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PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

Proposed refurbishment of the Fountain Inn Public House comprising partial demolition of extensions to the rear and development of 9 dwellings

Fountain Inn, Wellthorne Lane, Ingbirchworth

Conroy Brook (Developments) Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement relates to a full planning application submitted to Barnsley Council for refurbishment to the Fountain Inn public house to facilitate its re-opening and development of 9 dwellings on land to side (west). The application is submitted on behalf of Conroy Brook (Developments) Ltd.
- 1.2 The existing pub has had various failed attempts to be brought back into use leaving the building empty, derelict and a target for crime. The proposal will demolish the bedroom extensions at the rear to facilitate the residential development and allow the remaining pub to be refurbished and reinstated.
- 1.3 The site is previously developed and sits within the settlement limits of Ingbirchworth. The site is surrounded by existing dwellings to the north, east and south with open space to the north and west. The recent Conroy Brook development sits to the south of the site.

Background

- 1.4 This application is submitted following refusal of previous application 2020/0474 for demolition of the public house and redevelopment of the site for 13 dwellings. Details on the grounds for refusal are set out below in the Planning History Section of this report.
- 1.5 Following refusal of the planning application for redevelopment, the applicant has sought to explore opportunities to re-open the public house and bring it back into use. The site has now been acquired and this proposal seeks to refurbish the public house including creation of covered outdoor drinking / eating space to reflect revised trading and customer expectations resulting from the COVID pandemic. The internal layout will be refurbished with creation of an upstairs private function room which will be available for hire. Existing extensions to the rear of the public house will be demolished and the site cleared to enable development of 9 detached dwellings.
- 1.6 The retention of the public house is considered to be a significant benefit to the village and wider community whilst the proposed housing will deliver a mix of housing (3, 4 and 5 bed) on a previously developed site. The residential site is less than 0.4ha and so Local Plan Policy H4 is relevant. This has been confirmed with the Council.
- 1.7 Policy H4 refers to small windfall sites – the redevelopment of this site is clearly consistent with redeveloping previously developed land and the requirements of H4 are assessed fully in this Planning Statement.
- 1.8 Furthermore, the application is submitted on the basis of guidance set out at paras 59 and 68 of the NPPF which seeks to boost the supply of housing and deliver housing on small windfall sites respectively. The proposal is consistent with this national guidance.
- 1.9 The revised scheme addresses the previously stated reasons for refusal – further details set out below.

Planning History

- 1.10 The previous planning application (LPA ref 2020/0474) for demolition of the public house and redevelopment of the site with 13 dwellings was refused by the Council on 11 Dec 2020 for three reasons – these are set out below:

The reasons for the Council's decision to refuse planning permission are:

1. The proposed development is not located in a sustainable location having poor access to services and public transport and as such the proposed does not comply with Section 2 of the NPPF, Achieving Sustainable Development and is contrary to Local Plan Policies SD1 and H5.
2. The proposed development will lead to the loss of a community asset for which insufficient justification has been provided in accordance with Local Plan Policies E7 and I2. Furthermore, the loss of this asset will worsen the sustainability of the village of Ingbirchworth contrary to Local Plan Policy SD1.
3. The proposed mix development does not provide a range of house types and tenures to meet local needs and as such is contrary to Local Plan Policies H6 and H7.

- 1.11 The revised scheme seeks to address these reasons for refusal in that it will bring the public house back into use together with a mix of 3, 4 and 5 bed dwellings. The retention of the pub is a significant benefit for the community and the wider area which weighs significantly in favour of the revised scheme. Furthermore, the retention of the pub results in a smaller site for residential use such that the application falls to be determined against Local Plan Policy H4 (small non allocated sites) rather than H5 (large non-allocated sites). Policy H4 is more supportive and less prescriptive than H5 and affords support for the proposal of 9 dwellings. The basis for the 1st reason for refusal of the 2020 application falls away whilst the mix of 3, 4 and 5 bed dwellings including office space for home working delivers a suitable mix of housetypes for the site. Policy H6 is therefore addressed. Reference is made to tenure in the previous decision - Policy H7 refers to affordable housing and provision of suitable tenures - the scheme is for 9 dwellings and does not trigger the need for affordable housing. Policy H7 is therefore not relevant in this application.

