

Planning Statement (including Affordable Housing Statement)

Mountain House, Station Road, Godalming

August 2024

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Appendix 1: HBF Evidence on Challenges to Development in the Retirement Housing Sector49

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Client
Pegasus Homes

Our reference
LIFS3035

August 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Turley on behalf of Pegasus Homes Ltd in support of an application for full planning permission for the following development ('the proposed development') on land at Mountain House, Station Road, Godalming ('the Site'):

"Application for full planning permission for the demolition of the existing office building known as Mountain House and ancillary structures, Station Road, Godalming, the creation of the temporary means of construction access off Mill Lane, the redevelopment of the site to include a later living (sheltered housing) development, as well as associated communal lounge, meeting rooms, ancillary office, kitchen, bin store, multi-use activity space, wellbeing suite, plant rooms, building management store and workshop, mobility scooter /cycle store, storage areas, electrical vehicle charging facilities, car and cycle parking, upgraded bridge link to The Tannery car park, drainage, landscaping (including communal garden spaces) and all associated works."

- 1.2 The proposed dwellings will provide retirement living and each apartment will be required to be occupied by at least one person aged 60 or over.
- 1.3 The development will include a range of communal areas, including a lounge, meeting rooms, kitchen, activity space, wellbeing suite and two guest suites. A Buildings and Community Manager (BCM) and a General Manager (GM) will provide residents with a wide range of support services to assist in maintaining or improving the health, wellbeing and social engagement of the residents. The BCM and GM will also support residents in maintaining and managing their homes, and will assist in repairs and maintenance of appliances, buildings, living space and garden area.
- 1.4 The Site is located entirely within the administrative boundaries of Waverley Borough Council ('WBC') which is the relevant Local Planning Authority ('LPA') for the determination of this application for planning permission.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement describes the Site and proposed development, together with the existing planning policy framework, and sets out the justification for the granting of planning permission for the proposal. The Planning Statement should be read alongside the planning application forms, drawings and documents which accompany this submission.

The Applicant

- 1.6 The application is submitted jointly by the current landowner, BMW (UK) Trustees Limited, and Pegasus Homes Ltd, the proposed developer of the site.

Who are Pegasus Homes?

- 1.7 Pegasus Homes is a specialist housebuilder operating across England, creating retirement living communities for the over 60s. Pegasus Homes builds on a 30-year tradition of delivering retirement homes and follows the track record, experience and traditions of PegasusLife, Anthology and Renaissance Retirement. Pegasus Homes has

a portfolio of over 1,500 retirement homes across some 40 developments around the UK.

Why Pegasus Homes?

- 1.8 For over 30 years Pegasus Homes has created exceptional properties, designed and built to a high quality, along with beautiful amenities, landscaped gardens and communal facilities.
- 1.9 Pegasus Homes are committed to the creation of high quality, hassle-free later living, dedicated to freeing their residents from burden and stress of traditional home-ownership.
- 1.10 A key element of Pegasus Homes' retirement developments is the creation of real, thriving communities which create a sense of belonging. The provision of a range of generous, high quality communal spaces promotes the very important social integration which is an essential element of Pegasus Homes' developments.
- 1.11 As a collaborative business with extensive experience in complex regeneration projects, Pegasus Homes have established a network of reputable contractors to ensure quality on-time construction.
- 1.12 With carefully considered and sensitive age-appropriate design, Pegasus' independent living homes offer flexibility to their residents allowing residents to age in place with the support that they need as they age. Pegasus Homes select award-winning contractors, architects and planning professionals with local knowledge to create sustainable award-winning developments.

2. The Site and its Surroundings

The Site

- 2.1 The Site is located in the western part of the central area of Godalming, within the designated Town Centre. The Site is to the south of the four storey 'The Tannery' development of apartments and is bound by Mill Lane to the south, Station Approach/Station Road to the northeast and northwest, and the River Ock to the southeast.
- 2.2 The Site is bound by a high brick wall along the Mill Lane frontage (the southern boundary of the Site), mature trees to the northwest and southeast, and open to the remainder of the precinct comprising The Tannery development to the north.
- 2.3 The existing built form within the Site comprises a three-storey office building known as Mountain House (it is also known as Friary House) which extends to around 1,950 sqm (GEA) in size, as well as a number of smaller ancillary structures including a refuse store. The building was constructed in the late 20th century following the clearance of an earlier industrial complex. We understand that the external appearance of the building results from approved early 21st-century changes.
- 2.4 A large expanse of car parking is situated between the office building and Mill Lane. A smaller parking area serving the site is situated to the east of the River Ock, accessed through the parking area serving The Tannery building, and further parking is situated to the north of Mountain House. The existing office building is served by 44 associated parking spaces and shares an access to the surrounding highway network with the adjacent Tannery building of residential apartments.
- 2.5 Additional hard landscaping is located adjacent to the office building to the north, with land situated between the building and the River Ock primarily laid to grass with mature trees. Mature trees are also scattered throughout the remainder of the Site.
- 2.6 Mountain House is not Listed or identified by Waverley Borough Council as a Building of Local Merit and is not considered to be of any architectural merit.
- 2.7 The Site is located within the Godalming Conservation Area, and we note that there are a number of Listed Buildings within its vicinity.
- 2.8 A part of the Site, confined to the narrow corridor of the watercourse and the immediate adjacent areas, is identified to be partly within Flood Zone 2 and partly within Flood Zone 3b. The majority of the site, and notably the areas within which the principal elements of the development are to be constructed is located within a low-risk Flood Zone 1. Parts of the site are within 8m of the top of the riverbank of the River Ock.
- 2.9 The Site is also located within the Wealden Heaths SPA 5km zone and Ancient Woodland 500m Buffer Zone.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.10 We have reviewed WBC's online planning records and have not been able to identify any recent planning history which is likely to inform decisions regarding this current application. There are historic records available which confirm the existing use as an office building.

Planning Designations

- 2.11 The following images show the designations covering the Site and its vicinity in the adopted and emerging policy documents.
- 2.12 The image below shows an extract of the Local Plan Part 1 Proposals Map. The site is located in an Area of Suitably Located Industrial and Commercial Land, which is a designation which was carried over from the Local Plan (2002) (under policy IC2), and a Conservation Area. It is also located next to an Area of Strategic Visual Importance to the north east and is located approximately 100m to the west of the Central Shopping Area. It is also located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential.

