

Colony Planning:

Planning Statement:

Land at the former Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel, South Street Reading

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been submitted in support of a full planning application for the erection of a 4-storey building comprising 9 self-contained apartments on the site of the former Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel, South Street, Reading.

Structure of the Statement

- 1.2 The Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2 considers the site and surrounding area;
 - Section 3 sets out the planning history of the site
 - Section 4 establishes the Development Plan for the purposes of this application;
 - Section 5 considers the primary planning issues with reference to relevant government guidance and local planning policies; and
 - Section 6 concludes.

2.0 The Proposed Development

- 2.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of a 4-storey building comprising 9 self-contained apartments on the site of the former Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel, South Street, Reading.

Design and Scale

- 2.2 The proposed development seeks to provide the dwellings in a 4 storey building as illustrated on the accompanying Drawings. The site is currently vacant as the former Chapel has been demolished.
- 2.3 The new development will be sited appropriately within the setting of the site and in the scale of the proposed building has been carefully considered to respect the surrounding residential context.

3.0 The Site and Surrounding Area

- 3.1 The application site comprises an open area of land on the northern side of South Street close to the junction with East Street. The site is currently vacant open land as the former Zoar Chapel which used to occupy the site has been demolished. The detailed Character Assessment together with the design rationale for the proposed development is set out in detail within the Design and Access Statement which forms part of this submission. This section of the Planning Statement provides a written description of the application site and its immediate surroundings.
- 3.2 The site is located in close proximity to the town centre and has an urban, high density character. The immediate and wider area is characterised by a mixture of residential, commercial and community use buildings. There is no one single prevailing architectural style which characterises the area but the majority of the buildings are traditional brick and tile construction.
- 3.3 The site is located within a highly sustainable location being within close proximity of a number of local services and facilities within walking distance of Reading Town Centre.

4.0 Planning Policy

- 4.1 The following section identifies and reviews the planning policy context relevant to the application site and the proposed development. A detailed analysis of how these policies apply to the proposals is set out in Section 5.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Achieving sustainable development

- 4.3 The UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 4.4 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
 - Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies 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 this Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

Core planning principles

4.6 A set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:

- Be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings;
- Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability;
- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them;
- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources;
- Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution;
- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas;
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance;
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling; and
- Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

- 4.7 Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 4.8 The NPPF recognises the importance of transport in facilitating sustainable development and in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Paragraph 29 states that the transport system should be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes.
- 4.9 Paragraph 32 states that decisions on planning applications should consider: whether opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up; whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and whether improvements can be made to the existing transport network to limit the impacts of the development.
- 4.10 In addition, Paragraph 34 states that decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.
- 4.11 Paragraph 38 states that larger scale residential developments should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site. Key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties, where practical.

Requiring good design

- 4.12 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 4.13 Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:
- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
 - Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
 - Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;
 - Respond to local character and history;
 - Create safe and accessible environments; and

- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 4.14 However, design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.
- 4.15 Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.
- 4.16 In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- 4.17 The NPPF recognises that planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure – all of which is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (Paragraph 93).

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 4.18 The NPPF requires that the natural and local environment is contributed to and enhanced (Paragraph 109), by:
- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
 - Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
 - Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible;
 - Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
 - Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

- 4.19 Paragraph 111 encourages the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value.

The Development Plan

- 4.20 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises:

- Core Strategy (2008)
- Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

Core Strategy

- 4.21 The Core Strategy was adopted in January 2012 and sets out the overarching strategy and broad principles for development in the Borough up to 2026. The key Core Strategy planning policies relevant to the determination of the planning application are set out below.
- 4.22 Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

To meet these requirements: -

- All new housing is required to meet the most up to date Eco-Homes 'Very Good' as a minimum standard, and all new commercial developments are required to meet the most up to date BREEAM 'Very Good' as a minimum standard.
- 4.23 Core Strategy Policy CS2 states that development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

