



PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED TWO DETACHED DWELLINGS (OUTLINE) AT LAND AT **103 WERN ROAD, SKEWEN, NEATH**

On behalf of
Mr M Salini

Our Ref: 1476.a
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Prepared by: JDE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Evans Banks Planning has been instructed by Mr M Salini (the Applicant) to prepare and submit an outline planning application for two detached dwellings at land at 103 Wern Road, Skewen, Neath. This Planning Statement therefore forms part of the submissions of the application to be considered by the Authority and provides information on the following points:

- A brief description of the site and surrounding area
- A description of the proposed development
- Consideration of relevant planning policy

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE SITE

- 2.1.1 The application site relates to part of the curtilage of an existing property (103 Wern Road), who's total area is circled red in the plan below.



Plan A

- 2.1.2 As can be seen, the existing dwelling of the property is set centrally within the site, which totals approximately 1.1 acres in area. The existing dwelling, as pictured below, is two storey in scale and has a detached large double garage to its south west.



Photograph 1



Photograph 2

- 2.1.3 The application site itself then relates to the eastern drive serving the property, leading on then to a large level grassed lawn at the rear of the existing dwelling, pictured below.



Photograph 3

- 2.1.4 As can be seen from the above pictures, the existing property contains a large number of mature trees. However, none would require removal or be affected by the proposed development.

2.2 THE SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.2.1 In the immediate sense, as illustrated by Photograph 1, the application site is positioned wholly within the urban area of Skewen. As a result, there are existing residential properties to the north, east and west, some of which are illustrated below.



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6

2.2.2 As can be seen from the above, there is significant variation in terms of the design of existing properties in the adjoining area in terms of scale, form and general appearance. Notwithstanding this, as would be expected in an established urban area, the majority of existing development is of a medium density, with the application property with its large grounds being the exception.

2.2.3 In the wider sense, the application site is well positioned with regards to community facilities and local services, being within walking distance of a range of sporting facilities (to the south), the local primary school and district centre to the north. There are also a large number of well served bus stops within walking distance of the

application site, providing regular access to the larger urban areas of Neath, Port Talbot and Swansea.

2.3 PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLES

2.3.1 As a result of the above and the requirements of the Applicant, the following design principles and parameters have influenced the design subject of this planning application:

- **Density** – To make efficient use of the application site but be respectful of existing adjoining properties.
- **Layout** – To make efficient use of an area of urban land in line with current design guidance.
- **Access** – To provide a safe means of access to and from the site through utilising an established access point.

3.0 PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY

- 3.1 Prior to this application submission, a formal pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for consideration, based on the proposed site layout below.



Plan A

- 3.2 The enquiry proposed two detached dwellings at the rear of the existing property, served by a separate shared access drive. Each of the proposed dwellings would be two storey in nature, with integral garages positioned in the manner indicated on the drawings.
- 3.3 The LPA provided a response to the submission (LPA Ref. No. Q2022/0117) and set out that whilst the principle of the proposal was supported by Policy SC1 of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP), any proposal would still be required to comply with more detail policy considerations.
- 3.4 The Authority also highlighted that any proposed development should give careful consideration to the existing mature trees on site, with any future planning application being accompanied by the appropriate tree survey report.

- 3.5 The final key point of the pre-application response then related to the density of the proposal and its possible impact on the amenity of adjoining residential properties, with the following opinion being provided:

“Concern is expressed about the principle of a ‘backland’ form of development, which is at odds with the prevailing pattern of street facing dwellings on Wern Road, even if the proposal individual plot sizes are comparable to others in this area. The proposed new dwellings would unacceptably overlook the rear of the existing properties, including the donor property, to the detriment of residential amenity.”.

- 3.6 It is welcomed that the Authority recognises that the density of the proposed development is comparable to that of the majority of the surrounding area. However, we consider it unreasonable to hold the view that all backland development is ‘bad land development’ and so should be opposed in principle.
- 3.7 As a result, the advice provided in the pre-application response has been given full consideration in the preparation of the proposal subject of this planning application, with it adhering to all relevant adopted local planning policy and supplementary guidance for the reasons set out in Section 5 of this Statement.

