TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
ON BEHALF OF STRATA HOMES LTD
AT THE FORMER LONGCAR JUNIOR SCHOOL,
LONGCAR LANE, BARNSLEY, S70 6BD
(AMENDMENT AND RESUBMISSION OF
PLANNING APPLICATION LPA REF: 2007/1277)

SIGNET PLANNING
The Hamlet
Hornbeam Park
Harrogate
HG2 8RE

Telephone: 01423 878 550
Facsimile: 01423 815 599

Signet Ref: JEH/AY/HG0730

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This planning application has been prepared on behalf of Strata Homes Ltd for the redevelopment of Longcar Junior School, Longcar Lane, Barnsley for residential development comprising 66 units and associated development. The application is in full and is accompanied by the following documents:

- Design and Access Statement
- Landscaping Masterplan
- Tree Condition Survey
- Ecology Survey
- Affordable Housing Assessment
- Transport Overview Statement
- Site Investigation Report
- Flood Risk Assessment

1.2 This Planning Support Statement and the above accompanying documents should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings which are listed in the Design and Access Statement.

1.3 This planning application seeks the redevelopment of the Longcar Junior School site which was deemed inadequate to meet current education standards. The Council, through a PFI contract, has constructed a new school to replace the site on Longcar Lane. The new school site is located on Shaw Street in close proximity to the existing premises and provides facilities and accommodation to meet modern day education standards. The staff and pupils took occupation of the new school on Friday 22 June 2007. The application site was sold at auction on 23 May 2007 to the applicants.

1.4 An application for a similar proposed development by the applicant was refused on 11 October 2007 (LPA Ref: 2007/1277). Whilst the Planning Officer's report confirmed that the scheme was 'largely acceptable', it was recommended refusal on the following grounds:

i) The failure to provide an adequate form of replacement public open space.

ii) The failure to provide a sufficient level of affordable housing distributed across the site.

1.5 At Committee the Council Members agreed with the Officer's recommendation.

1.6 Since this time there have been a series of detailed pre-application discussions with the Council to identify and resolve the key issues pertinent to the redevelopment of the site, relating to greenspace, open space requirements and affordable housing. Within this context a general agreement has been reached regarding the planning principles of developing the site for housing purposes and these have been incorporated into the proposed scheme.

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF SITE, SURROUNDINGS AND PROPOSALS

2.1 A detailed description of the site and surroundings is enclosed in the Design and Access Statement. However for completeness a summary of the site context is set out below:

Site

2.2 The application site is a former junior school site which was closed in June 2007. It is located approximately 1 km to the south west of Barnsley Town Centre in a predominantly residential area. The southern boundary of the site is defined by Longcar Lane, and the western boundary lies on Racecommon Road. On the opposite side of Longcar Lane to the south is Longcar Professional Development Centre. Residential properties lie on the eastern and northern boundaries.

2.3 Since the previous application, the education buildings have been demolished. The south eastern corner, which is outside of the main school site, but within the application area, comprises a disused play area and dilapidated garages, which are used in association with nearby housing.

2.4 There are a number of mature trees on the northern and eastern boundaries and within the south eastern corner.

Proposals

2.5 As the application drawings demonstrate it is proposed to provide a total of 66 residential units via a mix of houses and apartments, the scheme also includes the relocation and reconstruction of the eight garages in the south eastern corner. The proposed layout sets approximately a third of the former school site aside as greenspace and ensures that as many of the mature trees as possible are retained. The main access into the site will be from Longcar Lane. In addition a secondary access point is proposed off Blenheim Road

2.6 The scheme proposes a variety of dwelling sizes as can be seen from the following table.

Type	Bedrooms					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Houses			8	21	11	40
Apartments		14				14
Duplex	12					12
Total	**12**	**14**	**8**	**21**	**11**	**66**

2.7 It is proposed that 25% of the units will be affordable, which is consistent with the requirements of your Affordable Housing Officer.

2.8 A variety of heights are proposed to provide visual interest and to reflect the surrounding character. To enhance the sense of place it is proposed to site some properties so that they front onto the greenspace area, Longcar Lane and Racecommon Road. All properties will have designated garages and/or car parking spaces. A comprehensive landscaping scheme is included in the design and includes the retention of as many of the existing trees and hedges as possible.

