

Land adjacent to 50-52 Brecon Road, Pontardawe

Planning Statement

Project No. 202401

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Rev A

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Juice Architecture in support of a Full planning application for the following application site:

Proposed 3 No Dwellings on Land adjacent to 50-52 Brecon Road, Pontardawe

This document has been prepared to provide context and justification for the proposed development. It is to be read in conjunction with the drawings & reports that form the overall proposal.

The role of this document is therefore to provide a communication tool showing that the objectives of good design set out in TAN 12 have been considered from the outset of the development process. It is also intended to assist the Local Authority, the local community and other stakeholders by clearly setting out the many factors that must be considered and reconciled in order to achieve good design, thereby clarifying understanding of the design process.

These factors include not only context, character, scale and density but also how the proposals respond to considerations of movement, community safety, inclusivity and sustainability.

Section 2 of this Statement expands upon the policy context for this document and the associated planning application.

Section 2: Planning Policy

2.1 Planning Policy Introduction

The planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by the content and scope of National Planning Policy, which is contained within the tenth edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and its associated Technical Advice Notes (TANs), together with the Local Planning Policy and its supplementary planning guidance.

2.2 Planning Policy Wales

National planning policy is contained within the tenth edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), published by the Welsh Government in December 2018. PPW is supported by 21 topic-based Technical Advice Notes (TANs), which are also relevant. PPW is the Welsh Government's principal planning policy document, setting out the context for sustainable land use planning policy, within which Development Plans are prepared and developed. Section 3.17 of PPW relates to design and access statements (DAS) discussing that a DAS should communicate what development is proposed, demonstrate the design process that has been undertaken and explains how the objectives of good design and placemaking have been considered from the outset of the development process.

2.3 Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act came into force in 2015 and seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals in order to make sure that everyone works towards the same vision.

2.4 Technical Advice Notes

This application has been prepared in deference to the latest version of TAN 5: Nature Conservation & Planning; TAN 12: Design, which was updated in March 2016, TAN 18: Transport and the suitability of the proposals in this design context are demonstrated in this Design and Access Statement.

TAN 6: Rural enterprise dwellings is also applicable for this application

2.5 Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

The intention of the Act is to promote continuous improvement of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The manner in which the proposals respond to the Act are set out in sections 3.4, 5.2.1, 5.2.4 and 5.5 of this Design and Access Statement.

2.6 Design and Access Statements in Wales (April 2017)

This guidance document sets out the requirements for a DAS, the benefits of preparing a DAS and some of the pitfalls that should be avoided when preparing the document. Section 5 of this document provides guidance on what to include in a DAS and how to communicate the proposals.

2.7 Local Development Plan

Consultation of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development plan 2011-2026 reveals the following policies related to the site:

Site is within Settlement Limit SC1

Site is within Pontardawe Spatial Area (AH1)

Strategic growth area

Strategic Policy SP1 Climate Change

Strategic Policy SP2 Health

Strategic Policy SP3 Sustainable Communities

Strategic Policy SP6 Development in the Valleys Strategy Area

Pontardawe Strategic Growth Area.

Strategic Policy SP7 Housing Requirement

Policy H1 Housing Sites

Windfall site

2.8 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Relevant SPG guidance from Neath Port Talbot Council:

Planning Obligations (October 2016)

Parking Standards (October 2016)

Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018)

Open Space & Greenspace (July 2017)

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (July 2017)

Design (July 2017)

Section 3: Appraisal

3.1 Site Assets & Resources

The site is situated approximately 800m North-North-East of Pontardawe's Commercial centre on Brecon Road a B classified Road. Originally a site housing multiple car garages which were demolished some time ago, leaving hard standings in place. The site is surrounded mostly by residential development of varying densities other than its South-Eastern corner which is a Church.

3.2 Character & Legibility

Much of the surrounding buildings are residential in typology. To the West and North of the site are two large detached dwellings with large grounds surrounding them. Moving clockwise from North to East is characterised by Detached Victorian dwellings and more modest semi detached units, the density of development far greater.

Continuing clockwise from the East to south presents Mount Elim Church and then to Brecon Road B Road which is on a North-East - South-West Axis. Much of the properties face directly onto Brecon road and are of similar typology.

As with many Victorian properties there are varying levels of ornament dependant on status at the time. Many of the properties maintain their characteristics, some have been rendered, many have modern Upvc windows which vary in character and standard.

The site does not present these characteristics having no existing dwellings or buildings on it. Its legibility to those passing on Brecon road is limited with small glimpses past the existing dwelling at No 52.

The dwelling located immediately to the North has views Southwards which are limited by the existing tree and hedge growth along the sites north boundary. Similarly dwellings located to the North-East can look towards the site, but views are limited by established trees and hedges located on their property.

