

**RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT FORMER PERFECTA
BEDS, BARNSELY ROAD, WOMBWELL, SOUTH
YORKSHIRE**

PLANNING STATEMENT

APPLICANT: STRATA HOMES

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1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Garner Planning Associates in support of a full planning application Strata Homes for 92 dwellings at the former Perfecta Beds site, Wombwell.

Outline planning permission for the "*Redevelopment of site for residential use (use class C3)*" was granted by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council on 16th August 2007 (Application no. 2006/1172). In November 2010 the local planning authority resolved to grant an extension of this application (2010/0990).

As part of the above approvals both access and layout were approved, leaving scale of buildings, the design and external appearance of the proposed development and landscaping to be submitted as reserved matters for subsequent approval.

This application is in full because Strata Homes seek to amend the approved layout which indicated 95 dwellings and instead put forward a scheme for 92 dwellings.

2. Planning Application

This submission includes the following documentation

- Planning Statement by Garner Planning Associates;
- Design and Access Statement by Strata Homes;
- Ecological Survey by Andrew McCarthy Associates;
- Transport Statement by Bryan G Hall;
- Residential Travel Plan by Bryan G Hall;
- Flood Risk Assessment by ARP Associates;
- Landscape Masterplan by FD Landscape
- Noise Impact Assessment by Environmental Noise Solutions Ltd; and
- Site layout plan by Homes by Strata (BR/WW/SK03.

3. Planning History

In resolving to grant consent for an extension of the outline consent, the planning authority's report states:-

"...the application to extend the time limit to submit reserved matters can be supported on the basis this would be an appropriate use of powers to deal with the economic downturn. Allowing the application would hopefully facilitate the applicants exit strategy to sell the site to a housing developer this offering the best chance to see the site developed in the next few years, as opposed to a further prolonged period. This is important from a visual amenity point of view on such a prominent site and to provide housing."

This full application follows from the planning authority's resolution and presents the opportunity for the site to finally come forward for development, delivering much needed housing in the area. This point is discussed again at 7.1 below.

4. Planning Policy

4.1 Regional Spatial Strategy

The Yorkshire and Humber Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 was published in May 2008, however RSS will be finally be revoked when the Localism Bill comes into effect.

4.2 Barnsley Unitary Development Plan

The site was designated in the UDP as an Employment Policy Area, however the grant of residential consent following an appropriate marketing period means the planning position has moved on somewhat.

Policies in relation to design, namely H8A and BE6 remain of relevance and are considered and addressed in the nature of the proposed development as set out in the Design and Access Statement.

4.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

The authority' web site indicates

"The Council has prepared a number of guidance notes which explain how the policies in the Unitary Development Plan will be implemented. Some of the guidance notes also bring local policy in line with more up to date national policy. These notes are intended to help people who may be thinking about applying for planning permission and to assist the Council in making decisions. By providing this advice, the Council ensures the planning application process runs smoothly and that good quality development is achieved."

Among the listed supplementary guidance notes that the Council will use in making decisions are the four SPG's referred to in the reasons for granting consent, namely:-

- SPG 2: The Design and Layout of New Housing (dated May 2003);
- SPG 24 : Re-use of Employment Sites (dated May 2003);
- SPG28: Developing Contaminated Land (May 2003); and
- SPG30: Sequential Approach to determining Planning Applications for New Residential Development (Planning Advisory Note dated January 2004).

5. Draft Planning Policy

5.1 Local Development Framework

A Core Strategy Hearing commences on 15th March 2011 where an Inspector will test whether or not the draft policies are sound. The following policies are of relevance, although it must be recognised these policies have limited weight at this stage:-

- CSP5 Including Renewable Energy in Developments
- CSP15 Affordable Housing
- CSP29 Design

6. Evidence Base Documents

In preparing the draft Core Strategy two documents have been produced which are particularly relevant to this application.

6.1 Barnsley Strategic Housing Land Availability Report 2009

The SHLAA concludes there to be a supply of 21,290 dwellings compared to a suggested housing requirement of 19,974 including the Growth Point status.

For the settlement of Wombwell there is a suggested site capacity of 52.19ha with dwelling yield of 2088 dwellings in the period 2011 to 2026, assuming a density of 40 dwellings per ha, in addition to sites with the benefit of planning permission.

Analysis of the SHLAA Site List and Site Assessment indicates that 38.54 has of the identified sites in Wombwell are on greenfield sites equating to over 1540 dwellings.

Assuming a continuing emphasis and priority for the redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings, the application site will continue to be high priority for redevelopment for housing for the planning authority.

6.2 Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The Yorkshire & Humber Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Summary Report June 2008 indicates in Table 3 an annual identified shortfall to meet housing need of 275 dwellings in Barnsley.

The SHMA report states that:-

"..., and even in a future and stronger market, there are limits to the potential for meeting affordable housing requirements in this way..."

