

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall
Knowsley Street
Bury
BL9 0SW

FAO: Jennie Townsend

22 November 2024

Dear Jennie

SPURR HOUSE, POLE LANE, UNSWORTH, BL9 8QL

On behalf of Watson, please find enclosed an application for full planning permission at the above site.

The application seeks consent for:

'Demolition of existing buildings, site clearance works including removal of areas of hardstanding, tree removal, disconnection of existing services and site levelling'

The application comprises the following documents, which were agreed with Helen Leech prior to the submission of the application:

- A completed application form;
- This covering letter prepared by Focus Town Planning;
- Application fee of £2,121 (including £70 service charge) made via the Planning Portal;
- Site Location Plan prepared by TADW;
- Topographical Survey prepared by SurveyEng Ltd;
- Post demolition/site levels plan prepared by TADW;
- Utility Survey prepared by SurveyEng Ltd;
- Swept Path Analysis prepared by SCP Transport;
- Refurbishment and Demolition Asbestos Survey prepared by Reddish Vale Insulations Ltd dated April 2022
- Reinspection Asbestos Survey prepared by Reddish Vale Insulations Ltd dated March 2023;
- Phase 1 Geo Environmental Appraisal prepared by Brownfield Solutions Ltd dated August 2022;
- Phase 2 Geo Environmental Appraisal prepared by Brownfield Solutions Ltd dated November 2022;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Roost Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment prepared by Thomson Environmental Consultants dated January 2023;
- Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ground level Tree Assessment prepared by Thomson Environmental Consultants dated November 2024;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Thompson Environmental Consultants dated October 2024;
- Dust Management Report prepared by Cundalls dated November 2024; and
- S106 Pro Forma.

SITE BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The proposed development site is located on Pole Lane in Unsworth. It currently comprises a vacant single storey building, constructed in circa 1980 and previously operated as a care home. Vehicular and pedestrian access is taken via Pole Lane. The site area is approximately 0.67Ha.

There is an area to the front of the existing building for car parking, with informal landscaping and a mixture of trees. There are no Tree Preservation Orders or Listed Buildings, nor is the site located within a conservation area. The site is within Flood Zone 1.

The site is located within a predominantly residential area, with Unsworth Cricket and Tennis Club located to the south, residential development to the north and west, with Unsworth Academy to the east. It is predominantly flat.

The site is unallocated on the Proposals Map accompanying the Bury Unitary Development Plan.

PLANNING HISTORY

The site has a limited planning history available online. Most recently, planning permission was granted in June 2023 for the change of use from residential home (Class C2) to a pupil referral unit (Class F1) and single storey extensions. This consent has not been implemented.

THE PROPOSAL

This application seeks to obtain full planning permission for the demolition of the existing care home and associated buildings, removal of all areas of hardstanding, the disconnection of existing services, tree clearance work and site levelling.

Watson intends to redevelop the site to deliver housing on the site in due course subject to receiving planning permission. To access funding from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, they are required to commence work on site by 1 March 2025. To meet these timescales, Watson is applying separately for the demolition of the building and will be submitting the application for residential development in January 2025.

The wider redevelopment of the site will result in the loss of 16 individual trees, four groups of trees and the partial removal of one further group of trees. It is proposed that the trees are removed as part of the site demolition and clearance work.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for Bury comprises:

- Joint Places for Everyone (PfE) (March 2024)
- Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (August 1997)
- Greater Manchester Minerals Plan
- The Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD (2012).

Other policies, strategies and evidence base documents are also material and relevant, including the draft Bury Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents as well as other documents which form the evidence base to the Local Development Framework, particularly in relation to housing land supply.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

The Joint Places for Everyone Development Plan Document was adopted by nine Greater Manchester local authorities, including Bury in March 2024. It identifies future needs for housing and employment floorspace, allocates strategy sites to help meet these needs and identifies a revised Green Belt boundary.

In terms of housing, the PfE identifies strategic housing allocations to meet Bury's future housing targets. There is a need to identify additional housing sites through the development plan, albeit limited, with a focus on previously development brownfield sites within the existing urban area.

The policies within PfE of relevance to this proposal (and the site's wider redevelopment) are detailed below.

Policy JP-H1 sets a requirement for an average of 452 homes per year over the plan period, with stepped targets starting from a minimum housing target of 246 homes per year from 2022-2025 (increasing in future years of the plan).

Policy JP-H2 seeks to significantly increase the supply of new housing and JP-H3 seeks to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes.

Policy JP-H4 requires new housing developments to be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve the efficient use of land and high-quality design. It also sets a minimum density to be considered.

Bury Unitary Development Plan

The Unitary Development Plan was adopted in August 1997. In 2007, the Council had to decide which policies to save until such time that a new Local Plan was adopted. The Secretary of Statement agreed that all policies should be retained apart from policy OL7/1.

Following adoption of PfE, many of the saved policies have been superseded, of relevance to the wider redevelopment of the site include, Policy H3 relating to housing land provision, housing environment and design (H2), housing need and new development (H4) and new development (HT4).

The general strategic direction of the UDP is to revitalise the sub regional economy, promoting urban regeneration, delivering new dwellings, ensuring Green Belt, open land and environmental quality and focusing shopping facilities within existing town centres, with a maintained transport system.

National Planning Policy Framework

National planning policy is set out within the NPPF (2023), which is supplemented by the NPPG.

