

Statement in relation to Canterbury City Council's "Call for Sites" 2020

Site at Hall Place, Harbledown

Goddard Planning
32-33 Watling Street
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 2AN

June 2020
Ref: 4066

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement sets out our proposals for a range of potential development options which could help to meet some of the city's future needs. The site is very well located in relation to the road network and public transport connections, close to Canterbury and visually relatively self-contained.

2 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site involves a substantial tract of land, accessed directly from the Harbledown bypass, shared with Hall Place Enterprise Centre. The site occupies land to the south of Rough Common and along Palmers Cross Hill. To the east, is woodland, The Grove. The area is part of a tract of land which separates Rough Common from the western edges of the city. To the south is the village of Harbledown. The site is included within the Harbledown Conservation Area. The site extends to approximately 3 hectares. The eastern edge extends into woodland. The remainder includes a light industrial/warehouse building, the remnants of a number of former agricultural buildings and land which rises up to the west towards Palmers Cross Hill to the rear of Hall Place Enterprise Centre.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 1km from the western edge of the city. Several bus routes pass along the A2050 and through the village of Harbledown with excellent links to Canterbury, to Faversham and beyond to surrounding settlements. There are also good pedestrian and cycle links which connect to various routes into and out of the city.

3 OUR PROPOSALS AND THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The development options include the following or any combination of the following:
- a) A care home.
 - b) A retirement village.
 - c) Office development.
 - d) Self-build/custom built housing.
- 3.2 We wish to explore with the city council these various options with the hope that we can agree a suitable development option.

a) A Care Home

- 3.3 1 in 5 people in the UK were aged 65 years and over in 2018. By 2050, this is projected to increase to 1 in 4.
- 3.4 We envisage a care home of around 80 bedrooms which would provide accommodation for the rapidly increasing elderly population of the District. Much of existing care home stock is in converted properties without self-contained facilities. The unfortunate limitations of that accommodation have been highlighted during the Covid crisis. The demand for purpose-built self-contained accommodation will inevitably increase as those seeking such accommodation would likely reject the obsolescent, less appropriate accommodation which represents a significant proportion of current provision.

b) Retirement Village

- 3.5 In recent years there has been a significant increase in the provision of retirement villages to cater for the changed requirements of retired people. Retirement villages are different from living in a traditional care home. People own or rent their own home, giving them greater independence but with leisure, recreation and support facilities on hand.
- 3.6 The retirement village would contain around 50 properties. These would include bungalows, houses and apartments with a variety of leisure facilities. These facilities would include a swimming pool, restaurant and clubhouse.
- 3.7 The development would have some similarity with sheltered housing or assisted living. However, it would incorporate a wider range of facilities and care provision would also be part of the package, including home help and personal care. The scheme would likely be attractive to those people planning for their retirement and old age. It is likely that future occupiers would be drawn from the local area. Many would currently be in larger family homes which are no longer manageable.

c) Offices

- 3.8 The Innovation Centre at the university has been an extremely popular facility for small and medium sized businesses and has been over-subscribed. We consider that there is potential to provide high quality office space in a location which is well connected with the city. This would provide "state of the art" accommodation in an attractive setting. Innovative mobility solutions including an electric shuttle bus and electric bikes would reduce car dependency.

d) Self-Build

- 3.9 There is also a strong demand from people wishing to commission or build their own homes. Part of the site could be used for that purpose.
- 3.10 Only 444 homes were delivered in the District during the period 2018 to 2019, against the required number of 900. The government's report on the housing delivery test in February 2020 concluded that Canterbury fell short of what is required and an action plan is necessary.
- 3.11 The September 2019 Popes Lane appeal followed a long inquiry during which the council's housing land supply was examined forensically. The inspector reported extensively on this matter in paragraphs 14 to 37 and paragraph 101 of his decision letter. He concluded that the council's supply was either 4.8 or 4.7 years (paragraphs 35 and 36 respectively).
- 3.12 Footnote 26 of the NPPF refers to Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015. This requires local authorities to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are required to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
- 3.13 The need to provide for sites for people wishing to commission or build their own homes is emphasised in paragraph 61 of the NPPF.
- 3.14 In view of the lack of a five-year housing land supply - paragraph 11d) of the NPPF is engaged and the 'tilted balance' applies. Even were the council able to demonstrate a five-year supply the absence of Local Plan policies which deal with the need to meet the identified demand for custom-built or self-build homes on its own engages paragraph 11d).
- 3.15 The development of this land for self-build housing would contribute several dwellings towards local housing needs. Residents would contribute towards the local community, providing social benefits. There would also be economic benefits during the construction of the development and in the future residents would support services and facilities close by in Whitstable and Blean.