- 4.24 Core Strategy Policy CS7 states that all development should be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances character and appearance. Developments should make a positive contribution towards the following urban design objectives: character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement and permeability, legibility, adaptability and diversity. Developments should also ensure that they respond positively to their local context, create safe and accessible environments, address the needs of all in society and be visually attractive.
- 4.25 Core Strategy Policy CS9 states that proposals for development will only be permitted if the local planning authority is satisfied that infrastructure, services, resources, and amenities lost or impacted upon by the development are provided or re-provided.
- 4.26 Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing) states that provision will be made for the completion of an average of at least 477 dwellings for the period 2001-2006, 572 dwellings per annum in the period 2006-2016, and 521 dwellings per annum in the period 2016-2026, in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in this Core Strategy Document. This provision will be made up of the following sources of supply: -
- Completions since 2001;
 - Existing commitments with planning permission;
 - Previously used sites of 0.4 ha or more that will be identified through urban capacity studies in a Site Allocations Document, to be prepared commencing in 2007;
 - Other sites to be identified in the Site Allocations Document including the proposed greenfield development at Green Park 3; and
 - Development coming forward on large and small previously developed windfall sites including changes of use and conversions.
- 4.27 Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by:
- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
 - Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;
 - The need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and
 - The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

- 4.28 Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, in accordance with the findings of a housing market assessment. The mix of dwellings should include an appropriate proportion of units designed to the Lifetime Homes standard. Net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable.
- 4.29 Core Strategy Policy CS20 requires that proposed developments contribute appropriately to the provision of a balanced transport network, including measures that make alternatives to the use of private cars.
- 4.30 Core Strategy Policy CS22 requires that all development proposals ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, in accordance with a submitted transport assessment.
- 4.31 Core Strategy Policy CS23 states that development proposals should be committed to implementing measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities.
- 4.32 Core Strategy Policy CS24 states that maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities.
- 4.33 Core Strategy Policy CS34 states that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution; where it would preserve or ideally enhance ground and surface water quality; and where existing water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure are adequate to support the proposed development.
- 4.34 Core Strategy Policy CS35 states that permission will not be granted for development in an area identified as being at high risk of flooding, where development would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.
- 4.35 Core Strategy Policy CS36 states that development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes.
- 4.36 Core Strategy Policy CS38 states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

- 4.37 The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) was adopted in October 2012. It sets out detailed policies for use in decisions on planning applications and identifies sites for development, protection and for the application of specific policies. The key planning policies in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD), which are relevant to the determination of this planning application, are set out below.
- 4.38 SDPD Policy SD1 states that a positive approach will be taken to considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.39 SDPD Policy DM1 requires all developments to demonstrate that they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures should be incorporated:
- New buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;
 - New buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change, for example by including measures such as: solar shading, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, etc;
 - Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets, designed with plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and,
- 4.40 All development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system.
- 4.41 SDPD Policy DM3 states that development proposals will make appropriate provision through planning obligations for transport infrastructure, open space and green infrastructure, education, and economic development. Where relevant, a high priority will also be given to the provision of energy infrastructure, health provision, and police

service infrastructure. Other measures may be considered where a specific need is identified and justified.

4.42 SDPD Policy DM4 seeks to ensure that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties. This policy applies to matters including hours of business operation and effects of traffic movements, particularly of HGVs.

4.43 DM6 (Affordable Housing) states that On development sites of less than 15 dwellings, the following proportions of affordable housing provision will be provided:

- on sites of 10 – 14 dwellings 30% provision;
- on sites of 5 – 9 dwellings 20% provision; and
- on sites of 1 – 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough

4.44 For sites of more than 4 dwellings, provision should be made on site in the first instance with a financial contribution being negotiated to make up the full requirement as appropriate.

4.45 In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy targets/thresholds as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/ landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.

