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C A N T E R B U R Y

**SUPPORTING**

S T A T E M E N T



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## **01 Introduction**

**1.1 This statement supports our bid for the three City Council car park sites at: Rosemary Lane, Station Road West and St John's Lane. Our submission also includes a covering letter to support our bid, our sketch proposals for each of the three sites and our developer's profile.**

**1.2 In each case the offers are on a conditional (subject to planning permission) basis.**

## 02 Our Proposals

### St John's Lane

2.1 Our proposals reflect the development principles set out in the March 2012 City Council document which provided guidance about this site and 2 other city centre car parks. The proposals incorporate vehicle and pedestrian access from St John's Lane as well as to the rear of houses in St Mary's Street. The scheme incorporates an active frontage to St John's Lane and a contextual and vernacular design.

### Rosemary Lane and Station Road West

2.2 For Rosemary Lane and Station Road West we propose an innovative form of residential development known as co-living. The Rosemary Lane and Station Road West sites are both housing allocations in the 2017 Local Plan. And they were both allocations in the previous Local Plan.

2.3 There have been several significant changes in the housing market and the way in which we live since those sites were first allocated in the Local Plan for traditional housing. The way we are living and the approach to housing has changed radically. It is no longer about buying your first home and then climbing up the housing ladder. For many, the price of housing and the deposits required to get on the housing ladder are beyond their reach. And the rental market is also difficult to enter and unaffordable. Unfortunately, the options for many are limited to living at home with parents or a room in a house share.

2.4 Many now want convenience and amenities close by, a small private, attractively designed studio in a community which provides for connection, convenience and ease of living.

2.5 Yet these aspirations cannot be realised because of important housing market and affordability factors, coupled with the absence of housing accommodation which meets their needs.

2.6 Rising house prices worsen this affordability gap, making it more important to provide accommodation which addresses this problem and meets an important need for households who cannot afford properties on the open market and who do not want to live at home with parents or in HMOs.

2.7 In Canterbury, the City Council has adopted policies which seek to reduce accommodation within HMOs. The problems of concentrations of HMOs in traditional family housing areas is well documented. However, the drive to reduce HMOs accentuates the accommodation problems of those for whom the HMO is the only accommodation alternative.

2.8 The size of deposit required for a first-time buyer has increased significantly over the last 15 years from around 70% of annual income to in excess of 150%. This increases the difficulty of younger people entering the housing market and getting a foot on the housing ladder.

2.9 There is a wide range of people for whom there is no suitable, available and affordable residential accommodation within the City. These include those who have completed their studies at the City's universities, people working in the shops, restaurants and cafés in the City Centre, those starting off in office jobs in Canterbury and those working in London and elsewhere who need to be close to the City's two railway stations and bus station in order to get to work. These are people who choose not to own a car and who like to live in the City and enjoy its vibrancy, all it has to offer and yet, at the same time, require high quality accommodation and a shared living experience.

2.10 Out of these needs has emerged a new living concept called "co-living". This involves well designed, high quality, high tech, individual studios incorporating small but very comfortable and attractive accommodation coupled with communal dining and entertaining space, secure storage and a safe place to keep their bicycle. All costs are incorporated in the rent, including heating, utility costs and wi-fi. There are no contracts, no bills, only one flexible and affordable rental payment. This is a combination which is perfectly tailored for modern living. And we feel that the two sites at Rosemary Lane and Station Road West are ideal candidates for this kind of living.