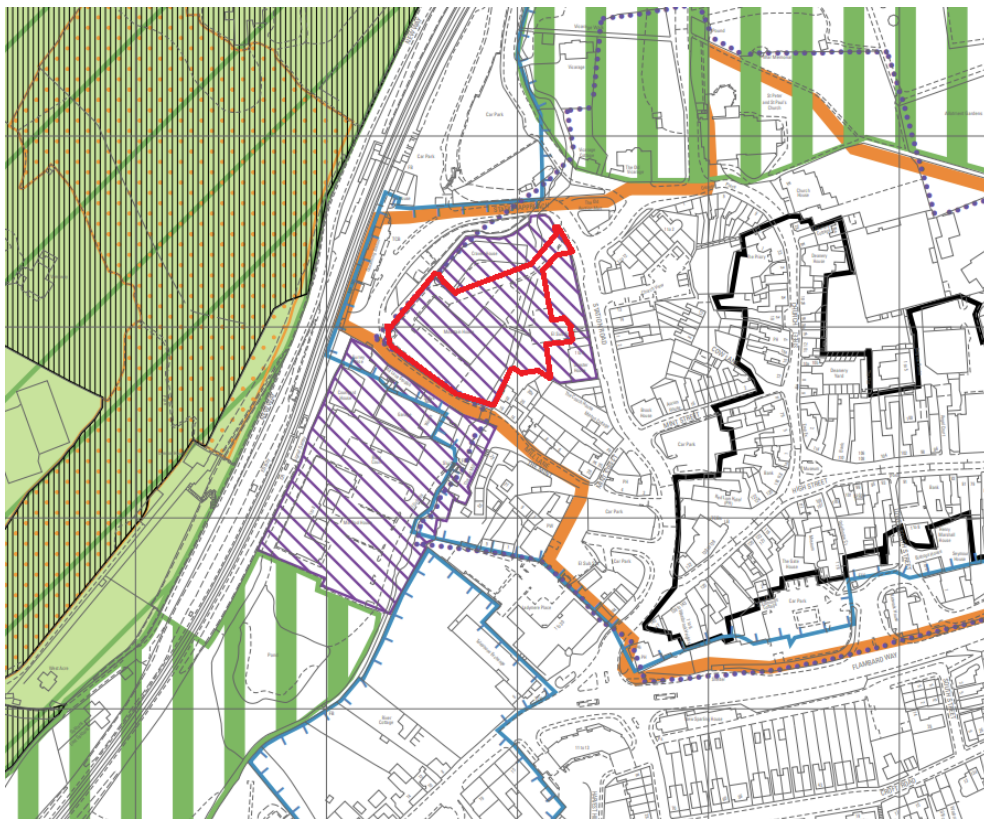


Figure 1: Extract from WBC's Local Plan Part 1 Proposals Map

- 2.13 It is noted that Local Plan Part 2 does not contain a unified Proposals Map, but rather separate maps are contained within the individual policies. It is noted that Appendix IV of the Local Plan Part 2 confirms that Policy IC2 of the Local Plan (2002) has been superseded and therefore the Area of Suitably Located Industrial and Commercial Land designation is no longer in effect. The site also falls outside of key designations

including Green Belt, National Landscape (formerly AONB), Areas of Great Landscape Value, Areas of Strategic Visual Importance etc.

- 2.14 The image below shows an extract of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Proposals Map. The site is located in Godalming Town Centre Conservation Area. It is also located next to a Movement Area and is located approximately 100m to the west of the Primary Shopping Area.

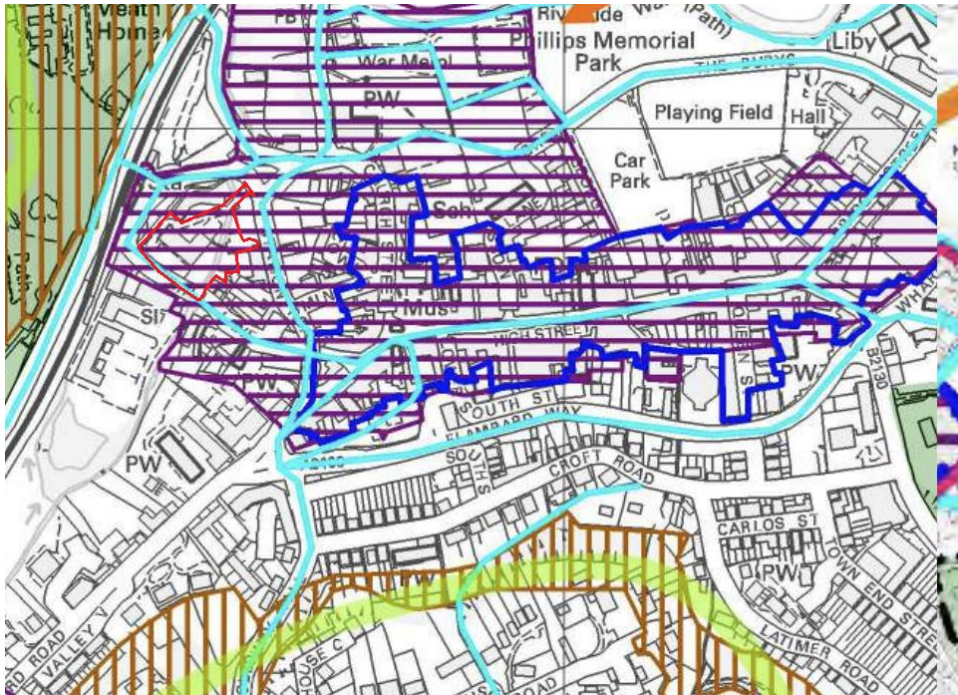


Figure 2: Extract from GTC's Local Plan Part 1 Proposals Map

3. The Application for Full Planning Permission

The Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the following development ('the proposed development') at the Site:

"Application for full planning permission for the demolition of the existing office building known as Mountain House and ancillary structures, Station Road, Godalming, the creation of the temporary means of construction access off Mill Lane, the redevelopment of the site to include a later living (sheltered housing) development, as well as associated communal lounge, meeting rooms, ancillary office, kitchen, bin store, multi-use activity space, wellbeing suite, plant rooms, building management store and workshop, mobility scooter /cycle store, storage areas, electrical vehicle charging facilities, car and cycle parking, upgraded bridge link to The Tannery car park, drainage, landscaping (including communal garden spaces) and all associated works."

- 3.2 The details of the proposed development are shown on the drawings, plans and throughout the other documents which accompany this application for planning permission.
- 3.3 The development will comprise 56 later living apartments including 31 one bed dwellings and 25 two bed dwellings. In addition, the scheme includes a communal lounge for use by residents, two guest suites, shared external amenity and garden space, a buggy store, external cycle storage facilities, 29 parking spaces (of which 2 will be designated accessible bays) and provision for the parking of mobility scooters.
- 3.4 The proposed dwellings will provide retirement living, each apartment will be required to be occupied by at least one person aged over 60, including, where applicable, their partner, spouse or dependant. The proposed residential dwellings are considered to fall within the definition of Use Class C3.
- 3.5 It is proposed that vehicle and pedestrian access at the development would be maintained directly from Station Road, the former pedestrian access on Mill Lane would be reinstated.

Application Material

- 3.6 The application is supported by the following material:

Plans

- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0001-S4-P02 - Site Location Plan
- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0002-S4-P03 - Site Plan - Existing
- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0003-S4-P01 - Ground Floor Plan - Existing
- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0004-S4-P01 - First Floor Plan - Existing

- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0005-S4-P01 - Second Floor Plan - Existing
- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0006-S4-P01 - Roof Plan - Existing
- P23069-RFT-xx-xx-DR-A-0100_s4_P09_Site Plan - Proposed
- P23069-RFT-XX-XX-DR-A-0101-S4-P02 - Proposed Block Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-01-DR-A-0201-S4-P07 - Proposed First Floor Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-02-DR-A-0202-S4-P07 - Proposed Second Floor Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-03-DR-A-0203-S4-P07 - Proposed Third Floor Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-04-DR-A-0204-S4-P07 - Proposed Fourth Floor Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-GF-DR-A-0200-S4-P09 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-RF-DR-A-0205-S4-P06 - Proposed Roof Plan
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0007-S4-P02 - Existing Elevations
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0008-S4-P02 - Existing Elevations (1)
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0009-S4-P02 - Existing Elevations (2)
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0010-S4-P02 - Existing Elevations (3)
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0300-S4-P07 - Proposed Elevations
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0301-S4-P09 - Proposed Elevations (1)
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0302-S4-P05 - Proposed Elevations (2)
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0303-S4-P04 - Proposed Elevations (3)
- P23069-RET-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0401-S4-P02 - Proposed Section
- P23069-RFT-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0402_s4_P03-Proposed Streetscene
- P23069-RFT-00-XX-VS-A-3000_s4_P01 - View 1 - Mill Lane
- P23069-RFT-00-XX-VS-A-3001_s4_P01 - View 2 - Entrance
- P23069-RFT-00-XX-VS-A-3002_s4_P01 - View 3 - Site Approach
- P23069-RFT-00-XX-VS-A-3003_s4_P01 - View 4 - Stream Bridge
- P23069-RFT-00-XX-VS-A-3004_s4_P01 - View 5 - Mill Lane balconies
- P23069-RFT-00-XX-VS-A-3005_s4_P01 - View 6 - Landscaped garden

