



121 – 131 BELL LANE
BURY BL9 6BB

PLANNING STATEMENT

September 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Neil Pike Architects (NPA) for and on behalf of the applicant with regard to the submission of a full planning application for the above site as shown edged red on the plan below.
- 1.2 The submission of the planning application is based on the feedback received from Bury Council through the pre-app consultation process (02575E).
- 1.3 As a result of the comments made by the council through the pre-app consultation process, the proposed development has undergone some significant changes.
- 1.4 The original pre-app submission proposed a scheme of 43 apartments over 7 storeys with a retail unit to the ground floor. There was 18 car parking spaces provided to the rear of the site and a new access formed off Bell Lane.
- 1.5 The Local Authority raised several queries with the proposal, the major ones being, the height and massing of the building, the interface distances to neighbouring properties, the number of car parking spaces and the size of the new access to the development off Bell Lane.
- 1.6 The revised scheme, that is the subject of this planning application, substantially addresses these queries and also a transport assessment has been undertaken to alleviate the concerns as raised by highways.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The Local Authority have accepted the principle of the proposed development and that it does not conflict with UDP Policy EC2/1.

2.2 Within the pre-app response, Bury Council advised that any supporting planning statement to a full planning application, should address the impact of the proposed retail unit on both the existing and surrounding uses of the area and on the town centre vitality and viability.

2.3 The subject site is located within the Freetown Employment Generating Area (EGA) as identified on the Council's Proposals Map. The area to the north and west of the site is primarily made up of commercial and retail uses, consistent with the permissible uses in an EGA.

2.4 The current uses in these areas are varied and include car showrooms, manufacturing units, building merchants and a sports clothing retail outlet. The town centre of Bury is approximately 300m to the East of the site and is therefore within comfortable walking distance.

2.5 The south and west of the site predominantly consists of dense residential areas, which also include Hoyles Park and primary schools to serve the need of the family orientated population.

2.6 The proposed retail unit is 176.9sqm, which is relatively small within the retail sector. The closest supermarket to the site is Aldi, which is approximately 200m to the West, fronting Bell Lane. This is the major retail outlet for the area and based on the Retail Study update 2012 has a significant part of the market within the borough, outside of the major supermarket chains, e.g. Asda and Tesco's.

2.7 With Aldi being within walking distance to the East and Bury Town centre being within walking distance to the West, the local convenience

requirements of the residents are generally accommodated for. It is therefore expected that the proposed retail unit will be occupied by a small independent non-food operator, such as a hairdresser, beautician or clothing store.

2.8 The location is suited for an operator that relies on passing trade that satisfies a local need. It may be possible that small newsagent/food outlet is attracted to the space, but none that is going to have a major impact on the surrounding infrastructure or traffic volumes.

2.9 It can be concluded therefore that the impact on the nearby retail outlets by the proposed retail unit of the subject site will be minimal.

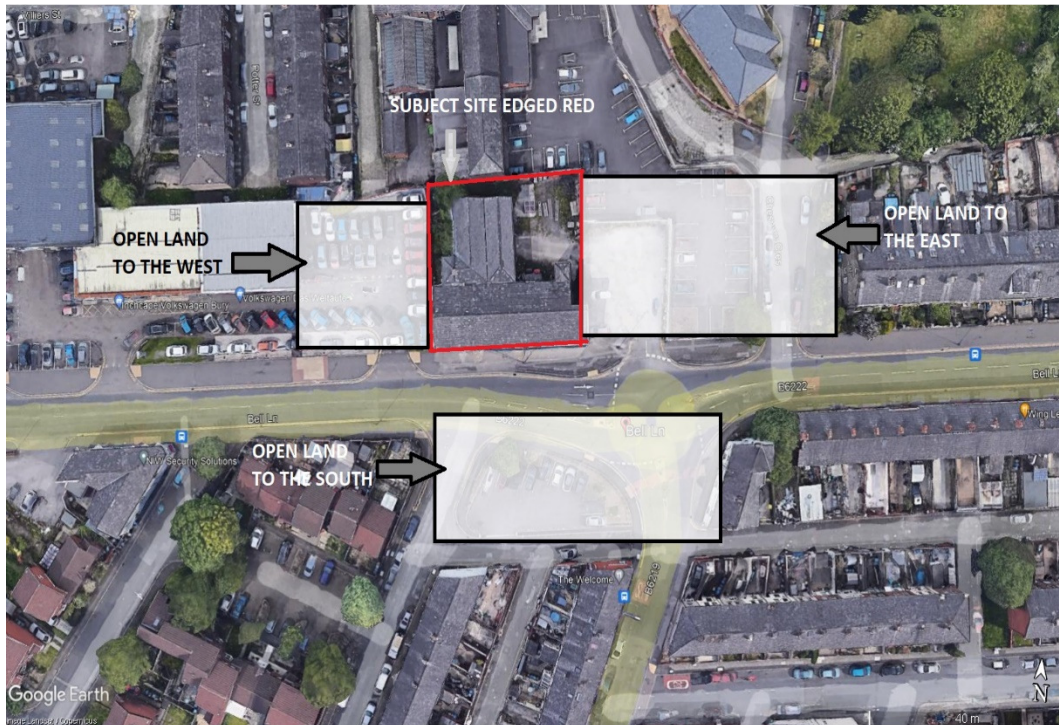
2.10 With regard to the design and layout of the proposed development, the Council have commented that the design concept is acceptable, however raised concerns as to the proposed scale and massing of the building in the context of the street scene and surrounding properties.