The Planning Application

- 1.12 This statement describes the application site and proposed development (Section 2) and identifies and examines the policy issues of relevance to the application, referring both to the relevant development plan and the advice of Central Government as set out and contained in the NPPF (Sections 3 & 4).
- 1.13 This statement will fully justify the development proposals for the subject site and will advance justification for the proposed development.
- 1.14 On the basis of the information provided in this statement, the associated supporting documents and on the application drawings, a presumption in favour of development can be maintained in this particular instance, the application being fully in accordance with the advice of Central Government and relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan (Jan 2019).
- 1.15 The planning application is supported by a comprehensive package of information including:
- i. Completed application forms, with all certificates signed and dated;
 - ii. Architectural Plans prepared by Farrar Bamforth Associates;
 - iii. Design and Access Statement prepared by Farrar Bamforth Associates;
 - iv. Energy & Sustainability Statement prepared by Farrar Bamforth Associates;
 - v. Drainage Report prepared by Eastwood & Partners;

- vi. Phase 1 & 2 geotechnical and Geo-environmental site investigation prepared by Eastwood & Partners;
- vii. Tree Survey / AIA prepared by James Royston;
- viii. Ecology Report prepared by Enzgo;
- ix. Noise Report prepared by NOVA Acoustics;
- x. Planning Statement prepared by Alistair Flatman Planning; and
- xi. Highways and Parking Technical Note prepared by Eastwood & Partners

2.0 Site Location and Proposed Development

Site and Surrounds

- 2.1 The site is located in the village of Ingbirchworth and comprises the former Fountain Inn pub and its car park. The pub has been closed since Feb 2017 and is boarded up.
- 2.2 The site sits on the western edge of the village on the north side of Wellthorne Lane opposite the recently completed Conroy Brook Summerford residential scheme. There is further housing to the north and east of the site.
- 2.3 The site is not allocated or subject to any designations. The site sits in FZ1 and is not subject to any landscape, ecology or heritage designations. Trees exist along the northern boundary.
- 2.4 Access is taken from Wellthorne Lane.
- 2.5 The total site area is circa 0.49ha of which 0.127ha comprises the pub and car park with remaining land to the rear at 0.371ha.

The Proposed Development

- 2.6 The Proposed Development comprises a full planning application for demolition for extensions to the rear of the public house to facilitate its re-opening together with erection of 9 dwellings.
- 2.7 The extent of the proposed demolition is set out on the extract below:



2.8 Following demolition, this area will then be redeveloped for housing comprising mix of nine 3, 4 and 5 bed detached family dwellings. 5 different housetypes are proposed offering mix of 3, 4 and 5 bed units together with space for home working. The dwellings are stone built with concrete tile roof. A summary of the housetypes / garaging is set out below:

- 4 x Brackendale – 4 bed detached with detached garage
- 1 x Stanbury – 3/4 bed detached with integral garage
- 2 x Shelf – 4/5 bed detached with accommodation in the roof and integral garage
- 1 x Bawtry – 4 bed detached with attached garage
- 1 x Stocksmoor – 4 bed detached with attached garage

2.9 Plot 3 takes direct access from Wellthorne Lane whilst the remaining 8 plots are served off a Mews Court / Private Drive – the access point is as per the 2020 application and was not subject to any objections from the Council. The Mews Court allows for turning within the site. Each plot benefits from off street parking and private garden area.

2.10 The public house is served from a revised access point off Wellthorne Lane with the car park revised to provide 23 spaces. As part of the refurbishment, outdoor eating and drinking space will be improved including provision of covered areas – this is an essential part of a pub's offer now (both for the operation of the pub and to reflect changing customer habits in terms of distancing) given the effects of the COVID pandemic.