Properties immediately south of the site, 44 - 52 Brecon road have back gardens facing toward the site, the site is approximately 2m higher than these gardens with existing boundary fences obscuring views from the site into the gardens.

3.3 Movement & Access

Landlocked on all but the Southern access for both Pedestrian and Vehicle access, there are no public rights of way across the site.

An existing right of way exists for the property located to the west of the site. This presents limitations to the developable area of the site, as a result provides little opportunity to develop in the western pocket of the site.

As Brecon road (B4603) is one of the main roads in and out of Pontardawe public transport operates along it. A Bus stop is located approximately 300m away from the site entrance.

Vehicular access to the site is currently via a narrow single track road suitable for one way traffic, current hard at site entrance and further in allow for vehicles to wait, allowing passing

3.4 Adaptability & Diversity

The site, essentially vacant brownfield and 0.29 Ha in size does offer opportunities to host multiple types of development. However, the surrounding typologies lends the sites redevelopment as a residential type development.

Section 4: Response to TAN12 Objectives of Good Design

4.1 Access

The objective in respect of Access, as defined in TAN 12: Design (March 2016), is as follows:

- *“Ensuring ease of access for all by adopting inclusive design principles that deliver adequate provision for all people including those with mobility impairments, sensory impairments and learning difficulties.”*

Naturally constrained by existing levels especially in relation to the existing property at the sites entrance, access into the site is proposed via the upgrade of the existing single track into a private driveway. Other than one section, the driveway will meet the requirements of CSS at 4.5m wide along its length and also benefits from an existing access to Brecon Road with sufficient visibility splays.

Driveways are sufficiently wide to provide clear pathway space in addition to sufficient parking close to the dwelling. Parking and paths will also be of shallow falls to minimise impediments to movement.

Rear gardens to the proposed dwellings are approximately 3m above the properties front entrance, internal shallow pitch staircases (ambulant) assist in the transition between levels, two landings are provided across the stairs length to allow for resting.

4.2 Character

The objectives in respect of Character as defined in TAN 12: Design (March 2016), are as follows:

- *“Sustaining or enhancing local character”*
- *“Promoting legible development”*
- *“Promoting a successful relationship between public & private space”*
- *“Promoting quality, choice & variety”*
- *“Promoting innovative design”*

These objectives are to be achieved by responding to:

- *“Landscapes and townscape, culture and biodiversity”*
- *“Locally distinctive patterns and forms of development”*
- *“Existing buildings, infrastructure, urban/rural landscape and public art”*
- *“Clear boundaries and established building lines”*
- *“Appropriateness of uses and the mix of uses and densities”*
- *“Easily recognisable and understood features and landmarks”*

Much of the surrounding properties are of varying levels of Victorian era housing. The development seeks to further the style presented in the approved dwelling renovation at 52 Brecon road. This approach has been taken to stand the development apart from the surroundings, providing a clear delineation between periods of development but still nodding to certain design features present, such as feature gables, double fronted plan form with central front door access. Number 44 & 48 Brecon road both present these features.

4.2.1 Landscape Design

The site offers ample opportunity to enhance its existing landscape character. Only one tree is proposed for removal, located to the North-East. Planting of SPG approved species can easily mitigate the loss and provide enhancement to the site.

Provision of an attenuation pond provides further enhancement and provision for native rain garden plant species.

Please refer to the landscape Architects proposals.

4.2.2 Scale

The development comprises 3 executive properties with 4/5 bedrooms in total. Responding to site topography creates a 3 storey front elevation and 2 storey rear. This echoes the proportions of properties along Coedcae road to the sites North-East. The plan form of the proposed properties is larger than many of the surroundings, however the site is large and there is sufficient breathing room around the properties not to dominate the those adjacent and affect their amenity.

4.2.3 Amount

Policy BE1 within the valley strategy area requires a density of 30DPH. This development provides approximately 9DPH, however there are mitigating circumstances for this deviation:

Access

In order to to facilitate a greater density on site a more substantial access road would be required, quite simply the existing property at No.52 blocks this opportunity. Widening and improving the current access to a private drive standard allows for a maximum of 5 properties accessible from it, including that of No.52 we have 4 dwellings. At pre application stage another dwelling was proposed in the Western nook of the site, however due to historic rights of way across the site, this has been removed. This can be detailed on a drawing if required; to demonstrate the limitation these rights of way create on the developable area of the site.

The positive to this situation is allowing the 3 remaining properties to shift and improve buffer zones around the site and minimise the removal of existing established trees and provide opportunities for additional GI improvements around the site.