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"...There is also a need to ensure that overall levels of provision are maintained with sufficient market provision to support economic and demographic trends. An affordable housing target that is too ambitious may place a risk to overall market delivery in less robust housing markets..."

The issue of affordable housing viability is addressed at 7.2 below.

7 Principle Issues for the Full Application

7.1 Housing Land Supply

The Core Strategy Inquiry is due to commence on 15th March 2011. The Inspector has issued a document outlining initial concerns. The Inspector raises a general concern about housing supply in the short term and a particular concern about supply in Wombwell.

"5... on the evidence currently available I have concerns about the adequacy of the supply, especially over the initial years of the Strategy."

"6... the dearth of sites in Wombwell and Royston (Table 3.2), suggest that these centres might be hard pressed to accommodate the quantum of housing assigned to them by Policy CSP 10, at least during the early years of the CS."

The grant of a full planning permission at the application site will enable this particular site to come forward in the short term and address these particular concerns about housing land supply.

7.2 Affordable Housing

As is indicated above, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment warns that *"in a weaker market the potential for securing affordable housing through planning agreements is reduced"* and that over ambitious targets *"may place a risk to overall market delivery."*

No affordable housing was required as part of the outline planning permission granted in August 2007. This consent established a land value and there can be no doubt that since planning permission was granted in August 2007 that the housing market has weakened.

Draft CSP 15 Affordable Housing intends that for residential developments of 15 or more dwellings

"25% affordable will be expected in Penistone and the rural west, Darton, Barugh, and Dodworth. 15% affordable will be expected in all other locations of the borough unless it can be demonstrated through a viability assessment that the required figure would render the scheme unviable."

PPS3: Housing requires planning authorities to *"...undertake an informed assessment of the economic viability of any thresholds and proportions of affordable housing proposed, including their likely impact upon overall levels of housing proposed..."*(29).

The planning authority has recently published the Barnsley MBC Affordable Housing Viability Assessment Final Report produced by the consultants Three Dragons. The report recognises the difficulty of providing affordable housing in locations such as Wombwell and as a result does not support 15% affordable housing in Wombwell. The report states:-

"3.11...However, in the weaker sub markets, in particular Hoyland, Wombwell and Darfield and North Barnsley and Royston, a 45 dph will produce lower residual values at all affordable housing scenarios above 15%. The reason for this is that developers building smaller units in weaker sub markets are likely to find it disproportionately difficult to cover development costs with the revenue generated."

"6.1 On the basis of the available evidence, which shows considerable disparity in viability levels between different areas of Borough we believe there are two key options for setting affordable housing proportions for spatial planning policy purposes.

- Adopt a dual target broadly splitting the Borough east and west. This would involve the Rural West, Darton, Barugh, Penistone and Dodworth with one target and the rest of the Borough with another. On this basis, we would suggest a 25% target for Rural West, Darton, Barugh, Penistone and Dodworth and a target of 15% elsewhere. On this basis however, our analysis suggests that the very weakest sub markets might find even a 15% target challenging without the assistance of subsidy to support the affordable housing element. At the other end of the scale, i.e in Rural West, this policy stance could well underestimate the potential supply of affordable housing from these higher value locations.*
- Adopt a more location specific based approach, including a four way policy target. This would set a target of 35% for Rural West; 25% for Darton, Barugh, Penistone and Dodworth; 15% for South Barnsley and Worsbrough and 10% for the weakest three sub markets which include Hoyland, Wombwell, Darfield, North Barnsley and Royston, Bolton on Dearne, Goldthorpe and Thurnscoe."*

As part of submissions in relation to the extension of time application (2010/0990) representations were made to the effect that the provision of affordable housing was not viable given both the established land value and the economic decline since August 2007.

The planning authority accepted this reality and concluded in its report:-

the DCLG Guide 'Greater Flexibility for Planning Permissions' sets out that the extension powers have been reintroduced on a temporary basis to deal specifically with sites/existing planning permissions such as this that were purchased at higher land values and are now affected by viability issues, even without affordable housing provision. Therefore it is considered unreasonable to insist upon affordable housing provision in view of the guidance setting what these powers should be used for, which is supported by detailed financial information."

The economic situation has not improved since November 2010 when these comments were made. In pre-application discussions the applicant's have submitted further financial viability information to the planning authority addressing the specifics of the scheme forming part of this application. As a result of those discussions officers have accepted that the viability situation is such that, in the current market circumstances, affordable housing would not be justifiable.

7.3 Design

The layout for 95 dwellings was approved as part of the outline planning permission in August 2007 and again in November 2011.

The Strata scheme for 92 dwellings is described fully in the Design and Access Statement accompanying this application.

The statement demonstrates detailed analysis of the site's context in the local area and ensures the proposed design respects that context and provides a form and density of development that will provide an interesting and safe environment for residents.

