

OPULWOOD DEVELOPMENTS Ltd

**Erection of single building containing 16 dwellings and
associated car parking
Waterside, Kay Street, Summerseat**

GREENBELT STATEMENT

May 2022

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Greenbelt Statement has been prepared by Hattrell Ds One Architects, on behalf of Opulwood Developments Ltd, to support the proposed amendment to the approved planning (LPA Reference: 63630) on land off Kay Street, Summerseat (the "Site").
- 1.2 This additional report serves to re-iterate why the proposed development is considered to be justified within the Green Belt having regard to planning policy, as well as why its design is considered to be suitable within its local context.

2.0 Extract from Planning Statement Addendum Prepared by Barton Wilmore April 2019

2.0 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

- 2.1 As a settlement, Summerseat is 'washed over' as Green Belt. As a result of this designation, paragraphs 133 to 147 of the NPPF are applicable. This represents the most up-to-date expression of national planning policy in respect of new development in the Green Belt.
- 2.2 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF identifies that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as "inappropriate" with the Green Belt. However, the same paragraph goes on to list seven exceptions whereby development within the Green Belt would be considered "appropriate."
- 2.3 Part e) of paragraph 145 states that one of these exceptions is:
"limited infilling in villages"
- 2.4 Accordingly, if a proposed development within the Green Belt can be demonstrated to constitute "limited infilling within a village" then the NPPF prescribes that it is an exception to inappropriate development, thus meaning that it is appropriate.
- 2.5 In order to assess the proposed development now subject to this Application within this policy context, the aforementioned exception must firstly be broken down into its component parts.
- 2.6 Firstly, "infilling" is not defined within the NPPF and is therefore open to interpretation. However, it is generally considered in a planning context that "infilling" means the development of land which is bound by built development or permanent structures/features i.e. filling an existing "gap."
- 2.7 In this context, the proposed development is considered to comprise the "infilling" of a vacant land parcel which is otherwise surrounded by built development and permanent physical features.
- 2.8 In a similar vein, the NPPF does not provide a definition of what constitutes "limited" infilling, or, the quantum of development that would qualify as "limited." In this regard, it is generally held that limited infilling is relative to the land parcel in question and that the proposed development should be proportionate to the site in question and its context.
- 2.9 By way of an example, a scheme for 23 affordable homes in the Green Belt in Cheshire West and Chester 1 has previously been found to qualify as "limited" affordable housing in the Green Belt (another exception in paragraph 145 of the NPPF). In the case of this Application, the proposed development now proposes only 16 apartments (a reduction from 17), seven units less than the aforementioned affordable housing scheme in Cheshire West and Chester.

- 2.10 The proposed development represents a low-density development; given the overall size of the Site, it could accommodate a higher number of apartments/dwellings as part of a higher density development in the event that the Site was not within the Green Belt. The Applicant has thus elected to pursue a lower density, high-quality development which is proportionate to its context and more representative of what constitutes “limited” development in the context of Green Belt policy.
- 2.11 The scale and design of the building is also an important consideration in the context of what constitutes “limited” development. The number of units proposed has naturally been restricted owing to physical constraints and policy requirements; however, the scale and massing of the building has also been designed (and amended) such that it would not introduce an imposing new building within the Conservation Area, and has drawn from the previous Waterside Pub as a steer to the scale and form of development which is considered to be acceptable on the Site. The location of the Site within the River Valley also means that the proposed building will not be overly prominent with the street-scene.
- 2.12 At a maximum of 4 storeys/11 metres in height, the proposed building is approximately 8.5 metres lower than the Spinnings building on the opposite side of the River and is only 3 metres higher than a typical 2 storey residential dwelling. The footprint of the building is only 410 sq. m compared to the 1210 sq. m of the Spinnings, a 66% difference. Further, the proposed building is proposed to occupy 0.041 hectares of the 0.23 hectare site, equating to a built area of 18%. A typical housing scheme on the Site would likely occupy a net developable area equating to 80-90% of the Site.
- 2.13 In view of the above, the proposed development is considered to be “limited” in its nature.
- 2.14 The third strand of exception (e) relates to infilling in “villages;” this exception criterion does not provide for limited infilling within any settlements other than a “village.” It follows therefore that in order to satisfy this exception, the proposed development must lie within a “village.”
- 2.15 Confirmation that Summerseat is a “village” is provided within the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and specifically Policy OL1/3 (Infilling in Existing Villages in the Green Belt).
- 2.16 Accordingly, and taking all of the above together, it is considered that the proposed development represents “limited infilling” in the “village” of Summerseat. The proposed development is thus compliant with paragraph 145(e) of the NPPF and as such constitutes “appropriate” development in the Green Belt.
- 2.17 A detailed Green Belt Assessment of the Site has also been undertaken in order to assesses the level of contribution that the Site makes to the Green Belt in line with the purposes outlined in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. This Assessment is enclosed at **Appendix 1** of this Addendum, and concludes that the Site does not make any contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt save from assisting in the urban regeneration by recycling a derelict site, for which the proposed development makes a strong contribution.