4.46 In determining residential applications the Council will assess the site size, suitability and type of units to be delivered in relation to the current evidence of identified needs and against Policy CS15. The Council will seek a tenure split of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate affordable units, with the affordable units integrated into the development. Priority needs are for family sized housing, specialist accommodation for vulnerable people and extra care housing. The Council will regularly monitor and review the need for, and delivery of, affordable housing.

4.47 Policy DM10 (Private And Communal Outdoor Space) states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with

private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.

4.48 The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.

4.49 Policy (DM11 Development Of Private Residential Gardens) states that proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;
 - A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;
 - Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;
 - Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;
 - The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;
- 2) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;
- 3) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;

- 4) The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem³⁰ development;
- 5) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;
- 6) The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;
- 7) The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;
- 8) The development would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent open space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and
- 9) The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area.

4.50 SDPD Policy DM12 states that in determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Development will only be permitted where:-

- Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;
- The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;
- The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;
- The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and
- For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.

- 4.51 SDPD Policy DM18 states that new development should make provision for tree planting within the application site, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change.
- 4.52 SDPD Policy DM19 states that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.

Supplementary Planning Policy

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

- 4.53 The Parking Standards and Design SPD was adopted in October 2011. It provides guidance on the design and amount of parking that should be provided as part of new developments.

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)

- 4.54 The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD was adopted in July 2011 to replace the previous version adopted in 2007. It provides clarification and interprets existing policy relating to climate change, energy efficiency, energy conservation measures, renewable energy sources, reducing carbon emissions and inclusion of flood minimisation measures in proposals for new development.

Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2013)

- 4.55 The Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 was adopted in November 2013. It sets out the types of infrastructure for which planning obligations will be sought from developers, to mitigate the impacts of development schemes.

5.0 Consideration of Key Planning Issues

5.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out an assessment of the application proposals against the main planning policy considerations and any other material considerations that are relevant to the consideration of this planning application. The proposed development has been assessed, with regard to the planning policy framework set out in the previous section, under the following headings:

- Principal of development
- Achieving sustainable development and promoting sustainable transport
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- Requiring good design
- Meeting the challenge of climate change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Principal of development

5.2 The application site is previously developed land located close proximity to Reading Town Centre. The Zoar Chapel which use to occupy the site has been demolished and as such the site has a 'nil use' in planning terms (As confirmed by the by the Council in in their response to the pre application submission). As such the redevelopment of the site is acceptable as a matter of principal provided a scheme is brought forward which complies with the NPPF and the framework of planning policies set out in the Development Plan for the area.

Achieving Sustainable Development and Promoting Sustainable Transport

5.8 The NPPF states that planning should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which comprises an economic, social and environmental role Paragraph 9 states that delivering sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including:

- Replacing poor design with better design;
- Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and
- Widening the choice of high quality homes.

- 5.9 The application site is located within a truly sustainable location in close proximity to public transport links and numerous local services and facilities all within walking distance. The site is currently vacant which represents very poor use of a sustainable site. The comprehensive redevelopment of the site in the manner proposed will make best use of a previously developed and sustainable site to deliver much needed new homes. As such the proposed development will achieve sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF, Policies CS1 and SC4 of the Core Strategy and Policy SD1 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

Accessibility and car parking

- 5.10 The application site is located within a highly sustainable location. There are public transport routes (Main line train station and number bus routes) in proximity to the site meaning that there is a genuine alternative to the private car. Furthermore the site is located in close proximity to the town centre and as such there are a host of services and facilities all well within walking distance of the application site.
- 5.11 No parking is provided as part of the proposed development. Given the truly sustainable location of the site it is considered appropriate for the scheme to be 'car free'. The site is located in close proximity to the town centre and there are public transport options available within walking distance of the site.
- 5.12 Against this background it is clear that the Proposed Development is sustainably located, would maximise the prospects for walking and cycling, and would have no materially detrimental impact on the highway network. It therefore accords with the NPPF, Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy.