- 851-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0001 Illustrative Masterplan-S3-P05
- 851-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0002- Landscape General Arrangement-S3-P05
- 851-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0003-Planting Strategy-S3-P03
- 851-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0004-Roof Plan-S3-P03
- 851-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0005- Boundary Treatment Plan-S3-P03
- 851-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0006- Landscape Site Sections-S3-P02
- 2142-ESC-00-ZZ-DR-E-2100 P2 – External Lighting Layout

Reports

- Planning Statement produced by Turley
- Design and Access Statement produced by ReFormat
- Flood Risk Sequential Assessment produced by Turley
- Air Quality Assessment produced by Mayer Brown
- Noise Assessment produced by Auricl
- Arboricultural Report & Tree Protection Survey produced by Ruskins
- Statement of Community Involvement produced by Pegasus Homes
- Ecology Report (including ECIA, BNG assessment, Shadow HRA and Council's Biodiversity and Checklist) produced by Lizard
- Marketing Report produced by LSH (and Council's Marketing Checklist)
- External Lighting Strategy produced by ESC
- Energy Statement produced by ESC
- Climate Change and Sustainability Checklist
- Land Contamination Desk Top Study produced by Ridge
- Ground Condition Assessment produced by Ridge
- Viability Assessment produced by BVA
- Highways Assessment produced by Mayer Brown
- Travel Plan produced by Mayer Brown
- Daylight Sunlight Assessment produced by eb7

- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment produced by RPS
- Built Heritage Statement prepared by Pegasus Group
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Mayer Brown
- Utility Infrastructure Report prepared by ESC

Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.7 The applicant has engaged the LPA in pre-application discussions.
- 3.8 In the first instance, Turley wrote to the LPA on 15 September 2023 to introduce the proposals. Following discussions with the LPA's Officers, the LPA's pre-application advice was received on 1 February 2024.
- 3.9 Following the above formal pre-application engagement, the applicant engaged in additional informal pre-application discussions where it was agreed that the upper floor of the proposal would be set-back from the initial pre-application scheme instead of seeking full removal of this storey.
- 3.10 Turley subsequently provided the LPA with further pre-application submissions as the scheme evolved and met with Officers again on 10 July 2024. This was followed by detailed design comments being issued by the officer on 26 July 2024.
- 3.11 In addition, the Applicant has also undertaken consultation with the wider community around the site including consultation with the Town Council as described in the Statement of Community Engagement produced by the Applicant.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 This Section of the Planning Statement identifies the relevant planning policy context (including that derived from the Development Plan and the NPPF/NPPG) as well as relevant local planning guidance.
- 4.2 This Section does not repeat the text of the relevant policies or guidance.

The Development Plan

Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites

- 4.3 The Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) was adopted in February 2018. Relevant policies in the LPP1 are considered to be:

- SP1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- SP2: Spatial Strategy;
- ALH1: The Amount and Location of Housing;
- ST1: Sustainable Transport;
- ICS1: Infrastructure and Community Facilities;
- AHN1: Affordable Housing on Development Sites;
- AHN3: Housing Types and Size Accommodation;
- EE2: Protecting Existing Employment;
- TD1: Townscape and Design;
- HA1: Protection of Heritage Assets;
- NE1: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation;
- NE2: Green and Blue Infrastructure;
- CC1: Climate Change;
- CC2: Sustainable Construction and Design;
- CC3: Renewable Energy Development; and
- CC4: Flood Risk Management.

Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies

- 4.4 The Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) was adopted in March 2023. Relevant policies in the LPP2 are considered to be:

- DM1: Environmental Implications of Development;

- DM2: Energy Efficiency;
- DM3: Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure;
- DM4: Quality Places through Design;
- DM5: Safeguarding Amenity;
- DM6: Public Realm;
- DM7: Safer Places;
- DM9: Accessibility and transport;
- DM11: Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows and Landscaping;
- DM13: Development within Settlement Boundaries;
- DM20: Development Affecting Listed Buildings, and/or their Settings;
- DM21: Conservation Areas;
- DM23: Non-designated Heritage Assets;
- DM25: Archaeology;
- DM27: Development within Town Centres; and
- DM28: Access and Servicing.

Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032

4.5 The Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in April 2019 and forms part of the Development Plan. Relevant policies from the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- GOD1: Addressing the Residential Needs of Godalming;
- GOD5: Character and Design;
- GOD6: Provision and Design of Residential Parking;
- GOD9: Movement Routes;
- GOD11: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure;
- GOD13: Water Recycling; and
- GOD14: Healthy Air.

Local Planning Guidance

4.6 In addition to the policies within the Development Plan, WBC has adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) on a number of matters (so far as they are relevant) as follows:

- Planning Infrastructure Contributions SPD (April 2018)
- Affordable Housing SPD (March 2023)
- Climate Change and Sustainability SPD (October 2022)
- Surrey Design as SPG (April 2002)
- Other guidance:
 - Waverley Tree Guidelines (updated 2018)
 - Development in and around the Wealden Heaths Phase I and II SPAs
 - Waverley Borough Council Parking Guidelines: October 2013

4.7 In addition, Surrey County Council has published its own guidance on parking standards.

The National Planning Policy Context

4.8 In addition to the Development Plan and SPDs adopted by BFC, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) published by Government set out key and relevant policy and guidance on a number of matters.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)

4.9 The updated NPPF was published in December 2023.

4.10 At the heart of the NPPF is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Sustainable development includes three elements – economic, social and environmental.

4.11 **Paragraph 8** advises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development:

- An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect

current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- An environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.12 **Paragraph 11** identifies the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.13 **Paragraph 60** states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

4.14 **Paragraph 63** confirms that within the context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

4.15 **Paragraph 65** confirms to support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.

4.16 **Paragraph 96** confirms planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other.

4.17 **Paragraph 124** confirms that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs and support opportunities to remediate degraded or contaminated land.

- 4.18 **Paragraph 129** confirms that planning policies should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land.
- 4.19 **Paragraph 135** calls for developments to function well, to be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character (while not discouraging innovation such as increased densities), creating a strong sense of place, optimising the potential of the site to sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and creating safe, inclusive and accessible places which promote health and well-being.
- 4.20 **Paragraph 136** confirms that planning policies should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.
- 4.21 **Paragraphs 182 and 183** confirms that the scale and extent of development within the AONB should be limited and that major development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it is in the public interest.
- 4.22 The new Labour Government has published a draft version of the NPPF on 30 July 2024 for public consultation until late September 2024. Amongst a number of changes, the Government has published a revised outcome from the Standard Method showing a significantly greater Local Housing Need in Waverley Borough.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 4.23 The NPPG is contained in a web-based resource which is regularly updated. Further commentary on this document, particularly in the context of housing for older people is set out below.
- 4.24 The NPPG notes that “The need to provide housing for older people is critical” and “Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.” (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626 Revision date: 26 June 2019).
- 4.25 The NPPF calls on Local Authorities to take a positive approach to schemes that address an identified unmet need for specialist housing for holder people (Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 63-016-20190626 Revision date: 26 June 2019).

