

proposed housing development at
Waterside , Kay Street, Summerseat, Bury

Density Statement

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Mellor Architects to accompany a Planning Application for the erection of five detached dwelling houses and associated access and landscaping works on the brownfield site previously used by the former Waterside public house in Summerseat, Bury.
- 1.2 It should be read in conjunction with drawings and other documents from specialist consultants, which focus on specific aspects of the existing site and how it and its environment may be impacted by the proposed development. In particular the Statement addresses the proposed density of development on the site and how this relates to Policy JP-H4 of the Council's adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.

2. SITE CONTEXT & LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located to the east of Kay Street in Summerseat, a riverside settlement in a steep-sided and wooded valley to the south of Ramsbottom. At this point the River Irwell takes a meandering course through the valley, surrounded by agricultural land, woodland, pockets of nineteenth century industrial development, and twentieth century housing.
- 2.2 Today the application site falls within the Brooksbottom and Rowlands Conservation Area surrounded by built form which is typical of late eighteenth and nineteenth century industrialisation, having the large four-storey Hoyle's Mill on the north bank of the river and workers' cottages clustered around Kay Street and Hill Street on the south side. Also, key features in the vicinity include the river bridge itself, which was extensively repaired and widening after incurring floor damage in 2015, and to the west, the railway viaduct which carries the East Lancashire heritage railway line across the river valley.

3. LAYOUT & DENSITY

- 3.1 The site, which is approximately 0.22 hectares in area, forms a narrow strip of land bounded by the river to the north and by the steep slope of the valley to the south. With access only available from Kay Street at the eastern end there are significant constraints on the amount and form of development possible. According to Land Registry records, part of the site (as edged red) extends into the carriageway of Kay Street. A larger portion of land to the east of the site is heavily wooded so development of the whole 0.22 ha would have several consequences:

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- Firstly, the woodland would have to be cleared in its entirety, to the detriment of an established wildlife habitat and beneficial green space, impinging on the wider landscape.
 - Secondly, providing compliant access and servicing to dwellings in this area would be unrealistic, as the additional land used for access, etc would then be unavailable for the proposed dwellings closer to the entrance, and there would be no net gain in dwelling numbers. In other word a disproportional amount of site area would be used for circulation space.
 - Thirdly, repositioning dwellings closer to the riverbank to increase density may require extensive investigative work and probably construction work to ensure that the development is structurally viable. Any reconstruction or strengthening of the river wall and embankment would cause further environmental harm. Locating dwellings away from the existing river boundary would mitigate any effects on the riverbank.

The result of taking these factors into account is that the net developable area of the site is estimated to be no more that 0.185 hectares. At this size the size density proposed would be 27 dwellings per hectare (10.9 per acre).

- 3.2 The site also contains several of mature trees, particularly at the narrow eastern end, as well as having more trees along the southern boundary and falling outside the site area. Overall, the site boundary and other constraints require that development is restricted to a narrow band of land running in an east-west direction, and therefore leaving a long, narrow space alongside and parallel to the proposed built form which can provide access to all parts of the site from Kay Street.
- 3.3 Historic Ordnance Survey maps of the area show that prior to World War 2 there existed cottages on the site, close to the riverbank and extending into what is now woodland at the eastern extremity. The dwellings appear to have been served by a narrow road, which is labelled 'Irwell Street', though the exact dimensions are unknown. Early studies indicate that replication of this feature to provide housing to modern internal space standards, access, parking, and servicing would not be viable. This form would also now be further restricted by the need to remove additional trees on the site.
- 3.4 As noted above, the shape, size and context of the site suggests that buildings be arranged in a linear configuration, which also results in the houses as a group aligning with the existing terraces along Hill Street, as they follow the contours of sloping land to the south of the site. The first four houses are designed to be between two and three stories in height and are larger than he cottages on Kay Street and Hill Street, but still domestic in scale compared to the much more dominant Hoyles Mill (The Spinnings) on the opposite riverbank.

- 3.5 The fifth plot on the site utilises the eastern end where narrowing makes further extension of the access road for further dwellings untenable.
- 3.6 The option to provide apartment dwellings on the site has also been re-examined, with the conclusion that such development would be incongruous in a semi-rural settlement, where the majority of existing housing stock comprises detached or terraced houses. The existing apartment block of 'The Spinnings' has arisen from the opportunity (or need) to find a viable alternative use for a redundant listed building, and this is previous approval is not a justification for constructing further, and new, apartments on another site in the village.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Design and Access Statement, and the Planning Statement take the above arguments and factors into account:
- Increased density would require clearance of woodland to the detriment of an established wildlife habitat and beneficial green space.
 - Servicing dwellings in the east of the site would result in more road and hardstandings, with no net gain in dwelling numbers.
 - Moving dwellings to the riverbank boundary to increase density may require disruptive construction work to ensure structural viability.
 - Creating higher densities by using apartments is inappropriate in this context.
 - The developable site area is no more than 0.185 hectares.

It is therefore contended that in this instance compliance with the higher densities required by policy JP-H4 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan would be inappropriate.