Delivering a wide Choice of Quality New Homes

- 5.13 The provision of much needed new housing is a key priority for the government and the Council. The existing site makes inefficient use of sustainable land and the proposed development seeks to make best and efficient use of the site and will deliver nine new high quality dwellings.
- 5.14 The redevelopment of the site in the manner proposed accords with the Key Priorities of the Core Strategy which seeks to deliver sustainable development much needed additional homes for the borough. As such the proposed development accords with the NPPF and Policies CS14 and CS15 of the Core Strategy.

Requiring Good Design

5.15 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF identifies that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is indivisible from good planning. Good design encapsulates a range of factors including the following:

- Density
- High quality and inclusive design
- Building heights
- Quality of accommodation
- Amenity space
- Residential amenity
- Landscaping and public realm

5.16 The Design and Access Statement, provides detailed information on the design rationale for this scheme having regard to national planning policy guidance and the design policies set out with the adopted Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents. The following section of the Planning Statement will explain the general design principles of the proposed development in broad terms.

5.17 National planning policy requires that LPA's should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development. It highlights that good design contributes positively to making places better for people. This advice is re-iterated by the Core Strategy which sets out the general principles for good design for new residential development.

Density

5.18 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that LPA's should set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances. As noted in the previous paragraphs the site is previously developed and in a sustainable location and as such development should be maximised to ensure that best use is made of this brown field site. However, this need is required to be balanced against the site context and the resulting impact on the character of the area.

5.19 It is considered that the density proposed does strike the balance between making efficient use of the site whilst also respecting the character and context of the site and immediate surroundings (which is high density terraced and flatted housing). As such

the resulting density of the proposed development is in accordance with the NPPF, Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy.

High Quality and Inclusive Design

- 5.20 Paragraph 57 of the NPPF identifies that it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.
- 5.21 The Design and Access Statement submitted with this application details how the design of the proposed development has been informed by a thorough analysis and understanding of the site context. The end result is a high quality design which is based on established design principles and which is informed by the established character of the area. This comprehensive approach ensures that the proposal is fully in accordance with the NPPF, Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies DPD.
- 5.22 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the design approach and how the proposal complies with the relevant national and local planning policies in general terms.
- 5.23 The Character Assessment which was undertaken to inform the design of the proposal identified that the local area is not characterised by one single prevailing architectural style. There are a wide variety of architectural styles, building materials and building heights which give the area a mixed and varied character. There are good examples of house design from the Victorian era as well as the 1930's, post war, 1960/70's and modern day development.
- 5.24 The design approach has sought to create contemporary and sensitive development with its own identity whilst also incorporating the common elements identified by the Character Assessment. This approach has resulted in a high quality development which is sensitive to its surroundings whilst also creating an identity of its own complimenting the character of the area. Therefore whilst it is acknowledged that the external appearance of the proposed development will contrast with the neighbouring properties, it is of high quality, finished to a high standard and represents a modern design 'of this time'. The Character Assessment identified that the local area is comprises good examples of house design from many eras including Victorian and 1950's for example. These create a varied urban character and each architectural style is considered to be a high quality design from the time in which it was built. The proposed development continues this trend in that it would comprise a contemporary,

high quality, sustainable development which will add interest to the surrounding area and enhance the character of the area.

- 5.25 In summary the sensitive development of the site in the manner proposed will significantly enhance the character of the area whilst making efficient use of the site. The design and scale of the proposed development has been informed by a comprehensive Character Assessment of the surrounding area and the final design has incorporated the common themes identified as part of the design process. As such the proposed development is considered to be appropriate for the site, striking the right balance between making efficient use of land and respecting the site context and established character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.26 The contemporary design approach which includes the design references identified as part of the Character Assessment avoids the mere replication of past architectural forms. The final design is considered to be appropriate for the site and has resulted in a high quality scheme which will add interest to the area and respect the local character and distinctiveness. The proposed development therefore fully accords with National Planning Policy, Policies CS7, and CS14 of the Core Strategy and policy DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies DPD.