5. Assessment of Planning Considerations

- 5.1 Section 54(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), as repealed by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The following section undertakes an analysis of the proposed development against relevant policies in the Development Plan, having regard to the form and type of the proposal, its location and other material considerations. This Planning Statement provides a summary as to whether the proposal complies with the Development Plan, taken as a whole, but it is not intended to cover each criterion of all relevant policies.

The Principle of Development

- 5.3 The Application Site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Godalming as defined in the LPA's Policies Maps (as well as the Policies Map in the Neighbourhood Plan).
- 5.4 The Site is not subject to any designations which indicate that the principle of development is unacceptable.
- 5.5 Policy SP2 of the LPP1 sets the 'Spatial Strategy' for the district which states (amongst other points) that:

"To maintain Waverley's character whilst ensuring that development needs are met in a sustainable manner, the Spatial Strategy to 2032 is to:

...

2. focus development at the four main settlements (Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh)

6. maximise opportunities for the redevelopment of suitable brownfield sites for housing, business or mixed use, including at Dunsfold Aerodrome which is identified as a new settlement. More details are given in Policies SS7 and SS7A"
Our emphasis

- 5.6 Consequently, Godalming is in the top tier of the Council's settlement hierarchy where it seeks to focus development. Moreover, the Site constitutes previously developed land (i.e. it is a 'brownfield site') and therefore aligns with criterion 6 of Policy SP2.
- 5.7 Policy DM13 further supports the principle of the development of the site, stating that:

"For settlements, except those washed over by the Green Belt, the principle of development within the settlement boundaries identified on the Policies Map is acceptable and development will be permitted, subject to compliance with other policies in the Development Plan."

- 5.8 The Applicant recognises that there are other policies in the Development Plan which may have a relationship with the principle of development (primarily Policy EE2 in relation to employment land matters), however for the reasons set out within this Planning Statement, those policies are satisfied. In any event, there are material considerations which should be afforded significant weight which overcome any potential inconsistency in that regard.

The Location and Accessibility of the Site

- 5.9 The Application Site is located within the Town Centre of Godalming, a settlement which is the focus of the Council's spatial strategy for development. Accordingly, the site is considered to be a sustainable location for new housing.
- 5.10 The accessibility of the Site is addressed through the Transport Statement prepared by Mayer Brown which accompanies this application.
- 5.11 Mayer Brown explain that the Site is well located for access by foot to the town centre and that services and amenities situated nearby include the following (with all measurements taken from the Station Road) entrance to the site:
- Railway station and taxi service – 100m;
 - Godalming Minster Church 160m;
 - High Street shopping, services, cafes and restaurants – 200m-800m;
 - Pharmacy – High Street – 325m;
 - Post Office – High Street – 600m;
 - Supermarket – High Street – 650m;
 - Library - Bridge Street – 850m; and
 - The Sainsburys supermarket – 1.2km.
- 5.12 In relation to public transport services, Mayer Brown explain that the Site is extremely well located for access by public transport, with the site access being located only 100m from Godalming rail station. There are three services from the rail station per hour between Haslemere and London Waterloo, also calling at Guildford and Woking, as well as three services between Portsmouth and London Waterloo, also calling at Guildford, Woking, Haslemere and Petersfield. As Mayer Brown explain, this provides excellent access by rail to nearby towns as well as opportunities to connect at other stations to the wider rail network.
- 5.13 The Transport Statement notes that the nearest bus stops to the site are located on Station Road, approximately 60m from the site entrance. These stops receive route 46 between Guildford and Farnham. There are additional bus stops on the High Street and A3100 Flambard Way (each c.300m from the site entrance) which receive routes 42, 46, 70,71, 72, 503, 523, SP3 and SP4.

- 5.14 Policy ST1 of the LPP1 states that *“The Council will work in partnership with Surrey County Council, neighbouring authorities, transport providers and other key stakeholders to ensure that development schemes: 1. are located where opportunities for sustainable transport modes can be maximised, reflecting the amount of movement generated, the nature and location of the site and recognising that solutions and measures will vary from urban to rural locations”*
- 5.15 On the basis of the Site’s accessibility and the broader highways impacts, as described by Mayer Brown, the application is consistent with Policy ST1 of the Local Plan Part 1, Policy DM9 of the Local Plan Part 2 and Policy GOD9 of the Neighbourhood Plan in this regard.

Housing for the Ageing Population & the Need for the Development

- 5.16 The critical need for planning for the housing needs of older people is clearly acknowledged in the Government’s NPPG which states:
- “The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking.” Our emphasis.”*
- 5.17 Paragraph 2.42 of the LPP1 states that *“Waverley has an ageing population. It faces the challenge of meeting the varying needs of older people, whilst ensuring that the Borough remains attractive and accessible to young people”*.
- 5.18 Paragraph 9.30 of the LPP1 states:
- “The NPPG recognises the need to provide housing for older people, those aged 65 and over, as part of achieving a good mix of housing. A key driver of change in the housing market over the next 20 to 25 years is expected to be the growth in the population of older persons. The West Surrey SHMA 2015 reports that the population of older persons within Waverley is expected to grow by nearly 49% (a growth of 31,200 persons). Although many older households will remain in the homes which they have lived for many years, some may wish to downsize. Furthermore, some older households will require specialist housing or support, or need adaptations to their homes. The increase in the older population may result in an increase in dementia by 1,800 and an increase of 3,500 with mobility problems between 2013 and 2033. The SHMA identifies a need for over 1,700 additional specialist housing solutions including sheltered and extra care homes in the same period within Waverley. The projected increase in the number of Waverley residents over 65 years has implications in relation to the type of housing available and other considerations such as health and access to services.”*
- 5.19 There are no policies within the LPP1 or LPP2 which specifically seek to deliver housing for older people although we note that Policy AHN3 of the LPP1 states that the Council

will require proposals for new housing to make provision for an appropriate range of different types and sizes of housing to meet the needs of the community, reflecting the most up to date evidence in the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Furthermore, the Policy explains that the Council will support the provision of new housing and related accommodation to meet the needs of specific groups that have been identified in the SHMA, with specific reference to older people (aged 65 and over). Policy AHN3 also states:

“The Council will also encourage the development of specialist housing and appropriate types of older persons’ housing on suitable sites.”

5.20 The Neighbourhood Plan discusses the changing population, noting that (paragraph 2.11) *“Godalming is a place where young families live but is seeing growth increasingly of the retirement age population.”*

5.21 Paragraph 4.1 of the Neighbourhood Plan states:

“The work undertaken with the community to inform the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan identified four sectors in which the housing market is failing to meet local needs:

a. Lack of suitable accommodation for the over 55s, who represent the town's fastest growing resident group; and who will increasingly be needing to cope with mobility disabilities and illness, especially dementia.”

5.22 Paragraph 4.6 of the Neighbourhood Plan states:

“However, what this does not address are other types of accommodation that are needed to support the ageing population. Over the period to 2032, Waverley borough’s population of people aged over 65 is forecast to grow by approximately 50%. In addition to considering how the number and proportion of older people is expected to change, one needs also to take into account specific illnesses (especially dementia-related) and disabilities (particularly mobility problems). The proportion of the population with a long term health problem or disability increases dramatically with age, with the vast majority of any increase concentrated among the over-65s.”