Purpose of the Green Belt

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.

1a. Does the parcel exhibit evidence of existing urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness?

1b. Does the parcel protect open land from the potential for urban sprawl to occur?

Assessment

No contribution – See below

The Site is surrounded on all sides by well-established built development. The Site is not reliant on the delivery of a wider strategic site or access to other infrastructure.

The Site comprises land which was previously developed (in part by the Waterside Pub and associated car parking) and its redevelopment would not create further pressure to release land from the Green Belt. The redevelopment of this Site would not result in the sprawl of Summerseat and would not threaten the coalescence of separate settlements.

It is acknowledged that future development would by its very nature have a degree of impact upon the openness of the Green Belt; however, it is considered that the impact on openness would be minimised by virtue of the enclosed nature of the Site, the presence of existing infrastructure, residential development and vegetation, as well as the position of the proposed building. The Site is located centrally within a predominantly residential area and does not possess the characteristics one would expect from a typical Green Belt site.

As set out in the response to 1a above, the Site benefits from a high level of containment, being located within a built-up area and surrounded by established development and physical features on all sides.

The Site is well-contained, and the development of the Site would not result in unrestricted urban sprawl into the open countryside. It would represent an urban infill on land which has already been subject to development.

In summary, it is considered that the development of this Site would not lead to unrestricted sprawl of the urban area of Summerseat. Moreover, in providing

residential development on the Site, the development would make a positive contribution towards the development needs of Summerseat and help to ease the pressure on greenfield land release.

2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one-another.

No contribution – See below

2a. Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements?

As noted within Section 1 above, the contained nature of the Site means that its redevelopment will result in an infilling of development, as opposed to an extension into the wider Green Belt. The Site is surrounded on all sides by well-established development and physical features and will not result in an extension to the settlement boundary of Summerseat.

The development will, in no way, result in the merging or erosion of the physical or visual gap between the settlements surrounding Summerseat.

No contribution – See below and following page.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

3a. Does the parcel have the characteristics of countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of countryside?
Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment or urbanised built development?

The Site is located centrally within a built-up area and does not possess the characteristics one would expect of a Green Belt area. Being surrounded on all sides by built development and physical features, the Site does not connect to land with the characteristics of countryside. It is noted that the Site adjoins the River Irwell; however, this relationship is not uncommon of a built-up area and will not impact upon the Green Belt.

The Site is located within an urban environment and is fully encroached by built development. There will be no wider Green Belt impact resulting from the proposed development of the Site in this regard.

No contribution – See below

4. To preserve the setting and “special character” of historic towns.

4a. Does the parcel contribute to the setting and “special Character” of a historic town(s)?

It is acknowledged that the Site is located within a Conservation Area and in close proximity to a Grade II Listed Building. Notwithstanding this, the Site has previously accommodated development and is vacant following the collapse of the former Waterside Pub. The Site does not make a contribution to this Green Belt purpose.

5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Strong Contribution – See below
The Site comprises land which has previously been subject to development, is contained on all sides by well-established built development and physical features, and which now sits derelict following the collapse of the former Waterside Pub. The proposed development will see this otherwise redundant Site recycled for residential use and will not result in the loss of any greenfield land. Accordingly, the proposed development is considered to be consistent with this Green Belt purpose.

3.0 Justification for building height amendment

The main change to the building approved under application 63630 is the increase in floor to floor due to the original application drawings not allowing for sufficient ceiling heights and suitable construction and service zone.

The scheme has been acquired by the applicant with the planning approval, and on developing the approved scheme through the next design phase it became evident that the approved floor to floor at 2.7m was insufficient to meet the clients' aspirations and government guidance for buildings.

To provide a minimum suitable structure and good design to meet national planning design guides the buildings floor to floor has been increased by 375mm, from 2.700m to 3.075m this is to allow for structural concrete floor and steel structure of 450mm, where the approved scheme only allowed for floor to ceilings of 2.400m with a structural floor zone of 300mm, this being insufficient for any form of construction, which would have reduced the floor to ceilings of inadequate heights

National design guide :

Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Part 2 The Ten Characteristics

Homes and Buildings

H1 Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment

(as National Planning Policy Framework : Chapters 8 &12)

126 Well-designed homes and communal areas within buildings provide a good standard and quality of internal space. This includes room sizes, floor-to-ceiling heights, internal and external storage, sunlight, daylight and ventilation. The quality of internal space needs careful consideration in higher-density developments, particularly for family accommodation, where access, privacy, daylight and external amenity space are also important.

4.0 Conclusion

It is proposed that the justification together with, the accompanying technical drawings submitted with the Application, that this high-quality development represents a suitable form of development within the designated Green Belt, and is appropriate to its context in terms of design. When factoring in the social, economic and environmental benefits the redevelopment of this Site will bring.

That the additional height increase to the scale of the building will have no additional impact on the surrounding buildings, vistas, and overall greenbelt

The increase in the building's height overall, is minimal and within keeping to the total buildings scale and massing, and will not in the built form appear to be significantly different.

The scale and massing of the building will still be in proportion.