Residential Amenity

- 5.34 The application site is located within an urban area and the proposed development has been sensitively designed in order to take account of the site constraints and ensure that the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties will not be adversely affected.
- 5.35 There will be a separation distance of in excess of the minimum distance required by planning policy between the main rear elevation of the proposed building and the rear elevation of the neighbouring properties. There are sufficient separation distances to ensure that it will not have an adverse impact on the amenities of the neighbouring by way of loss of light, overlooking or appearing overbearing.
- 5.36 In summary the proposed development has been sensitively designed in order to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties. The building is relatively modest in scale, maximum of 4 storey plus a pitched roof with sufficient separation distances to ensure that the proposed building will not appear overbearing, adversely restrict levels of day and sunlight or result in loss of privacy by way of overlooking. As such it is clear that the

proposed development is acceptable in accordance with the NPPF, Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies DPD.

Sustainable Construction and design

- 5.40 Paragraph 93 of the NPPF states that planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The proposed development has been designed to meet the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 which complies with national and local planning policy in respect of sustainable construction.

Flooding and drainage

- 5.41 Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 5.42 The NPPF requires that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding where, informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
- 5.43 The overall aim should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1. Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities allocating land in local plans or determining planning applications for development at any particular location should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2, applying the Exception Test if required. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required.
- 5.44 In considering the proposals, the following key aspects have been addressed:
- Vulnerability to flooding from all sources.
 - Protection of occupants of the new development.
 - No increased flood risk to third parties as a result of the development.

- Appropriate management of surface water to ensure there is no increase in surface water runoff from the site.

5.45 In summary the proposals are safe, they do not increase flood risk and they do not detrimentally affect third parties, in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

5.46 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. National policy requires that LPA's ensure that measures to sustain, enhance, or restore biodiversity resources are taken into account in relation to development. Specifically, appropriate weight should be given to the presence of protected species or protected sites; features of benefit to nature conservation should be incorporated into development design, and adequate mitigation or compensation measures should be implemented to prevent adverse impacts on biodiversity.

5.48 The application site is previously developed land and as such has a low biodiversity value. Given the sites urban location and the limited extent of suitable on-site habitat, the site was assessed as having very limited biodiversity value.

5.49 The proposed development provides a number of opportunities to significantly enhance the ecological and biodiversity value of the site. The provision of outside amenity areas to the front and rear of the property with suitable planting provides the opportunity for habitat creation and a significant enhancement of the biodiversity value of the site.

5.50 Overall as a result of the design approach adopted it is clear that the proposed development will significantly enhance the biodiversity value of the site in accordance with national policy and the Core Strategy.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The application site is in a sustainable location being located in close proximity to the town centre, as such the site is within easy walking distance of a host of facilities and local services as well as a number of bus routes and a main line train station. The proposed development therefore presents an excellent opportunity to maximise and make efficient use of this sustainable site. The application site is located within the existing built up area and the development of the site for housing is consistent with the national and local planning policy and the principal of development is acceptable.

- 6.2 The sensitive development of the site in the manner proposed will significantly enhance the street scene and the visual amenity of the area whilst making efficient use of the site. The design and scale of the proposed development has been informed by a comprehensive Character Assessment of the surrounding area and the final design has incorporated the common themes identified as part of the design process. As such the proposed development is considered to be appropriate for the site, striking the right balance between making efficient use of land and respecting the site context and established character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 6.3 The proposed development has been sensitively designed in order to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties. The development is modest in scale (when compared to the existing buildings which are to be demolished), with sufficient separation distances to ensure that the proposed development will not appear overbearing, adversely restrict levels of day and sunlight or result in loss of privacy by way of overlooking.
- 6.4 The application site is in a sustainable location within close proximity of the town centre, and within walking distance of public transport provision. The level of car parking is considered to be appropriate and in accordance with the Councils adopted standards.
- 6.5 In preparing this application all relevant planning policy requirements have been taken into account. The development fully accords with national and local planning policy for the reasons set out in this planning submission it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.