5.23 The Applicant does not consider that it is necessary to submit any evidence of the need for such housing for older people in the Borough. It is evident from the text of the LPP1 that the Council has recognised the ageing population and the need for specialist housing within the Borough. Given the location of the Site and its accessibility, the Applicant considers it to be a *suitable site* for the delivery of specialist housing as supported by Policy AHN3.

5.24 We draw attention to the pre-application advice received from the LPA which states:

“In terms of the proposed use of the site for housing specifically for older people (the over 60s in this case), it is recognised that this is addressed in the Government’s guidance on housing for older and disabled people as well as paragraph 9.30 of the supporting text to LPP1 Policy AHN3 and paragraph 4.6 supporting Policy GOD1 of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan (GFNP). As such, the need has been

clearly demonstrated and is embedded in planning policy at all levels." (Our emphasis added).

Housing Mix

- 5.25 Of the apartments proposed a mix of 56% are 1-bed units whilst the others are 2-bed units. This broadly aligns with the Applicant's design guidance where their market research suggests there is increased demand for 1 bed units.
- 5.26 Policy GOD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan requires that *"All new residential developments (Use Class C3) of at least 10 dwellings should provide at least the required percentage of one, two and three-bedroom properties as indicated for the Godalming area in the most up to date area Strategic Housing Market Assessment"*.
- 5.27 Policy AHN3 of the LPP1 states *"The Council will require proposals for new housing to make provision for an appropriate range of different types and sizes of housing to meet the needs of the community, reflecting the most up to date evidence in the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)."*
- 5.28 The Applicant recognises that the SHMA identifies the need for a range of housing types and sizes, whereas this scheme will provide flatted accommodation of 1 and 2 bed dwellings. This is a deliberate response to the housing needs of older people. In the Neighbourhood Plan, we draw attention to paragraph 4.10 which states:
- "Extra care is not the only requirement for the ageing population. Increasingly, older people are retaining their independence for longer and wish to remain in their own homes rather than move into an institutional setting. The provision of the right type of housing to address this need is paramount. Smaller dwellings are in strong demand from older people but what they are seeking is often different to the first-time buyer, with many requiring homes that are on one level. Typically, older buyers are looking to downsize from large, family homes and therefore have significant amounts of equity. So a smaller home may well be a spacious two or three-bedroom property with a small garden. It is important that new development provides for these needs. This will also have the benefit of freeing up family homes as currently, many of these older people prefer to stay in their family homes rather than move out of their local community. Other factors such as the cost of stamp duty on a house sale deters some from moving, the lack of supply of smaller properties is also a significant factor."*
- 5.29 The Applicant also notes that the central location of the Application Site provides a prime opportunity to make the efficient and effective use of land in a sustainable location. A different scheme, providing a broader mix of housing would not provide the same opportunities.
- 5.30 Pegasus Homes has extensive experience in delivering later living homes and has refined an ideal unit mix to deliver efficient later living communities. There is very little need for retirement homes with more than 2 bedrooms. Larger homes would simply lead to unused bedrooms and the inefficient use of the site.
- 5.31 Clearly the overall housing mix in the SHMA cannot be replicated on each and every site given their individual characteristics, and there is an ability and policy objective for

Town Centre locations to accommodate higher density housing (as per Policy DM27 of LPP2). Nevertheless, whilst the proposal provides for accommodation of 1 and 2 bedrooms, it also responds directly to the conclusions of the SHMA regarding the housing needs of older people. Delivering larger homes, with 3 or more bedrooms would either lead to a need to increase the size of the building or to reduce the number of homes. This is considered to be counter the NPPF's imperative to make efficient and effective use of land.

5.32 It should be noted that this is a proposal designed specifically for occupation by older people (which could be secured as part of any planning permission granted via condition), with associated facilities (such as communal spaces and parking for buggies for example). It is not designed for occupation by families, and so only a small proportion of the proposed accommodation is larger than two-bedrooms. In order to support residents, Pegasus's schemes include two ancillary guest suites for use by visiting family members and friends.

5.33 The pre-application advice from the LPA stated that:

"LPP1 Policy AHN3 and the supporting text sets out requirements for C3 residential properties, a use class which the proposed units would fall into, but given the proposal for older people housing, it is considered unreasonable to require three- and four-bedroom units to be provided as there would be no need. Realistically future occupiers would only need one bedroom with the second bedroom being used as storage and / or accommodation for visits by family members and friends. Therefore, based on the 3:1 ratio in favour of two-bedroom units, 14 one beds and 42 two beds could be expected. 33 x 1 bed and 23 x 2 bed units are proposed along with a guest room. As such, it would be expected that any formal submission would justify the reasoning for the discrepancies with the SHMA and the alternative mix proposed, particularly why more 1 bed are proposed than 2 beds if that is to be the final proposed mix."

5.34 The Applicant has undertaken research of 914 apartments within their existing estate, part of this research included the demand for unit sizes, and considered relationship status, age, gender and the demand for spare bedrooms. This has indicated an ideal unit mix of 55% one bedroom, 40% two bed and 5% three bed apartments. This ideal mix has been adjusted somewhat in respect of the site to take into account the local market conditions and design considerations.

5.35 Pegasus Homes will provide a separate storage area within the scheme, at the ground floor level, this is fitted out with cages. The apartments are also generously in excess of NPSS, which means that there is sufficient space for storage, and so there is no need for spare bedrooms to be used for storage space.

Housing Space Standards and Accessible and Adaptable Housing

5.36 Policy AHN3 requires proposals to make provision for an appropriate range of different types and sizes of housing. While the policy makes reference to the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment for identifying an appropriate mix, it is noted that this does not address the needs of older people for later living schemes such as the proposed development. The proposal includes a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom housing with a mix of 31 1 no. bedroom apartments and 25 no. 2 bedroom apartments with a mix of

sizes of both. This is considered to be a suitable mix for the proposed development which will offer a range of choice for prospective residents.

5.37 Policy AHN3 of the LPP1 explains:

“The Council will require the provision of new developments to meet Building Regulations M4 (2) Category 2 standard: “Accessible and adaptable dwellings” to meet the needs of older people and those with disabilities. The Council will also encourage the development of specialist housing and appropriate types of older persons’ housing on suitable sites.”

5.38 The proposed scheme is designed specifically for those over 60, as a later living community. Following these principles the scheme is designed to comply with Building Regulations Part M4(2), to provide accessible and adaptable dwellings and as such accords with Policy AHN3. In addition, the proposed later living development would meet the policy’s aims to address the needs of older people.

5.39 All of the proposed apartments are above the “Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard”.

5.40 Therefore, the requirements of Policy AHN3 of the Local Plan Part 1 are met.

Affordable Housing and Viability

5.41 Policy AHN1 of the LPP1 states that “The Council will require a minimum provision of 30% affordable housing on all housing developments where at least one of the following applies:

- In designated rural areas developments providing a net increase of 6 dwellings or more.
- In non designated rural areas developments providing a net increase of 11 dwellings or more.
- Developments that have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1000 sq m.

5.42 As a matter of general principle, it would be inappropriate to include an element of affordable housing for families or younger persons as that conflicts with the purpose of the scheme. The proposal is designed for older people through the delivery of a scheme which is suitable for their time of life, facilitating quiet enjoyment of retirement within safe and secure environments.