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposal seeks outline planning permission for a two detached two storey residential dwellings. All matters other than the principle of the proposal, its siting and its means of access are reserved for consideration as part of future planning applications. The related following information is therefore for illustrative purposes only as to how the proposal could be designed

General Scale and Siting

- 4.2 The general layout of the site has been steered by a number of on-site and off-site factors. Its point of access will continue to be directly off Wern Road, utilising the eastern access drive currently serving the existing property. This will then lead to the new dwellings, with each being served by a dedicated off-street parking and turning area.
- 4.3 The proposed dwellings will be detached in nature and will be two storey in scale. Although the final design of the proposed units has yet to be determined, the respective scale parameters for the proposed dwellings can be found on the accompanying drawings and have been chosen to ensure no detriment on any visual or residential amenity. In particular, this has been secured through ensuring that the outer extent (garage) of each proposed dwelling would be single storey only, as illustrated in the plan below (circled green).



4.4 It is proposed that each dwelling will have external finishes to match those of the local vernacular, with all fenestration and rainwater goods to also draw on those used in nearby dwellings.

4.5 It is suggested that the boundaries of the application site will remain largely unchanged, with the exception of a new solid wooden fence between the existing and proposed units at the location indicated on the accompanying drawings.

4.6 All foul water will be disposed of via the public sewer. It is anticipated that all rainwater will be disposed of via soakaways or a new SUDS feature.

5.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

5.1 In terms of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the adopted development plan for the area within which the application site is positioned is the *Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP)*. It is therefore the policies of this document and its relevant *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design (SPG)* document that have been referred to in the preparation of the proposal subject of the planning application in question, including the following:

- Policy SC1 – Settlement Limits
- Policy BE1 – Design
- Policy EN7 – Important Natural Features
- Policy TR2 – Design and Access of New Development

5.2 As detailed in Section 3, the application site is positioned wholly within the settlements limits defined by Policy SC1. As a result of this and that the principle of development at this location is supported by local planning policy, the application proposal is now assessed against the more detailed requirements of the remaining policies highlighted above.

• POLICY BE1 – DESIGN

5.1.1 Policy BE1 represents the overarching policy against which all proposed developments are assessed. The Policy sets out that all proposals will be expected to “... *demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places.*”, which it assesses against the provisions of 10 criteria. Although in outline format at this stage, it is considered that 5 of the 10 criteria are of relevance to the application proposal, with an assessment against each of the scheme now provided.

- 5.1.2 In order to satisfy Criterion 1, the Policy sets out that a proposal should compliment and enhance “... *the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale height, massing and elevation treatment.*”.
- 5.1.3 Taking each point in turn, the application property at present is typified by a residential property set within a very generous plot, some of the boundaries of which are defined by mature tree lines. It is in fact at odds with adjoining properties, who's plot-build ratio is much higher and with the building lines at a different alignment to it.
- 5.1.4 The application proposal therefore seeks to introduce a compromising balance between the different siting and density patterns present in the adjoining area, through introducing additional units at the site to make “... *the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density ...*”, but maintaining the current role of the existing property in the streetscene. This balance ensures that the proposed siting of the new development satisfies this element of Criterion 1 and also the requirements of Criterion 8.
- 5.1.5 With the details of any reserved matters expected to draw on the existing vernacular and materials palette of the adjoining area, it is considered then that any detailed design for the two proposed units would be of a scale, height, massing and elevation treatment appropriate for the application site and the settings of the adjoining area. The application proposal therefore satisfies the requirements of Criterion 1 and indeed Criterion 3.
- 5.1.6 The final criterion for consideration is Criterion 4, which consists of two elements. The first sets out that developments should “... *not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, ...*”. As detailed above, both the proposed dwellings will gain access to the public highway via one of the existing private drives (eastern) serving the current property, whilst the current property will then only be served by the remaining existing private drive (western).