2.9 In addition to the on site greenspace provision, it is proposed, subject to negotiations, to make financial contributions towards the overall loss of greenspace on site and also towards the improvement of local public open space areas.

SECTION 3: CASE IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION

3.1 The Planning and Compensation Act 2004 Section 38(6) requires that where a proposal meets the requirements of the relevant statutory development plan, and there are no other material considerations to indicate otherwise, planning permission should be granted. With this in mind consideration will be given to the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations to demonstrate that planning permission should be granted.

PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

3.2 National planning policy guidance relevant to this site are: PPS1 (design); PPS3 (housing); and PPG17 (planning for open space, sport and recreation).

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

3.3 PPS1 sets out the government's objectives for delivering sustainable development. Specifically it advices that:

"Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- **Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve peoples quality of life;**
- **Contributing to sustainable economic development;**
- **Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;**
- **Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design and efficient use of resources;**
- **Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community."**

3.4 The proposals for the redevelopment of Longcar Junior School comply with the requirements in PPS1 in that they will maximise the redevelopment of the site for high quality residential development whilst protecting the existing mature trees and providing a useful greenspace for the wider community.

3.5 PPS1 also places great emphasis on the need to ensure good design that provides "attractive, useable, durable, and adaptable places". In particular, paragraph 35 of PPS1 advices that good design should:

"- **address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;**
- **be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;**
- **be an integral part of the processes for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;**
- **create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to member of society;**
- **consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment."**

3.6 The proposed scheme complies with the above advice in that it provides housing in an established residential area where there is access to services and facilities including the relocated Longcar Junior School. Furthermore, Racecommon Road is a key public transport route into Barnsley Town Centre, which is approximately 1 km from the site. Careful consideration has been given during the design process to the retention of existing trees and vegetation, and a comprehensive landscape scheme has been prepared. A detailed Tree Condition Survey is also enclosed with the application.

3.7 Paragraph 38 of PPS1 advices authorities to ensure that the design policies within their development plan avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Furthermore local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and 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, particularly where this is supported by clear planning policies or supplementary planning documents on design.

3.8 The application proposals comply with the overall design objectives in PPS1 by creating a place with its own distinctiveness whilst respecting the surrounding area's character.

PPS3

3.9 PPS3 (housing) was issued in November 2006 and replaces the advice in PPG3 which has now been deleted. The key objectives of PPS3 are to achieve sustainable development, a visionary and strategic approach, market responsiveness, collaborative working, evidence based policy approach and outcome and delivery focus.

3.10 PPS3 also places great emphasis on good design as a way of achieving high quality new housing which contributes to the creation of sustainable and mixed communities. This advice reflects that within PPS1. It also requires a mix of housing to be achieved on site in terms of tenure, price and mix of households such as families with children, single person households and older people. This also includes an appropriate mix of market and affordable housing.

3.11 The policy statement also requires new housing to be provided in suitable locations, particularly those locations which offer a range of community facilities and provide good access to jobs, services and infrastructure. Such sites should also ensure the efficient use of land, existing infrastructure, and available public and private investment. Development should be focused towards previously developed land, particularly those sites which are vacant or derelict and in urban areas (paragraph 44).

3.12 In terms of the appropriate density for new residential development, PPS3 advices that Local Authorities may wish to set out a range of densities across their area rather than providing one density range, although consideration should be given to the national indicative minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare.

3.13 PPS3 also requires Local Authorities to plan, monitor and to manage the supply of land for housing. In particular, Local Authorities are advised to ensure a continuous delivery of housing for at least 15 years, of which the first five years of supply must be on specific deliverable sites.

3.14 Paragraph 69 of PPS3 requires Local Authorities to have regard to:

- Achieving high quality housing.
- Ensuring development achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people.
- The suitability of the site for housing, including environmental sustainability.
- Using land effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring new proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing and in and the spatial strategy for, the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives.

3.15 The application responds to the requirements in PPS3 for using high quality design to contribute to creating a mixed community, specifically it is proposed to provide a mix of apartments and houses on the site in contemporary buildings. This brownfield site is well located to existing facilities and services with good public transport connections to the town centre. Furthermore, it is proposed to construct 66 units which equates to a density of 66 dwellings per hectare, which fully accords with PPS3.