7.4 Ecology

An Ecology Survey undertaken by Andrew McCarthy Associates forms part of this application.

The survey indicates that three breeding pairs of little ringed plovers have been nesting on the site and as a protected species their nests should not be disturbed between April and July.

The report refers to the "*relative abundance of post industrial sites in South Yorkshire*" and therefore it can be concluded that the loss of this particular site for little ringed plovers is not critical.

7.5 Flood Risk

An updated report ensuring compliance with the PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk issued in March 2011 has been prepared by ARP and forms part of this application.

The report concludes:-

"The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and the Sequential Test is satisfied. Therefore, there are no mitigation measures required in respect of flooding on the site..."(7.1)

A number of mitigation measures are suggested to address situations of extreme storm or blocked sewers.

The report indicates that *"...the surface water drainage system shall be designed with an allowance for climatic change and restricted to the agreed discharge rates with appropriate attenuation incorporated into the design. The design, detail and calculations shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to the construction on site."*(7.5)

It is suggested this matter can be dealt with by planning condition.

7.6 Travel

Given the similarity in the number of dwellings proposed by this application compared to the current planning permission, the number of car borne trips is similar.

As part of the planning application a Residential Travel Plan has been prepared. This Plan indicates the proximity of the site to local services and bus stops and has been prepared as *"a mechanism to provide incentives which will help persuade residents to travel by other modes of travel that have less environmental impact than the car."* (1.1.4).

The applicants propose to appoint a Residential Travel Plan Co-ordinator to assist in meeting the Travel Plan objectives.

8 Benefits of the Scheme

8.1 Bringing Previously Developed site back into use

The application site has been vacant since December 2005. Previous submissions in relation to the August 2007 consent indicate a good supply of existing employment sites and properties locally and marketing campaigns that did not result in any offer for the purchase of the site for employment purposes.

The site is within an existing residential area, with residential on three sides of the site. The most suitable form of redevelopment of the site is for residential purposes to avoid the reintroduction of amenity problems associated with industrial uses for neighbouring residents.

The redevelopment of the site for residential purposes would be a significant improvement for the local environment and would meet a key planning policy objective.

8.2 Housing Delivery

As has been previously discussed the Core Strategy Inspector has expressed concern over the short term supply of housing, particularly in Wombwell. The grant of a full planning permission to allow this site to come forward will help address that concern.

8.3 Scheme meets local requirements

The mixed nature of housing ranging from 1 to 4 beds means that a broad sector of the local population can be catered for.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment refers to the particular need to accommodate families when it states:-

"The proportion of family households suggests that family housing should form a significant component of the future housing offer."

More generally the scheme would address another issue referred to in the SHMA which refers to

"... a need to attract more working age people to live in the area. The M1 provides access to the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions and improving the quality of the housing and neighbourhood offer can help to attract and retain working households within the HMA."

8.4 Benefits to the Local Economy

In responding to the Core Strategy Inspector's initial concerns the planning authority quotes from Government's White Paper "Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential" which states

"Housing can be an important source of economic growth, particularly at a local enterprise partnership level. The recent recession had a severe impact on housing construction, with output falling by around a third from its pre-recession peak. However, this also means that the sector has clear potential to grow. It could therefore play a major role in leading the economy back towards growth and improving the long-term competitiveness of the UK economy. This potential has been demonstrated in UK growth over the past six months, which showed construction output – of which housing is a major part – growing by 14 per cent between the first and third quarters of 2010, making a major contribution to the strength of whole economy GDP growth. Housing can also play a key role in supporting an efficient labour market, which is critical to economic growth. A more strategic role for housing and planning at the LEP level could help maximise the UK's house building supply response and the wider economic recovery. "

Clearly the redevelopment of the former Perfecta Beds site will have local economic benefits both during the construction phase and in the medium term as the local environment is improved and new residents support the viability of local services and facilities.

9 Conclusions

The principle of residential development has already been established by the previous outline consent for the site.

This application is in full in order to secure permission for a revised layout and a marginally reduced number of dwellings.

Planning policies support bringing back into use of a previously developed sites and the location of the site in within a primarily residential area means that a residential redevelopment is entirely appropriate.

In preparing the layout and design, considerable care has been taken to understand and respect the local context, provide appropriate landscaping treatment and ensure an interesting layout and design.

The financial situation means that the applicant's are unable to offer an affordable housing contribution, nevertheless the scheme will provide for a broad mix of properties to cater for a wide range of household requirements. More specifically the scheme will address the needs of families and those of working age, key issues referred to in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

The redevelopment of the site has a number of key benefits including bringing a derelict and vacant previously developed site back into use, delivering housing in the short term, meeting specifically identified local housing requirements and providing significant local economic benefits.

Taking all of the above into account it is requested that the Council approves this application.