulted in a letting.
- 6.04 Based on the pre-application advice received from Officers, it is considered that the marketing exercise itself has demonstrated that there is no precedable interest from commercial occupiers in the site. Notwithstanding that, the market commentary in the report explains that in the current difficult market, coupled with the poor quality of the accommodation on site, it is unlikely that a suitable occupier will be found, especially given the availability of superior quality commercial accommodation on the market at present.

6.05 It is therefore considered that alternative uses should be considered for the site. On the basis that the site has not proven attractive for alternative uses, and the sustainable location of the site within the urban area it is considered that the principle of residential development at the site should be considered acceptable, and in accordance with Core Strategy **Policy DM3**.

Mix

6.06 The proposed development comprises a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed dwellings with 8 apartments and 16 houses. The apartments are proposed to be located in the converted Henry Jones Building that is located on the West Street frontage of the site. The remainder of the dwellings are proposed in mews style in two rows to the front and rear of the site.

6.07 The apartments are appropriate on this site given the constrained nature of the locally listed building, and also the location of the site on the edge of the town centre.

6.08 The proposed houses are 3 beds and will help address the need for family housing in Havant in this sustainable location.

6.09 It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with **Policy CS9**.

Layout

- 6.10 The layout of the proposed development has been designed to accord with pre-application comments from Officers. The conversion of the Henry Jones building and secures its retention with minimal alterations. As discussed pre-application, it is proposed to demolish the poor quality more recent additions to the rear of the building and utilise as parking on site.
- 6.11 Likewise, the poor quality of the office building (St Andrews House) has meant that it is not of a convertible standard. Architecturally it is also lacking. The proposed replacement of it with a pair of semi-detached houses is considered to be a more sympathetic solution in the streetscene, and reflects the residential uses adjacent.
- 6.12 The development of the remainder of the site as effectively two rows of new development is considered to be acceptable, particularly following comments from officers.
- 6.13 Parking is proposed in the centre of the site between the front and rear rows of development. This has been interspersed with landscaping to add interest.
- 6.14 The protected Yew tree is retained on site as a feature. Around the tree is amenity space for the development which will be overlooked by plots 14 and 15. This is in accordance with **Policy DM8**.

Appearance/Scale

- 6.15 To reflect the prevailing scale of the buildings in the surrounding area, it is considered that two storeys in height across the site is appropriate. The traditional design reflects the existing local vernacular along West Street, and reflects the comments from officers.
- 6.16 The predominant materials for the proposed houses are brick with tiled roofs. Again, this reflects the predominant materials in the area.
- 6.17 It is proposed to retain the Henry Jones Building as painted brick.
- 6.18 It is considered that the proposed development accords with **Policies CS11 and CS16** in that it proposes high quality design which draws upon its surroundings. The proposed development:
- Responds positively to the local character of the area
 - Integrates local landscape features
 - Does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours – indeed it will improve the outlook of the adjacent residential uses due to the non-commercial use
 - It will improve the public realm along West Street through the removal of a wall and introduction of residential dwellings and open space
 - Where possible the site will allow level access to dwellings.

- The development layout allows for passive surveillance within the site, particularly of the open space and car park areas, and the introduction of street frontage development along West Street in place of the wall will increase surveillance along West Street. Both will contribute to the prevention of crime.

Access

- 6.19 The accompanying layout plan shows the retention of the existing access from West Street. It is proposed to widen this to approximately 5m.
- 6.20 As shown on the layout plan shows 20 parking spaces for the 24 units. Parking areas would lead from the access toward the centre and western boundary of the site to provide sufficient parking spaces for this sustainable Town Centre location. As detailed in the Transport Assessment, the proposed development accords with the adopted Parking Standards, and the access is suitable for this type of development.
- 6.21 Cycle parking is provided in sheds for the houses, and within the converted Henry Jones building for the apartments.
- 6.22 Clearly level access to all buildings on the site will be achieved where appropriate.

- 6.23 Storage areas within the curtilage of the various dwellings will be provided for refuse bins. These will be brought forward to the entrance to the site for collection.

Landscaping

- 6.24 The accompanying layout plan shows landscaping of the proposed development which entails the provision of small front and larger rear gardens for the houses together with the inclusion of a number of trees and shrubs in landscaped areas around the site. As officers are aware, there is an existing yew tree on the site which is subject of a Tree Preservation Order and will of course be retained within a landscaped amenity space.

- 6.25 It is considered that the provision of the proposed residential development on the site and the proposals to landscape this built environment will be a vast improvement on the current hard urban built environment in accordance with

Policy CS16.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.01 It is considered that the principle of the redevelopment/regeneration of the application site with a residential dwellings should be considered acceptable by officers as it does not result in the loss of *viable* employment/office floor space. This has been demonstrated by the fact that the building has been marketed for in excess of 18 months without a successful letting. It is our considered opinion, given our local market knowledge, that the site would continue to be unattractive to the commercial market were it not to be redeveloped.
- 7.02 The proposed residential redevelopment of the site is considered acceptable given its sustainable location on the edge of the town centre, close to all amenities and transport links. Similarly the provision of 20 parking spaces is considered acceptable on these terms.
- 7.03 The proposed development will retain the locally listed building. The conversion of this building has been designed to retain the existing exterior features, openings and facades whilst allowing the provision of 8 apartments.
- 7.04 Moreover, the redevelopment of the remainder of the site would provide additional houses on a previously developed site in a sustainable location which would contribute towards the Council's housing target.

7.05 The regeneration of the remainder of the site with residential dwellings will ensure the replacement of the dated, dilapidated buildings with well designed houses in a landscaped environment. Parking is provided in accordance with the prevailing standards.

7.06 It has been demonstrated above that the application site can be redeveloped with apartments and dwellings in accordance with planning policy. We consider that we have demonstrated that the proposed development accords with policies of the Core Strategy and therefore should be granted planning permission.

VAIL WILLIAMS LLP

NOVEMBER 2012