PPG17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation)

3.16 This PPG sets out the national planning objectives relating to open space as well as sport and recreation uses. The planning objectives, within PPG17 which are pertinent to this application are as follows:

- Supporting an urban renaissance.
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Promoting more sustainable development.

3.17 The PPG advises Local Authorities to undertake an assessment of needs and opportunities within their area and to set local standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities. Where a robust need assessment for playing fields has not been undertaken, applications affecting such land should not be granted unless:

1. The proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use;
2. The proposed development does not affect land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch or part of one;
3. the playing fields that would be lost as result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of the equivalent or better quantity and quality in a suitable location; or for the proposed development is for the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the planning fields.

3.18 This guidance also sets out the national approach to open space, although where local policies are provided these would take precedence in any event.

3.19 Prior to its recent relocation to new premises the playing field provision at Longcar Junior School was inadequate. The new premises provide an appropriate level of play pitches and sports facilities which include a junior football pitch, two multi-use games areas and a playground.

PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

3.20 This PPS sets out the Government's approach to development and flood risk. It's aims are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood risk. It specifically requires development on sites over 1 hectare to be the subject of a FRA as a consequence this application is accompanied by a FRA.

Regional Policy

Yorkshire and Humber RSS

3.21 The adopted RSS (2004) sets the development strategy for the region with the main focus for development in the principle urban areas including Sheffield and Leeds.

3.22 The RSS requires Barnsley to provide 810 units (gross) per annum with a brownfield target of 49%. The RSS also requires authorities to use the sequential approach when allocating sites as based on Policy H2 of the RSS as follows:

1. Previously developed land within urban areas
2. Other infill within urban areas.
3. Extensions to main urban areas where land is accessible to services and jobs by public transport with priority for reusing brownfield sites.
4. Extensions to market and coalfield towns where it is accessible to services and jobs by public transport.
5. Other development that supports the RSS objectives.

3.23 The application complies with the overall development strategy to locate development on brownfield sites in urban areas.

Emerging Regional Plan

3.24 The Proposed Changes to the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Plan following the Panel's Report was released at the end of 2007 and was the subject of an Examination in Public in Autumn 2006. This document proposes a level of housing development within Barnsley up to 2026 which was more than currently allocated for within the UDP. It also set a target of 65% of all housing to be provided on brownfield land (Policy H1) and proposed the following sequential approach (Policy YH8):

1. Reuse of previously developed land within town.
2. Other suitable infill opportunities within the town.
3. Extensions to the relevant town.

3.25 Table 13.1 sets out the annual average net additions to the dwelling stock balance 2004 to 2026. The Proposed Changes recommends that the level of housing should be as follows:

- 2004/2008 - 840 units per annum
- 2008/2026 - 1015 units per annum.

3.26 These requirements are in excess of those currently provided for within the UDP albeit that this is more in line with the Council's current completion rates. The *emerging Regional Plan has yet to be adopted as policy, but significant weight* should be given to its contents since it has reached an advanced stage in the consultation process.

Local Policy

Unitary Development Plan

3.27 The policies within the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) have been 'saved' under the new plan procedures for a period of time. The UDP allocates the school site as "community use", whilst the adjacent play area/garages is identified as "established residential use". Policy CF2 deals explicitly with "community use" sites and reads as follows:

"Development will not be permitted which would lead to the loss of existing community facilities. Where an existing community use ceases, and no alternative community use can be found, other uses will be considered with regard to:

- **a) The amount of open space in the area measured against the standard set out in Policy GS36;**
- **b) Compatibility with adjoining land uses, such as the likely impact on residential amenity; and**
- **c) Access to the site, car parking and the likely impact on highway safety."**

3.28 In accordance with the above policy, it can be confirmed that Longcar Junior School has been relocated to new premises on Shaw Street off Racecommon Road. Policy CF2 indicates that planning permission will be granted where "no alternative community use can be found". In this instance, it is understood that the Council has undertaken an exercise to address this issue prior to the sale of the site at auction. This exercise has demonstrated that, with the exception of the greenspace requirements included within the conditions of sale, the land and buildings at Longcar Lane are not required for any other community use. Therefore subject to the provision of open space as required, UDP Policy CF2 has been adequately addressed and other uses for the site will be considered.