2.11 These comments were raised based on the then proposed scheme of 41 apartments and as a result of these comments, the number of apartments has now been reduced to 24 apartments. The rear leg of the proposed development has been removed, as advised within the pre-app consultation and the building has been reduced by one storey in height. Whilst the advice within the pre-app consultation was to reduce the height by two storeys, the top floor (5th Floor) is significantly set back from the main façade of the building, giving the appearance of a 5 storey building from the street.

2.12 This substantially reduces the impact on the street scene that the top floor will have, particularly because it will not be possible to view this floor from street level.

2.13 Although the immediate street scene is depicted by single and two storey properties, there is a commercial property to the rear of the site that is three storeys in height. The setting of the site is such that a taller

building is not going to compromise the aspect or amenity of other buildings that front Bell Lane. As shown in the image below, immediately adjacent to the site are three areas of open space, in the form of car parks or open land, which provide a degree of separation to the varied building forms around it.



2.14 As such, the proposed development will not have a dominance effect on the buildings that are further away. The site being at the junction of a mini-roundabout, provides an opportunity for prominence and definition on a gateway route towards the town centre. The site can endure a building of this height.

2.15 The footprint of the proposed building is smaller than the existing footprint of the building that currently occupies the site, which addresses the concerns raised in respect of interface distances and effects on amenity and privacy.

- 2.16 This is predominantly achieved, by the removal of the rear leg of the building which significantly reduces the massing of the building and the potential over-development of the site. The removal of this element of the building also reduces the impact on the commercial buildings to the rear of the site and the concerns raised in respect of interface distances between the proposed development and the existing commercial buildings
- 2.17 The other main concern raised within the pre-app consultation was from the highways dept. They cited concerns about the new access, the number of parking spaces, the refuse store and the use of the land to the East of the site, which was previously used by the former occupier of the property.
- 2.18 The first point in addressing these concerns is that the number of units has nearly halved, therefore the provision of 18 car parking spaces is now serving 24 apartments. The access has also been widened to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site at the same time.
- 2.19 All of the above points, including the provision of refuse collection and storage, and cycle storage, have been addressed in the accompanying transport assessment that forms part of the application.
- 2.20 The proposed development is situated in a very sustainable location with Bury Town centre being a 5-10 min walk away and all other local amenities also being within walking distance. The proposed development will contribute to the housing numbers within the borough and enable residents to not have to rely on the use of a private motor car.
- 2.21 The development is located on a major bus route and is within 5 mins walk of the tram network which provides access to Manchester City Centre and the national rail network. The transport assessment will address this in further detail, but the proposed car parking provision will be more than sufficient for the development, given its location.

2.22 The proposed apartments consist of 15No. 2-bed apartments and 9No. 1-bed apartments all of which have their own private balcony. The balconies are built within the fabric of the building so as to minimise their impact on the street scene. Each balcony provides private amenity space for each dwelling.

2.23 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, Paragraph 10 states that *'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.'* As it has been demonstrated that the proposals are for a sustainable development and the proposal also accords with the development plan, the application should now receive the support of the Local Authority.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The information supplied in the pre-app consultation process has been applied to the proposed development resulting in a significant reduction in the number of apartments.

3.2 The various supporting documents and reports that were requested to be submitted within the pre-app consultation have been undertaken and accompany the submission of the full planning application.

3.3 It is acknowledged that the building will be taller than the properties around it, however the sky line has other tall buildings in the vista, with St. Pauls Church approximately 150m to the south of the site, the tall buildings within Bury town centre approximately 300m to the West and a mixture of 3 and 4 storey commercial buildings to the North.

3.4 The proposed development will make a positive contribution to the street scene and the gateway route along Bell Lane to the town centre. It will enhance the locality through its design and appearance, and will revitalise the street level frontage with a local retail unit that will engage with the local residents.

3.5 The intention is to create a development that allows its occupants to travel both nationally and locally without the use of a car. The location of this development is such that the reliance on the private motor car is significantly reduced.

3.6 As referred to in Section 7 of the NPPF, paragraph 86e, the planning policies should be geared towards approving applications that are for developments that make sustainable uses for edge of town centre sites and as referred to in Paragraph 86f, recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

3.7 Section 4, Paragraph 38, of the NPPF, states that Local Planning Authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The proposed development is an excellent example of this type of development and therefore we look forward to working with the Local Authority to bring this application through to a positive conclusion.