2.11 The proposed site layout is copied below.



2.12 Landscaping is proposed to the site frontage and within the site. Trees to northern and eastern boundary will be retained where possible.

2.13 Further details are set out in the submitted Design & Access Statement.

3.0 Planning Policy Review

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (revised Feb 2019) 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 in to account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.2 Set out below is a summary and assessment of the relevant sections of the NPPF.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The guidance advises that the policies in paragraphs 1-211 taken as a whole constitute the government's view on what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 3.4 Paragraphs 7, 8 and 11 of the NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 3.5 Paragraph 11 sets up the presumption in favour of sustainable development stating:

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date⁷, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁶; or

ii. 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.

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 3.6 Chapter 5 of the NPPF relates to the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes with Paragraph 59 confirming the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing whilst Paragraph 68 confirms the role of smaller sites in meeting housing requirements of an area. Para 68 acknowledges that smaller sites can often be built out quickly and encourages the development of windfall sites, advising that *great weight* should be given to the benefits of using sites with existing settlements (para 68-c).
- 3.7 Paragraphs 73-76 confirm the importance of maintaining a minimum 5 year supply of deliverable supply of housing sites.

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 3.8 Chapter 6 of the NPPF sets out guidance on the economy including the rural economy. Paragraph 83 seeks to ensure decisions enable the growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas as well as the retention of community facilities such as public houses.
- 3.9 The refurbishment and re-opening of the public house is consistent with this guidance. The associated housing development is essential in ensuring the public house can be re-opened.

Promoting Healthy and safe communities

- 3.10 Chapter 8 seeks to deliver healthy, inclusive and safe communities.
- 3.11 Paragraph 92 advises that in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should consider positively the provision of community facilities such as public houses and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Consideration should also be given to an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities.
- 3.12 In this case the proposal involves retention of the pub which will deliver social and economic benefits in close proximity to housing.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 3.13 Chapter 9 of the NPPF refers to highways matters with para 109 advising that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 3.14 The established use of the site is as an extended public house with extensions providing additional bedspace. The extensions are to be demolished and that element of the site redeveloped to deliver 9 dwellings. Onsite parking and turning is provided for the dwellings and public house. The proposed dwellings together with retained public house will not result in severe impacts and therefore not give rise to any highway safety or capacity issues.

Design

- 3.15 Chapter 12 of the NPPF refers to Design and advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 3.16 Paragraph 127 sets out a number of design criteria to be considered in terms of design of development stating:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing*

or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 3.17 The proposed development has been designed and laid out to ensure the character and appearance of the buildings are in-keeping with their surroundings. The main pub will be retained with later additions / extensions demolished. The proposal results in a well-designed scheme with benefits to visual amenity of the site through high quality design. The Design & Access Statement that accompanies the development proposals clearly sets out how the development meets all of the objectives set out above and represents high quality design.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- 3.18 Paragraph 155 of Chapter 14 confirms that development should be directed to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk from flooding.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 3.19 Paragraph 170 of Chapter 15 advises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: -
- *a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - *b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
 - *c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
 - *d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
 - *e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*

- *f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*

- 3.20 Paragraph 175 relates to ecology and biodiversity considerations when determining planning applications.
- 3.21 The site comprises a boarded up pub and its car park. The site is not subject to any ecological, or landscape designations and is not considered to be a valued landscape. The quantum of development will not give rise to any unacceptable levels of pollution or land instability.
- 3.22 There are no known protected species or ecology designations on site. As such it is considered the site is of low wildlife value.
- 3.23 Paragraph 178 refers to ground conditions advising that when making decisions, consideration must be given to whether a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.
- 3.24 A Phase 1 & 2 Geotechnical Report is submitted with the application. The findings of the report suggest there are no reasons why the site cannot accommodate residential development.