5.43 The communal nature of the shared facilities within the development together with the management arrangement for providing a concierge/house manager and services covering regular maintenance of the building, access, parking and communal landscaped gardens means that Registered Providers (RPs) are either unable or unwilling to meet these requirements and the associated charges. Providing a mixture of tenure within a single development scheme of this size will result in conflict between the owner occupiers and subsidized tenants. It would be unreasonable to expect the

elderly private owner-occupiers, on fixed incomes, to subsidize the service charge costs of the development for other tenure groups and other costs such as an on-site concierge/house manager.

5.44 If there is shared/dual management there will undoubtedly be conflict between the requirements of a Housing Association and those of the operator of the open market later living accommodation and their occupiers. Not least would be the difficulties and potential for conflict between the shared use of communal facilities and the cost and responsibility for the upkeep of such facilities, let alone the difficulties and potential for conflict between the responsibilities between the different tenures relating to the employment of an on-site concierge/house manager. Requiring on-site affordable housing is likely to mean that greater costs are passed to the RP, or to occupiers of the later living element, who may not be able to afford them, or means that the operator effectively has to subsidise the occupiers use of such facilities over the long term. These managerial problems of mixed tenure within later living developments are well recognised and accepted by Local Planning Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate. There have been a substantial number of planning appeals which have concluded that on site mixed tenure schemes are not conducive to a successful development for the reasons previously stated. These include:

- Gullivers Bowl Club, Bexhill-on-Sea (APP/U1430/A/06/2030466) – Paragraph 40-41
- Dorking Road, Epsom, (APP/P3610/A/07/2043238) 27th November 2007 – Paragraph 50-51
- Whitton Avenue West, Greenford (APP/A5270/A/06/2022898) 5th April 2007 – Paragraphs 15 – 20
- Wigginton, York (APP/C2741/A/06/2008620) 28th June 2006 – Paragraph 17-19
- Brighton Road, Purley (APP/L5240/A/04/1162627) 09th February 2005 – Paragraphs 30-33
- Reading Road, Winnersh (APP/x0360/A/03/1125817) 1st April 2004 – Paragraphs 20 -22
- Blenheim Road, Minehead (APP/H3320/A/02/1101054) 11th February 2003 – Paragraph 21-23

5.45 In Pegasus Homes' experience only sufficiently large schemes can be designed in such a way to facilitate and address those issues on-site in a manner which can be managed appropriately given the separate arrangements of Pegasus Homes and RPs without jeopardising the efficient use of the land.

5.46 This application is supported by a Viability Statement (submitted confidentially) produced by Bailey Venning Associates Limited which demonstrates that the scheme, without affordable housing, generates a negative land value. Paragraph 83 of the Council's Affordable Housing SPD states that:

“The Council recognises that there may be exceptional situations where the specific circumstances of the site, or other matters, could mean that achieving the required level of affordable housing would compromise development viability. This must be demonstrated through a viability submission, which should adopt an ‘open book’ approach in line with Government guidance.”

5.47 The report on viability from the HBF Retirement Home Builders Group tabled before the CLG select committee on Housing for Older People shows (see Appendix 1), shows that the additional costs associated with delivering specialist retirement housing means that these forms of development cannot support the same level of planning contributions as conventional forms of housing. These additional costs, considered to constitute exceptional situations, are as follows:

- To enable local access to services and facilities, retirement housing is generally delivered on brownfield sites which are typically 8 times more expensive than greenfield sites in South-East England.
- Build costs are around 36% higher than for mainstream / open market housing.
- Retirement housing schemes generally contain around 35% non-saleable area (lounges, circulation, welfare, staff spaces, plant areas and communal areas) compared with 10-15% for mainstream / open market flats and nil for mainstream / open market housing.
- Unlike mainstream / open market housing schemes, retirement developments are generally fully built out and staffed prior to initial occupancy, resulting in higher up front and finance costs and longer rates of return.
- Council Tax is often a significant amount as this applies to any vacant units after 1 year of completion.
- Retirement developments generate almost full staff and operational costs from completion, despite lower occupancy in the initial period while the scheme reaches a sustainable occupancy rate.

5.48 The Applicant recognises that the LPA is likely to seek an independent review of the Bailey Venning Viability Appraisal and as such is willing to engage with Officers and the independent review in order to facilitate that process.

Housing Delivery Matters

5.49 Policy ALH1 of the Local Plan Part 1 explains that the Council will make provision for at least 11,210 net additional homes in the period from 2013 to 2032 (equivalent to at least 590 dwellings a year), with 1,520 to be delivered at Godalming.

5.50 The Council’s latest Housing Land Supply Statement was published in October 2023 and presents the position from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028, asserting 3.89 years of deliverable housing land supply. As a consequence, there is a material housing land supply shortfall in the Borough and the presumption in favour of sustainable development (at paragraph 11d of the NPPF 2023) is engaged by virtue of the most

important policies being out-of-date. We note that the housing land supply position is derived from the Local Housing Need (the standard method) rather than the requirement of the Local Plan Part 1. The standard method derived Local Housing Need as expressed in the October 2023 statement is a requirement for 719 dwellings per annum, being significantly in excess of the Local Plan Part 1 requirement.

- 5.51 The proposed development will contribute 56 homes to the Council's housing need. Furthermore, the development will facilitate the downsizing of older people from larger, under-occupied family homes, freeing up these homes in the housing ladder. The 2020 'Retirement Living' report by JLL advised that *"An over 65 household downsizing generates (on average) a chain of three further dependent sales in the mainstream housing market"*.¹

Employment Land Change of Use

- 5.52 Policy EE2 of the LPP1 relates to 'Protecting Existing Employment Sites'. The Applicant accepts that as the site comprises an existing (albeit vacant) office building, the Policy applies. The Policy states that:

"The Council will permit the change of use of existing employment sites to residential and other alternative uses where it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment use. Existing employment sites include sites specifically identified by saved Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 Policies IC2 and IC3, sites identified in Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, as well as other existing employment sites within the B Use Classes.

Where there is an identified need for new homes, the Council will normally approve applications for a change to residential use and any associated development from employment use subject to there being no strong economic reasons why such a development would be inappropriate.

In considering proposals that are not consistent with this policy, the Council will take into account the extent to which the proposed new use will contribute to the economy or meet other specific economic needs and the provisions of Policy WD2 of the Surrey Waste Plan 2008 or equivalent adopted policies in a New Surrey Waste Plan 2018-2033."

- 5.53 The Applicant's response to this Policy is that it does permit the redevelopment of existing employment sites where the described circumstances are met. The Marketing Report submitted with the application demonstrates that the site has been marketed since March 2022 and notes that there was little interest in the property, with only 3 viewings taking place. It outlines that existing market pressures, including the recent 'flight to quality' and a high-level of supply of office space locally has contributed to this. In addition, the majority of the existing occupier base in Godalming is for SMEs and the size of the existing premises is too large to attract local occupiers. This has led

¹ 'Retirement Living' – JLL, 2020 [retirement-living-3-delivering-the-opportunity.pdf \(jll.co.uk\)](https://www.jll.co.uk/retirement-living-3-delivering-the-opportunity.pdf)

to lettings being reliant on new occupiers coming to the town, which is limited even in larger, more established office markets.