**2.11 In addition to these important market factors there are also locational factors which make the Rosemary Lane and Station Road West sites ideal for co-living including:**

- **Access to employment.**
- **Close to universities.**
- **Within the City and its wide range of amenities and services.**
- **Lower transport costs without the need for a car.**

**2.12 The proposals will involve a combined rent and service charge at a level which will be affordable to a wider range of households. In effect, it brings the possibility of high quality living accommodation, ease of living and with all costs incorporated, to a much wider range of households.**

**2.13 The need for this kind of accommodation has already been recognised in London with Policy H16 of the adopted London Plan which sets out the criteria for co-living schemes. The proposals in each case reflect the content of Policy H16 of the London Plan. Policy H16 sets out the criteria for co-living schemes which it describes as large-scale, purpose-built shared living.**

**2.14 The scheme will be car-free, assisting with the council's sustainability agenda and reducing vehicular traffic in the city.**

**2.15 This form of living is also entirely appropriate for these sites because it enables a design which responds to its immediate context and the heritage constraints which that imposes. In the case of Station Road West, it has enabled us to come up with a scheme which very effectively responds to its immediate surroundings with a warehouse-style building, reflecting the railway vernacular of the station, The Goods Shed and picking up cues from the nearby Holters Mill and Malthouse buildings which are in similar close proximity to the railway line. In our opinion, this is a much more appropriate form of design than would be the case with a scheme of 20 houses.**

**2.16** In the particular case of Station Road West, we consider that the Local Plan allocation for 20 units is out of date and that our proposals more accurately reflect and adapt to current housing needs with a form and design of building which is much more compatible with its surroundings and immediate context.

**2.17** In the case of Rosemary Lane, the proposals provide a strong frontage to Stour Street with a building which reflects the form and appearance of the converted tannery buildings opposite. That theme of converted former warehouse buildings is continued along Rosemary Lane.

**2.18** An energy Assessment will inform detailing decisions on the basis of achieving a significant reduction in CO2 emission for each site. This will result in a highly insulated building fabric, substantially improving on the Building Regulations TER model. This will be supported by renewable energy being supplied by roof mounted photovoltaic as required to achieve the improvement. Installation of air source heat pumps will also be considered. Each scheme will also be utilising best practice robust airtightness details to ensure extremely low air leakage, which will be coupled with MVHR heating and ventilation systems, which will not only minimise air leakage but also ensure that natural ventilation can be achieved without opening windows, thus responding to the need to provide acoustic insulation. Especially at the Station Road West Site, against potential railway noise. All artificial lighting provided within the development will be low energy LED fittings.

**2.19** The schemes will deliver an off-site contribution towards affordable housing and CIL payments in accordance with the City Council's Charging Schedule.

**2.19** These schemes will also contribute significantly towards the council's housing land supply. Each of the individual units will be counted towards the council's housing land supply and its housing delivery. Those contributions will be significantly greater than the delivery of 40 traditional houses.

## **03 Conclusions**

**3.1 Our proposals for the St John's Lane car park directly reflect the development principles set out by the council in its 2012 document. Our proposals for the Rosemary Lane and Station Road West sites directly address the substantial affordability gap within the District which prevents many people getting their feet on the home ownership ladder or finding suitable properties to rent. There is a pressing need to deliver new and more affordable housing opportunities to the local market in Canterbury. At the same time, there is an increasing need to provide an inclusive one charge covering all accommodation costs such as rent, heating, utilities and wi-fi. And many are looking for accommodation where they do not need to own or use a car. Our proposals address those needs with an innovative housing solution.**

**3.2 The council does not have a 5-year housing land supply. The latest housing delivery figures show that it has fallen well below what is required. Our schemes will contribute significantly towards housing delivery with proposals which are specifically tailored to what the market requires. In addition to the delivery of the individual units themselves, the proposals will help to free up many HMOs in the City, making those available for families, contributing further to the council's housing strategy and delivery. The proposals will also provide an attractive, appealing alternative to living in a shared HMO. This will help to achieve the council's strategic objectives of reducing the number of HMOs within the District. And all of this will be achieved with designs which will make a positive contribution to their immediate and wider context.**

**3.3 In conclusion, we have come up with an innovative and more appropriate set of proposals than would be realised with a strict application of the housing allocations for the Rosemary Lane and Station Road West sites. The schemes will deliver not only much needed housing which meets current needs but many wider benefits.**



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