Compliance with the NPPF

- 3.25 Assessing the proposed dwelling against the main objectives of the NPPF, it is clear the scheme accords with the overarching approach to planning in that:-
- The site comprises a previously developed, windfall site in an existing village;
 - The proposal will assist in the Council delivering and maintaining its five-year housing land supply;
 - The proposal will deliver economic (construction jobs / spend and future resident spend together with employment opportunities within the public house) and social benefits together with environmental benefits in terms of new planting on site and increase in permeable areas through replacement of car parks with gardens.
 - The proposal will retain the existing public house.
 - The proposal will not give rise to any severe highways impacts
 - The proposal will not result in any drainage or flood risk issues
 - As illustrated by the submitted layout and Design and Access Statement, the development proposal can provide a development that is sympathetic to and reflective of the character of the surrounding area.

From the foregoing assessment of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposal is wholly consistent with this national guidance. As such, the presumption in favour applies and the application should be approved.

Statutory Development Plan

- 3.26 The Development Plan for Barnsley is formed by the adopted Local Plan (Jan 2019). The relevant policies are set out below:
- Policy SD1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy GD1 – General Development – this sets out a number of general development control matters to be considered in relation to (inter alia) amenity, landscaping, access and trees.

Policy H4 – Residential Development on small non-allocated sites – proposals for residential development on sites below 0.4 hectares will be allowed where the proposal complies with other relevant policies in the Plan.

Policy D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making – policy sets out that development is expected to be of a high quality and respect local character. The policy sets out a number of criteria which should be considered.

3.27 These Local Plan policies are considered in the next section.

4.0 Planning Assessment

- 4.1 This Chapter considers the principle of the Proposed Development and an assessment of the application against other policy requirements.

Principle

- 4.2 The site comprises a public house with extensions to the rear (west) and car park to the front (east). It is therefore a previously developed, windfall site within the village.
- 4.3 The proposal retains and refurbishes the public house to bring it back into use after many years of being closed. The proposal will deliver improvements to outdoor drinking and eating space, including provision of covered / enclosed areas, to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Inside, the pub will be refurbished and include provision of a private function room which will be available for hire.
- 4.4 As such the proposal will bring the public house back into active use after many years of being closed with associated social, community and economic benefits. This is consistent with guidance set out in the NPPF and the aspirations of Local Plan Policy E7 which seeks to avoid loss of community facilities. The retention of the public house and its re-opening is a significant benefit that weighs in favour of the proposal.
- 4.5 With regards the residential element of the proposal, this falls to be assessed against Local Plan policy H4 as a small windfall site. The site is a previously developed site within an existing village. The proposed dwellings are an integral element to the re-opening of the public house which, as stated above, delivers clear social, community and economic benefits. As demonstrated in the supporting reports submitted with the application, there are no technical reasons why the site should not be developed.
- 4.6 The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with Local Plan Policies SD1 and H4.
- 4.7 With regards national planning policy, the NPPF is clear on the importance of boosting the supply of housing and encourages the redevelopment of previously developed, windfall sites in villages (para 68c). As such the proposal is consistent with national planning policy on this matter and is a material consideration in support of the proposal.

Design

- 4.8 Local Plan Policy D1 sets out design principles. The site currently comprises a vacant, boarded up public house with extensions to the rear and extensive car park area to the front. These extensions and the overall appearance of the site contributes very little to the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.9 The proposal will refurbish the public house, the outdoor seating area and car park to create a more attractive site within the village. Trees will be retained where possible and additional planting considered within the site.
- 4.10 The proposed dwellings (to be built following demolition of the extensions to the rear of the pub) are two storey in height, constructed in stone with interlocking grey tile to the roof. The dwellings are detached delivering a total of nine 3, 4 and 5 bed family dwellings on the site. The internal and external

layout has been carefully considered to deliver modern family accommodation with access to large, enclosed gardens and opportunities for home working.