- 5.54 The Applicant notes that, as a consequence of the housing land supply position in the Borough, there is a clear need for new homes. Secondly, that need for new homes should be seen in the context of the well-established critical need for housing to meet the needs of older people, as recognised through the NPPF, NPPG as well as through the Development Plan. There are no strong economic reasons why such a development would be inappropriate. It is the applicant's position therefore that the proposals comply with the policy requirements, through meeting the permitted circumstances set out within the second paragraph of Policy EE2.
- 5.55 Policy EE2 does not require consideration of the final paragraph of as the proposals have been shown (through the discussion set out above) to accord with its requirements. Nevertheless, the Applicant's position is that this proposal will also contribute to the economy of the area through the creation of new jobs during both the construction and operational phases and local expenditure, for example.
- 5.56 Further to the commentary set out above, the Applicant's position is that there are a range of material considerations which should be afforded significant weight (namely the housing land supply position, the delivery of housing designed specifically to meet the needs of older people, the economic benefits of the development, and the re-use of previously developed land in one of the main settlements) which would outweigh any potential conflict with Policy EE2.
- 5.57 By virtue of paragraph 11d of the NPPF being engaged, the most important policies for determining this application are out-of-date. Policy EE2 must be deemed as one such policy and limited weight should be afforded to it as a result.

Design

- 5.58 This application is supported by a Design and Access Statement produced by the project Architects, Re-Format. The Design and Access Statement has been informed by a detailed analysis of the Site and its wider context, including the character of the existing development within the area.
- 5.59 In addition, the Design and Access Statement has been informed by the detailed analysis undertaken by the Applicant's wider consultant team.
- 5.60 The Design and Access Statement explains how the proposal has evolved having regard to the various forms of engagement undertaken, with particular regard to the feedback from the LPA as part of the pre-application discussions.
- 5.61 The Design and Access Statement is a comprehensive document which explains the nature of the proposal in relation to its layout, the internal layout of the development, the form and massing of the proposal, its appearance, materials palette, landscape design and access arrangements.

- 5.62 The Design and Access Statement demonstrates how this scheme represents a well-designed and considered scheme which responds positively to the Site and the context within which it is located.
- 5.63 As for the height of the building, we note that the relationship between this proposal and its broader context is discussed in the various application documents, namely the Design and Access Statement and the Built Heritage Statement. Nevertheless, we note that there is no policy basis which stipulates that development on sites such as this should be restricted to a specific height.
- 5.64 The Applicant notes that Policy DM4 of the Local Plan Part 2 states “Design Review arrangements should be made for significant schemes as agreed with the Local Planning Authority at the earliest opportunity”. The supporting text provides examples of what ‘significant schemes’ might include, with five examples given. The Applicant’s position is that this proposal would not fall into the definition of a ‘significant scheme’ for the purposes of Policy DM4. Nevertheless, the Applicant notes that the pre-application process has focused on various elements associated with the design of the scheme.
- 5.65 Consequently, it is considered that the scheme positively responds to design-related policies in the Development Plan, namely Policy GOD5 of the Neighbourhood Plan, Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan Part 1 and Policies DM1, DM4, DM5, DM7, DM11, DM13, DM20, DM21 and DM27 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Built Heritage

- 5.66 This application is accompanied by a Built Heritage Statement produced by Pegasus.
- 5.67 There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site itself, however the site is situated within the Godalming Conservation Area and there are several Listed Buildings within the vicinity.
- 5.68 The relationship between the Site, the proposed development and those heritage assets has been a key influence for the evolution of the proposed development as explained in the application material, namely the Design and Access Statement.
- 5.69 Pegasus conclude that there would be:
- A very minor impact on the overall heritage significance of the Godalming Conservation Area. This is considered to represent less than substantial harm, at the lower end of the spectrum.
 - Very minor impact on the overall heritage significance of Solllys Mill, via a change in 'setting'. This is considered to represent less than substantial harm, at the lower end of the spectrum to Solllys Mill.
 - No harm to any further designated heritage assets.
- 5.70 The demolition of Mountain House is not considered by Pegasus to result in the loss of a building that positively contributes to the character and appearance of the

Conservation Area or identified Listed Buildings. Accordingly, Pegasus conclude that no harm arises from these aspects of the proposals.

- 5.71 Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that *“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”* Paragraph 208 states that *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*
- 5.72 The Applicant’s position is that, provided the balancing exercise is undertaken and satisfied, in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF, this is sufficient to provide the clear and convincing justification sought by paragraph 206.
- 5.73 In this case, the Applicant notes that this scheme will utilise previously developed land (which has been vacant for some time, with no evidence that the existing office floorspace will be occupied) in a highly sustainable location, a benefit afforded substantial weight through paragraph 124 of the NPPF. The delivery of this development will provide new housing in a context where the LPA is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and provide housing specifically designed to address the critical need for housing for older people in an area with an identified ageing population. The provision of specialist accommodation with wellbeing and support has been recognised to reduce costs to the health and social care sector.
- 5.74 In light of those considerations and the low level of harm caused to designated heritage assets, the Applicant’s position is that the balancing exercise required by paragraph 208 of the NPPF is satisfied.
- 5.75 As for the policies in the Development Plan, we refer to:
- Local Plan Part 1 Policy HA1 – Protection of Heritage Assets.
 - Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM20 – Protection of Heritage Assets.
 - Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM21 – Conservation Areas.
 - Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Policy GOD5 – Character and Design
- 5.76 Policy HA1 of the Local Plan Part 1 explains that the Council will ensure that the significance of the heritage assets within the Borough are conserved or enhanced to ensure the continued protection and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- 5.77 Policy DM20 states that *“Development affecting Statutory Listed Buildings should preserve or enhance the buildings and their settings, and any features of special architectural or historic interest they possess by ensuring that:*

- a) *it is of a well-considered design which ensures that development will be appropriate and compatible in terms of siting, style, scale, density, height, massing, colour, materials, architectural features and detailing;*
- b) *changes of use are compatible with and respect the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset or its setting and;*
- c) *the demolition of objects or structures within the curtilage of a Listed Building is supported by robust evidence demonstrating that the object or structure is incapable of repair for beneficial use or enjoyment, and/or is not of special architectural or historic interest as a structure ancillary to the principal Listed Building.”*

5.78 Through the high quality design of the development, which has been heavily influenced by heritage considerations, this application demonstrates that criterion a of Policy DM20 has been satisfied.

5.79 Policy DM20 also states that *“Proposals which would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset will be considered against the other public benefits to be gained.”* This aligns with the equivalent policy in the NPPF and as such has been satisfied in this case.

5.80 Policy DM21 states that development should preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Areas through various means, including:

- *“a. retaining buildings and other features, including trees, which make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area;*
- *b. the design of all development, within or adjoining Conservation Areas, being of high quality and responding appropriately to the character of the area and surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, layout, design, building style, detailing and materials”*

5.81 Given the nature of the conclusions set out by Pegasus regarding the demolition of the existing building, it not considered that the existing Mountain House makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Similarly, the design of the development is of high quality and responds appropriately to the character of the area. Accordingly, the relevant criteria in Policy DM21 are satisfied.

5.82 Policy DM21 also states that *“Proposals which would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset will be considered against the other public benefits to be gained.”* This aligns with the equivalent policy in the NPPF and as such has been satisfied in this case.

5.83 Although it does not specifically refer to Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas, Policy GOD5 does relate to character and design. This application demonstrates that a design-led approach has been taken to the evolution of the scheme which accords with the various expectations of the Policy.