4.2.5 Appearance

The Housetype submitted builds on the approved development at No.52, utilising the same materials:

White render

Timber effect cladding

Dark grey timber effect cladding

Composite slate roofs

Dark Grey double glazed windows & doors

Cues have been taken from the surrounding buildings, such as double fronted plan form and gable features to each of the wings. Whilst more grand in scale due to the 3 storey frontage these properties are a modern nod to the surroundings. The intention is not to create pastiche replications which inevitably look like poor copies and blur the history of the urban grain.

4.3 Community Safety

The objectives in respect of Community Safety, as defined in TAN 12: Design (March 2016), are as follows:

- *“Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces”*
- *“Security through natural surveillance”*

These objectives are to be achieved by promoting:

- *“High quality in the public realm”*

- *“Routes which are fit for purpose and will provide opportunities for safe physical activity and recreation to meet the needs of all members of society”*
- *“A sense of ownership and responsibility for every part of the development”*

As existing, the site is open to Brecon road and has the potential for anti social behaviour on site. This situation is likely to have been improved when the disused garages were demolished some time ago. By the nature of large trees and hedges along the boundary the site becomes quite sheltered. It also offers opportunities to access the rear of many properties surrounding it. Whilst this application isn't being submitted for SBD its core principles have been considered with placement of active frontages which offer multiple vantage for passive monitoring to neighbouring properties.

Improvements to the existing boundary treatments are proposed as part of the development such as construction of close board fencing where existing hedgerows aren't present. The sites South-Western boundary includes stone walls which will be retained.

4.4 Environmental Sustainability

The objectives in respect of Environmental Sustainability, as defined in TAN 12: Design (March 2016), are as follows:

- *“Achieving efficient use & protection of natural resources”*
- *“Enhancing biodiversity”*
- *“Designing for change”*

These objectives are to be achieved by incorporating:

- *“Sustainability measures to reduce the environmental impact associated with buildings and minimising the demand for energy (low and zero carbon sources), water, and materials and creation of waste”*
- *“Approaches to development which create new opportunities to enhance biodiversity”*
- *“Adaptable and flexible development that can respond to social, technological, economic and environmental conditions/changes (e.g. the current and future effects of climate change) over time to minimise the need to demolish & rebuild”*

The exact energy strategy for each property isn't currently finalised, however it is anticipated a standard such as AECB CarbonLite will be met. This standard far exceeds the real world performance of an EPC A building. Panellised MMC 2 standard would assist in achieving this standard with well considered Air tightness, thermal insulation and window/door products. Combined with ASHP and MVHR these properties should achieve low running costs and comfortable spaces to live in. This is in compliance with the energy hierarchy defined in current Welsh Planning policy.

4.5 Movement

The objective in respect of Movement, as defined in TAN 12: Design (March 2016), is as follows:

- *“Promoting sustainable means of travel”*

This objective is to be achieved by maximising:

- *“Safe and clear connections*
- *“The potential to cycle, walk and use public transport safely, and reducing the reliance on the car”*
- *“The connection to the existing transport infrastructure by integrating development with existing footpaths, cycle ways and public and private transport infrastructure”*
- *“The integration of different transport types whilst minimising the adverse effects on the network”*
- *The ease of movement to, from and within the development for sustainable forms of transport by creating a safe and attractive environment”*
- *The provision of on-site facilities for sustainable forms of transport”*

The proposed private drive will provide Vehicular, Pedestrian and Cycling access to Brecon Road. Brecon road is a well trodden road for vehicles connecting easily to Swansea and the M4 corridor. Pedestrians are able to access parks and sport facilities with a short 700m walk east of the site. Cyclist are also able to join Sustrans Route 43 which continues further up the valley or down to Swansea and Mumbles. It is also possible to join route 4 which spans much of south Wales.

Section 6: Summary & Justification Statement

The proposal submitted seeks to make the most of the brownfield site which has many constraints. Limitations to access improvements, historic rights of way and boundary conditions reduce the amount possible and limit positioning of proposed buildings. The proposed site plan addresses these constraints and presents opportunities to enhance the existing urban grain by creating 3 properties which present well proportioned plots that respect existing soft landscaping, sight lines and privacy to amenity spaces. Regeneration of the site through removal of existing hard standings and winding paths returns much of the site back to nature. Well considered planting and the introduction of an attenuation pond offers further ecological improvements.

The construction of 3 large dwellings on the site offers a financial balance to the limitations of density created by site constraints. The properties, whilst large aren't excessive in size or mass and do not overbear the surroundings. Their style takes cues from surrounding properties without presenting a pastiche replica, this is an honest approach to the development of the urban grain in the area.