- 4.11 The design reflects those newly built dwellings to the south of the site whilst the layout ensures all dwellings can be safely accessed, parking is provided for at least 2 cars and adequate private amenity space is provided. The proposed plans together with details set out in the Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the proposed residential development can be comfortably accommodated on the site.
- 4.12 The demolition of the extensions to the rear of the pub, the pub's refurbishment and provision of quality family housing will deliver an attractive development within the village with clear visual benefits arising through design, layout and landscaping. The proposed layout provides adequate space for additional landscaping as well which will have amenity and ecological benefits.
- 4.13 As such it is considered the proposed development is appropriately designed to reflect its village location. The proposal meets the design aspirations of the NPPF and relevant local policies and guidance particularly Local Plan policy D1.

Highways

- 4.14 8 of the 9 dwellings will be accessed via a mews court serving private drive with the other dwelling taking direct access from Wellthorne Lane. Each dwelling is served by a driveway with parking for at least 2 cars with a mix of detached, attached and integral garages proposed depending on housetype. Adequate turning is provided on site. The means of access to the dwellings is similar to that proposed in 2020 and was supported by Council Highways officers.
- 4.15 The pub car park is retained and laid out to provide 23 spaces to serve the retained public house.
- 4.16 In terms of trip generation, it is considered the proposed dwellings will generate fewer movements than the current larger public house with its large rear extension.
- 4.17 The proposed development will not give rise to any severe cumulative impacts in terms of safety or capacity.
- 4.18 Future residents will also have access to existing bus services within walking distance of the site with regular daily services to Barnsley and Penistone.
- 4.19 In summary, the Proposed Development will not have a detrimental impact on the local highway network and is therefore in accordance with the NPPF and the Local Plan policy GD1.

Residential Amenity

- 4.20 The siting, design and layout of the proposed dwelling is such that there will be no issues of overlooking / loss of privacy and future occupiers will have adequate private amenity space. The proximity of proposed dwellings to those existing to the north and east is also such that there will be no harm to living conditions of existing residents.

4.21 The pub itself is an established use and there is no planning permission required to simply re-open the pub. A Noise Survey has however been submitted to demonstrate there will be no harm to residential amenity of future or existing residents. The layout of the proposed dwellings relative to the pub have also been considered to ensure future residents enjoy suitable living conditions.

4.22 The proposal is therefore consistent with Local Plan policy GD1.

Drainage and Flood Risk

4.23 The site is in Flood Zones 1 where there is the lowest risk of flooding and can be developed without increasing the risk of flooding. Surface water run-off rates will be limited to greenfield rates and where practicable SuDS will be utilised. The Proposed Development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of the NPPF and relevant development plan policies.

Ecology

4.24 The site comprises a vacant, boarded up pub building with extensive car park. There are no known protected species on site nor any important habitats. The removal of existing buildings and car park with proposed dwellings and gardens will increase opportunities for soft landscaping in form of gardens and planting. Existing trees along the northern boundary will be retained where possible. Overall, it is considered there will be a net benefits in terms of ecology arising from the proposal.

Trees

4.25 The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and AIA. Existing trees will be retained along the northern boundary to the car park and eastern boundary within rear gardens of proposed dwellings. As such it is considered there will be no detrimental impact on trees arising from the proposal.

4.26 Considering the above assessment and with regards the submitted plans, and technical reports, it is considered the proposal is consistent with relevant National and Local planning policies. As such there is no planning reason why planning permission should not be granted for the proposal.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This Planning Statement relates to a full planning application submitted to Barnsley Council for refurbishment to the Fountain Inn public house to facilitate its re-opening and development of 9 dwellings on land to side (west). The application is submitted on behalf of Conroy Brook (Developments) Ltd.
- 5.2 The existing pub has had various failed attempts to be brought back into use leaving the building empty, derelict and a target for crime. The proposal will demolish the bedroom extensions at the rear to facilitate the residential development and allow the remaining pub to be refurbished and reinstated.
- 5.3 The site is previously developed and sits within the settlement limits of Ingbirchworth.