The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 8), through the three overarching objectives of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development through both plan making and decision taking. Paragraph 11 explains that for decision taking, this means that proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

Section 5 of the NPPF focusses on housing growth. Paragraph 60 states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is vital that the sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

Section 11 relates to making effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Paragraph 120 sets out that planning policies and decisions should '*give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs*'. It also states at paragraph 124(d) decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Paragraph 180 ensures proposals conserve and enhance the natural environment. The policy seeks to prevent new development from resulting in unacceptable levels of pollution. The policy also asks that proposals minimise the impacts on and provides net gains for biodiversity.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

As the building is being demolished, there is no information for design. The site will be levelled once the demolition has been undertaken and a site levels plan is provided within the submission.

The existing site access will be utilised. A swept path analysis has been undertaken by SCP Transport to ensure that an 18m low rider can safely access the site.

JUSTIFICATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The revised NPPF along with the NPPG and other supplementary and emerging policies are material considerations relevant to the determination of this application.

Principle of development

The site is unallocated within the Bury UDP and Places for Everyone (PfE). It is a brownfield site within the urban settlement area with residential properties to the north and west of the site. As such, the reuse of the site for residential development would not conflict with the surrounding land uses and is in a sustainable location for access to local services and public transport, in accordance with Policy H1/2.

There is an emphasis on the redevelopment of brownfield sites to deliver much needed housing, including affordable housing. This is clearly set out within the NPPF, Bury UDP and PfE. Section 11 of the NPPF makes clear that substantial weight should be given to using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs. The redevelopment of this site, to deliver much needed affordable homes should be supported.

The clearance of the site enables the developer to access funding to facilitate the redevelopment of the site to deliver affordable housing and assist the council in their delivery of their housing requirement. The separation of the clearance works from the redevelopment of the site is to enable access to GMCA funding, which has a deadline of 1 March 2025 to begin works on site. It is anticipated that an application for the redevelopment of the

site for circa 60 apartments will be submitted in January 2025. This has been subject to a pre application discussions with the Council.

Trees

The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. It has assessed the trees on site as part of the clearance works and the redevelopment. The wider redevelopment will result in the loss of 16 individual trees, 4 groups of trees and the partial loss of 1 other group. Of the trees to be removed, 3 are Category B, 11 are Category C and 2 are Category U. The tree groups are all Category C.

One of the trees proposed for removal (T3) has potential roost features and it is recommended within the PEA and PRA that a bat licenced ecologist check the potential roost features for bats, immediately before it is soft felled.

It is anticipated that as part of the affordable housing scheme, replacement tree planting will be incorporated within the landscaping proposals to mitigate against the loss of these trees as well as contributing towards the BNG for the site.

Ecology

The application is accompanied by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated January 2023, with a supplementary roosting appraisal dated November 2024. This approach was agreed with Suzanne Waymont at GMEU.

Within the PEA, it confirms that 18 records of priority or protected species were found within the study area, including Great Crested Newts and bat species. One statutory and five non statutory designated sites were identified and six priority habitat types, including deciduous woodland and five priority grassland habitats, as well as eight waterbodies. As part of the UKHab survey, eight habitats were recorded as well as Himalayan Balsam, an invasive species.

Suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN, common reptiles and amphibians is present on site within the woodland and scrub habitats. Building 1 and 2 trees had moderate potential for roosting bats, with Building 2 having low potential. A further roost assessment and ground level tree assessment was undertaken in August 2024. It concludes that Building 1 now has high potential for roosting bats and the proposed demolition has the potential to kill or injure bats, destroy or damage roosts as well as disturb bats within their roosts. The report recommends hibernation surveys to determine whether they are being used. If no bats are present, the building can be demolished before May 2025, but if bats are present, a licence and mitigation will be required.

The original PEA concluded that the proposed works were unlikely to affect any of the designated sites due to the distance between the sites and the application site, as well as barriers of residential buildings.

Mitigation recommendations set out within the PEA and PEA, including achieving BNG on site will be included within the scheme for the redevelopment application.

Contamination

Phase I and II Geo Environmental Assessment reports accompany this planning application. The Phase I, stated that the overall risk from land contamination was considered low but this would need to be confirmed through appropriate intrusive investigation, testing and assessment. For ground gas, the Phase I concluded that there was a potential on site gas source identified with made ground and the risk associated was moderate to low. Ground gas monitoring was recommended. The overall risk to controlled waters at the site was considered low.

Subsequently, a Phase II has been undertaken. It identified elevated concentrations of lead and arsenic and recommended a remediation strategy of a 450mm cover system of clean topsoil/subsoil in the soft landscaping areas, with verification reports required. It also provides recommendations relating to drainage and foundations which will be picked up as part of the detailed design for the residential scheme.

The overall risk to controlled waters was considered low and no further action required. Following ground gas monitoring, the site is classified as CS1 and therefore no ground gas protection is required.

Services

The existing electrical, gas and water services will be shut off and disconnected prior to the demolition of the building. This application is accompanied by a utility survey which identifies the locations of the relevant cables and pipes that will need to be disconnected.

S106 contributions

The proposed clearance works form part of the wider redevelopment of the site for affordable housing. The Council's S106 pro forma has been completed and forms part of the planning submission to assist with the validation of the application, but it is not anticipated that S106 contributions will be sought for demolition and clearance works.

CONCLUSION

The proposed enabling works will facilitate the wider redevelopment of the site for much needed affordable housing. It ensures that the applicant can access brownfield funding provided by GMCA and deliver a significant contribution towards the council's housing requirement.

The accompanying reports demonstrate that there would be no adverse impacts arising from the demolition works that cannot be mitigated against and that the proposal is acceptable in all respects.

I trust that this is all that you require to validate the planning application. Should you need anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