- 5.1.7 The photographs below provide an indication of the junction of the proposed means of access, together with the adjoining highway network, permitted directionally flow of traffic using it and other measures of traffic control in place.



Photograph 7



Photograph 8

- 5.1.8 As can be seen from the above, the junction of the application site with Wern Road and the adjoining section of public highway is heavily regulated in terms of both direction and speed of traffic. It is therefore not surprising that current records highlight that there are no recorded accidents or incidents as a result of traffic using the application entrance. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the application proposal – an increase of one dwelling using the means of access – would not “... *have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, ...*”. The first element of the criterion is satisfied and also in turn, the requirements of Policy TR2.

- 5.1.9 The second element of Criterion 4 then deals with the issue of the protection of the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the wider community. As detailed in Section 3, concerns were raised by the LPA during the pre-application stage with regards to the potential overlooking impact of the proposed properties on both the existing dwelling of the application property and those on adjoining properties.

- 5.1.10 Taking on board the concerns raised and the guidance set out in the aforementioned SPG entitled ‘Design’, the application proposal now represents a scheme that will have no detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining properties through facilitating the following key features:

- The respective north eastern and south western elements of the two proposed buildings will be single storey in nature only (garages)
- The separation distance from the windows in the front elevation of the proposed dwellings and those of the first floor of the rear of the existing dwelling of the application property will be greater than 21m
- The separation distance from the windows in the front elevation of the proposed dwellings and those of the dwellings adjoining the application site will be greater than 21m
- Due to the resultant angle between the windows in the front elevation of the proposed dwellings and those of the dwellings adjoining the application site, no unacceptable degree of overlooking shall be incurred.

5.1.11 All of the above can be secured further at the detailed design stage (e.g. no un-obscured windows in side elevations), but is sufficient to demonstrate that the application proposal will not have any detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining properties or the wider community, as well as the fact that not all backland development is 'bad land development'.

5.1.12 In summary therefore, the requirements of Criterion 4 and Policy BE1 as a whole.

5.2 POLICY EN7 – IMPORTANT NATURAL FEATURES

5.2.1 Policy EN7 deals with the ecological and natural assets of an application site, setting out that proposals will not be permitted if they would "... *adversely affect ecologically or visually important natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows/fiel boundaries, water courses or ponds ...*".

5.2.2 As detailed previously in this Statement, the application property contains a range of mature trees, particularly along its northern, southern and western boundaries. Accompanying this application therefore is a tree survey report with associated plans, which have been referred to in full in the preparation of the application proposal. As a result, no harm will be incurred by the existing trees on the application site.

- 5.2.3 Combined with any detailed proposals for the new dwellings including biodiversity enhancements measures (e.g. bat and bird boxes), the application proposal adheres in full to the requirements of Policy EN7.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The application is for outline planning permission for the construction of two detached residential dwellings at land at 103 Wern Road, Skewen.
- 6.2 The application proposal represents an opportunity to make more appropriate and efficient use of under-used urban land at a sustainable location that will complement the existing setting and character of the area. This proposed pattern of development will in fact represent a more harmonious balance than that presented by the current dwelling, set within its 1.1 acre grounds at the heart of the urban area.
- 6.3 Whilst concerns were raised by the LPA during a pre-application enquiry for a similar proposal, the evidence contained within this Statement clearly demonstrates that not all backland development is 'bad land development'. The details submitted demonstrate that the application site is capable of comfortably accommodating two new units at a density that is more sympathetic to that of the adjoining area, without any detriment to the amenity of both existing and proposed residents. The evidence has also shown that both units can be accommodated without any detriment to highway safety and at a location that is highly sustainable.
- 6.4 In view of the above and accompanying information, we therefore respectfully request that planning permission is granted for the proposed development in question.