3.29 In terms of criterion (a) within Policy CF2, it is understood that the Council has prepared a greenspace strategy and that this has identified that a proportion of the school site, has functioned as urban greenspace and that the Council is seeking to continue this role, albeit in part. It is understood that the Council requires approximately a third of the school site as greenspace whilst also providing for financial contributions towards improvements to off site areas. The proposed site layout seeks to provide an appropriate amount of greenspace fronting onto Racecommon Road/Longcar Lane. This greenspace area is the subject of a landscaping scheme which seeks to enhance the appearance of this part of the site for the benefit of the wider area. It is envisaged that this area will function as a good quality local neighbourhood area. It is also understood that a financial contribution will be provided, subject to negotiations, towards the improvement of off-site greenspace requirements.

3.30 It is considered that the proposed residential use of the site is compatible with the surrounding land uses which are primarily residential in nature, and therefore it complies with criterion (b). Furthermore the proposal will not conflict with activities of the nearby adult training centre. It is also understood that the existing play area and garages in the south eastern corner have been a focus for anti-social behaviour in the past. The application scheme would improve this part of the site and resolve this current problem area by integrating this area into the overall site and relocating the garages to a more appropriate location. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that the scheme will limit opportunities for such anti social behaviour. In overall design terms, the proposed layout takes full account of the need to protect the residential amenities of existing and potential occupiers.

3.31 Pre-application discussions with the Council revealed that access should be taken from Longcar Lane having regard to the existing access point for the adult training centre and the Racecommon Road junction. The scheme therefore proposes an access point which complies with these requirements. The proposed level of car parking is in accordance with the Council's standards. Criterion (c) is therefore complied with.

3.32 In addition to any greenspace requirements that may be associated to Policy CF2 above, Policy H6 explicitly deals with the requirement for open space. This policy reads as follows:

"All developments which comprise or include the provision of 20 or more new dwelling units shall incorporate, as an integral part of the development, a minimum of 15% of the gross site area as open space of a type appropriate to the character of the site, its location and the layout and the nature of the new housing thereon and the adjoining land uses."

3.33 Following advice from the Council, it is understood that due to the site constraints, a financial contribution is required towards the improvement of nearby open space areas.

3.34 Paragraph 7.12 of the UDP identifies a potential requirement for education contributions. It is understood from the Council's education department that due to the current school provision in the area there is no requirement for an education *contribution in this instance.*

PAN30 – Sequential Approach

3.35 Barnsley Council has produced numerous Planning Advice Notes (PAN) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which are supplementary to the adopted UDP. The most pertinent PAN to the consideration of the application is the document entitled PAN30 - Sequential Approach to Determining Planning Applications for Residential Development. This document states that sites which are over 0.4 hectares and on brownfield land within the urban area are not required to undertake a sequential test. Given that the site is considered to be brownfield, a sequential test is therefore not required.

SPG2 – Design and Layout

3.36 Of relevance to the proposals is the advice in Supplementary Planning Guidance 2: The Design and Layout of New Housing. Whilst this document is a little out of date in that it refers to PPG1 and PPG3, the general advice is contained within the SPG is of pertinence. The SPG emphasises the need for good quality design based on the objectives of providing: character; continuity; quality of public realm; ease of

movement; legibility; and diversity. Details of how the scheme meets these objectives are set out in the Design and Access Statement.

PAN34 – Affordable Housing

3.37 Consideration has also been given to PAN34 - Affordable Housing, within Affordable Housing Assessment and reference is specifically made to the report prepared by Pioneer, which accompanies this application.

3.38 It has been concluded that notwithstanding the deficiencies in the Council's policies and evidence base, it is recognised that provision of affordable housing is a material consideration. Consequently it is proposed to offer 25% of the dwelling numbers as affordable housing. Of the 25%, it is proposed that this shall comprise 60% shared ownership and 40% social rented provision. This tenure split will offer an improvement on the current affordable housing stock which is weighted predominantly toward social rented provision.