Background

- 5.4 This application is submitted following refusal of previous application 2020/0474 for demolition of the public house and redevelopment of the site for 13 dwellings.
- 5.5 Following refusal of the planning application for redevelopment, the applicant has sought to explore opportunities to re-open the public house and bring it back into use. The site has now been acquired and this proposal seeks to refurbish the public house including creation of covered outdoor drinking / eating space to reflect revised trading and customer expectations resulting from the COVID pandemic. The internal layout will be refurbished with creation of an upstairs private function room which will be available for hire. Existing extensions to the rear of the public house will be demolished and the site cleared to enable development of 9 detached dwellings.
- 5.6 The retention of the public house is considered to be a significant benefit to the village and wider community whilst the proposed housing will deliver a mix of housing (3, 4 and 5 bed) on a previously developed site.

Planning History

- 5.7 The previous planning application (LPA ref 2020/0474) for demolition of the public house and redevelopment of the site with 13 dwellings was refused by the Council on 11 Dec 2020 for three reasons.
- 5.8 The revised scheme seeks to address these reasons for refusal in that it will bring the public house back into use together with a mix of 3, 4 and 5 bed dwellings. The retention of the pub is a significant benefit for the community and the wider area which weighs significantly in favour of the revised scheme.
- 5.9 Furthermore, the retention of the pub results in a smaller site for residential use such that the application falls to be determined against Local Plan Policy H4 (small non allocated sites) rather than H5 (large non-allocated sites). Policy H4 is more supportive and less prescriptive than H5 and affords support for the proposal of 9 dwellings. The basis for the 1st reason for refusal of the 2020 application falls away whilst the mix of 3, 4 and 5 bed dwellings including office space for home working delivers a suitable mix of housetypes for the site. Policy H6 is therefore addressed.

Assessment

- 5.10 The site comprises a public house with extensions to the rear (west) and car park to the front (east). It is therefore a previously developed, windfall site within the village.
- 5.11 The proposal retains and refurbishes the public house to bring it back into use after many years of being closed. The proposal will deliver improvements to outdoor drinking and eating space, including provision of covered / enclosed areas, to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Inside, the pub will be refurbished and include provision of a private function room which will be available for hire.
- 5.12 As such the proposal will bring the public house back into active use after many years of being closed with associated social, community and economic benefits. This is consistent with guidance set out in the NPPF and the aspirations of Local Plan Policy E7 which seeks to avoid loss of community facilities. The retention of the public house and its re-opening is a significant benefit that weighs in favour of the proposal.
- 5.13 With regards the residential element of the proposal, this falls to be assessed against Local Plan policy H4 as a small windfall site. The site is a previously developed site within an existing village. The proposed dwellings are an integral element to the re-opening of the public house which, as stated above, delivers clear social, community and economic benefits. The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with Local Plan Policies SD1 and H4.
- 5.14 With regards national planning policy, the NPPF is clear on the importance of boosting the supply of housing, encourages the redevelopment of previously developed, windfall sites in villages (para 68c) and encourages the retention of public houses (paras 83 & 92). As such the proposal is consistent with national planning policy on this matter and is a material consideration in support of the proposal.
- 5.15 In terms of design, the proposal comprises stone built 2 storey dwellings entirely in-keeping with their surrounds. The layout ensures safe access, adequate parking and private gardens and distances between dwellings ensuring there are no issues of overlooking / loss of privacy. The proposal is therefore well designed and preserves the residential character and appearance of the village. As such, the proposal complies with Local Plan policies GD1 and D1.
- 5.16 This statement and the supporting technical documents confirms there are no adverse impact from the proposed development. The proposal will deliver housing on a previously developed site within Ingbirchworth whilst facilitating re-opening of the Fountain Inn public house within the village.
- 5.17 In view of the above, it is considered the scheme satisfies national and local policy and represents a suitable development proposal for the site that addresses all the relevant and material considerations. In this context, the proposal satisfies Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.