3.39 The proposed mix of affordable dwellings is as follows:

	Shared Ownership	**Social rented**	**Total**
Apartment (2 bed)	8	0	8
Duplex (1 bed)	2	6	8
Total	**10**	**6**	**16**

3.40 The proposed mix of dwellings has been established having regard to the limited findings of the Housing Needs Study 2005, together with waiting list data, both of which identify an overwhelming requirement for one and two bedroom dwellings.

3.41 Within the affordable housing provision of 16 units being offered there will be six ground floor apartments to satisfy the need for this type of accommodation.

Greenspace Strategy

3.42 The Council is preparing a greenspace strategy which identifies the approach to greenspace within the district. The Council has already produced its "Part One: Our Strategy" document which sets the Council's vision and aims for greenspace, as well as the standards for each type of greenspace. The Council is currently preparing an assessment of the quantity, accessibility and quality of the greenspace in each town and village in this borough, and the priorities for greenspace in these settlements. These documents will be known as 'Barnsley's Greenspace: In Your Neighbourhood'.

3.43 It is understood that the Council considers that a large part of the application site (i.e. playground and playing fields) has functioned as an area of greenspace for some time. In accordance with the Council's greenspace policies with the UDP and the objectives in the Greenspace Strategy, it is proposed to designate and landscape a third of the school site as greenspace. A financial contribution will also be made, subject to negotiation, towards improvements of nearby open space.

SECTION 4: OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

School Relocation

4.1 The Council undertook a survey of its education provision and determined that the site on Longcar Lane provided inadequate playing fields and due to the site constraints there was no opportunity to redevelop the site and to provide the level of playing fields required. The Council subsequently entered into a PFI agreement to provide a new school on Shaw Street which provides the appropriate accommodation as well as a junior football pitch, two multi use game areas and a playground. The pupils and teachers from the school were relocated to the new premises on Friday 23rd June.

4.2 It is clear that the Council no longer requires this site for education purposes or any other Council activity, it is therefore surplus to requirements. To prevent the site becoming derelict and disused, it is proposed to reuse it for housing purposes and this was acceptable as part of the previous application that was refused planning permission.

Trees and Landscaping

4.3 The planning application is accompanied by a Tree Condition Survey and Landscaping Scheme which seeks to maximise the potential of the site and provide a valued environment for both existing and new residents. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that the least number of trees have been affected by the proposed development, particularly having regard to the recent designated trees.

Flood Risk Assessment

4.4 In accordance with PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk) consideration has been given to the need for a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). As the site is over 1 hectare and is flood risk area 1, a Phase 1 FRA is being prepared to assess the developments impact on flood risk.

Ecology

4.5 Since the last application was submitted the majority of the buildings on site have been demolished. Nevertheless the bat survey has still been submitted since some

of the buildings remain and it also assessed the trees on site. It is understood that no roosting birds have been recorded in the remaining building or the surrounding trees.

SECTION 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 It is considered that the redevelopment of this highly sustainable brownfield site within the urban area of Barnsley, complies with the Council's housing and community use policies with the 'saved' UDP. The Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the level of housing provision pertinent to the Barnsley area and from 2008 this requirement will increase. The provision of additional units on this site in a sustainable location will therefore assist in Barnsley Council maintaining a five year deliverable supply of housing in accordance with PPS3.

5.2 The scheme has been comprehensively revised following the previous refusal of a similar planning application. The original scheme was considered to be largely acceptable by your officers, but it was refused on the grounds of the provision of replacement open space and affordable housing. The open space area proposed within the site has been reconfigured so that it is now concentrated at the corner of Longcar Lane and Racecommon Road. Furthermore, the amount of affordable housing proposed has increased by 25% to satisfy the requirements of the local authority. As a consequence, both reasons for refusal associated with the previous application have been satisfactorily addressed.

5.3 The proposal would create a high quality residential scheme based on a contemporary design. This approach will improve the character of the area providing modern and sustainable forms of housing, creating diversity and will attract different residents in order to build the local community.

5.4 It is therefore concluded that the scheme complies with the relevant development plan policies and the other material considerations also indicate that planning permission should be granted.