- 5.84 On the basis of the assessment undertaken by Pegasus and the design-led approach, the scheme would also comply with Policy DM1 which states that *“Development should ... Not cause harm or damage to existing environmental assets such as areas of ecological, geological, townscape, or landscape value, and maximise opportunities to enhance such assets”*.
- 5.85 Based on the commentary set out above, the application and the proposed development complies with the relevant Development Plan policies, namely Policy HA1 of the Local Plan Part 1, Policies DM20 and DM21 of the Local Plan Part 2 and Policy GOD5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Access, Highways Impact and Traffic Generation

- 5.86 The highways impact of the proposed development and its traffic generation is addressed in Mayer Brown’s Transport Statement which accompanies this application.
- 5.87 Mayer Brown calculate that a development of 56 flats of this type is likely to result in only minimal traffic in peak hours, and overall around 1.5 vehicular trips per residence per day.
- 5.88 In comparison, the Transport Statement explains that the existing office building (if occupied) would generate considerably higher level of trip generation in the peak hours than the proposed residential use, with around one vehicle every minute in the morning peak and around one vehicle every two minutes in the evening peak.
- 5.89 The proposal, based on the figures in the Transport Statement, provides for a significant reduction in vehicle trips to and from the site in both peak hours and throughout the day, with an overall reduction of around 167 vehicular movements per day.
- 5.90 In relation to access:
- Vehicular access to the site is via an existing crossover arrangement, with a footway on the eastern side. This existing access arrangement will be retained for the new scheme, with no amendments planned to the junction with Station Approach. Given The Tannery building was permitted as a residential site with this arrangement and opened in 2018, Mayer Brown explain that it is appropriate to retain the arrangement given the lower trip generation predicted for the later living accommodation compared to the current office consent.
 - A pedestrian gate is currently provided in the western boundary wall onto Mill Lane although this is kept locked and does not provide general access. This will be made available for use to improve connectivity, with appropriate security measures.
 - The pedestrian bridge link (within the Site) over the stream from the new building to the separate car park for The Tannery will be retained and improved (widened) to suit the needs of residents.

5.91 On this basis, the application accords with Policy ST1 of the LPP1. In line with policy GOD9 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the reduced trip rates also show that the impact of the scheme on the Movement Routes along Station Road and Mill Lane will be positive by reducing vehicular traffic compared to usage as an office block.

Parking

5.92 The proposal makes provision for 29 dedicated parking spaces (including 2 dedicated disabled bays) comprise of 17 spaces including two disabled spaces to the north and west of the proposed building and a further 12 spaces within the retained parking area to the east of the River Ock.

5.93 Appendix 2 of WBC's Parking Guidelines from 2013 sets out standards for 'Elderly (sheltered) Housing' as follows:

- 1 car space per one or two bed self-contained unit; or
- 0.5 space per communal unit; or
- individual assessment

5.94 Surrey County Council has also published 'Vehicular, electric vehicle and cycle parking guidance for new developments' which provides 'Recommended guidance for maximum vehicular parking levels'. The County Council's standards are the same as in WBC's document from 2013, although they are specifically expressed as being maximum figures. The County's standards also indicate a minimum standard of one cycle parking space per dwelling (for 1-2 beds), although we note that there is no separate standard given for this form of specialist accommodation designed specifically to meet the needs of older people.

5.95 The Neighbourhood Plan (Policy GOD6) explains that within the Town Centre, parking should be provided at a rate of 1 space for each 1 or 2 bed flat, however we note that this standard applies to residential development in general, with no distinction made for housing which is specifically designed for older people.

5.96 A total of 29 parking spaces are proposed. These include 17 parking spaces (including 2 dedicated disabled bays) immediately adjacent to the building and 12 spaces across the bridge link within the existing car park that is also located within the site ownership.

5.97 We note that the abovementioned standards do not provide any indication as to the quantum of buggy parking spaces required for development of this type. The proposal incorporates an internal mobility scooter parking area (of around 31sqm).

5.98 Pegasus Homes has considerable experience of developments for older people and has circa 40 sites throughout the country. Their experience in such facilities show that parking provision of 1 to 1 or greater is an overprovision for car parking spaces.

5.99 It is found that many Authorities have outdated parking standards, which do not reflect the location of a site, in terms of public transport or facilities nearby. Also parking standards do not reflect the provision of mobility scooters.

- 5.100 Low car ownership is a characteristic of retirement accommodation which arises due to a number of reasons which lie behind the decision to move to specialist accommodation. These reasons include location, age, bereavement, desire to downsize, all of which are factors which influence desire or willingness to give up on the ownership of the private car. There is also a steep change in the post occupation level of car ownership, once people have settled in, where those residents have retained a car, begin to realise they are not being used and begin to give them up, usually over a period of 12-18 months. These factors therefore influence the ownership and hence car parking provision with such facilities. The parking provision reflects these factors and is considered to be appropriate for the development.
- 5.101 20% of spaces will be fitted with EV charging upon first occupation with passive infrastructure (ducting) in place for all remaining spaces. This is in accordance with the County Council's standards. As a result, the proposals are also consistent with Policies GOD11 and GOD13 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.102 Mayer Brown explain that cycle parking will be provided in storerooms and within the buggy store area should the demand from residents require it. Given the nature of development and the likely residents it is not expected that many residents will have a bicycle, but the scheme nevertheless provides the ability for cycle storage.
- 5.103 On the basis of the level of parking proposed, the Applicant considers that the proposal is consistent with relevant Development Plan Policies regarding parking provision, namely Policy ST1 of the Local Plan Part 1 and Policy GOD6 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Although the proposal does not provide for 1 car parking space per dwelling, local guidance does allow for individual assessments and, in this case, the level of parking proposed is based on the Applicant's significant experience developing and operating such schemes.

Air Quality

- 5.104 This application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment produced by Mayer Brown.
- 5.105 The site does not lie within any declared AQMA.
- 5.106 Mayer Brown conclude that the proposed development site is suitable for the introduction of new residential receptors.
- 5.107 The report explains that a construction dust assessment has been undertaken for the four stages of construction activities associated with the proposed development in accordance with IAQM guidance on the assessment of dust from construction activities. Following the successful implementation of the mitigation measures, Mayer Brown conclude that the residual effects of construction dust and emissions from construction plant/vehicles upon the local area and sensitive receptors although adverse, will be temporary and considered to be 'not significant'.
- 5.108 The predicted net traffic associated with the proposed development is unlikely to result in a detrimental pollution impact upon the local highway network and the current pollution levels as set out in Mayer Brown's assessment.

- 5.109 The Assessment notes that there are no building emissions as the proposed development will be fully electric, utilising Photovoltaic (PV) panels and Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP). Based on the information provided, the proposed development does not raise any significant adverse impacts on the health and/or quality of life for any existing or proposed receptors, as a result of any anticipated changes to air quality.
- 5.110 Mayer Brown conclude that the proposed development complies fully with air quality related national and local planning policy and any mitigation can, if considered necessary, be enforced by means of appropriate planning conditions, consistent with paragraph 54 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.111 Policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 1 relates to the Environmental Implications of Development and as such covers air quality considerations.
- 5.112 Policy GOD14 states that development should not cause unacceptable risks to air quality. The same Policy also explains that:
- “Proposals will be expected to assess the impact of the development on air quality via an Air Quality Assessment and propose appropriate mitigation measures having regard to existing local policies, strategies or Air Quality Action Plans, where:*
- a. The development has the potential to impact on air quality within an AQMA either on its own or having regard to the cumulative impact of proposed developments or,*
 - b. The development has the potential to impact on air quality, where there is the possibility that an air quality objective may be exceeded, either on its own or having regard to cumulative planned developments*
 - c. The development introduces new residents or employees within an AQMA.”*
- 5.113 In this case, the highways work undertaken by Mayer Brown demonstrates that this proposal will result in a reduction in vehicle movements to and from the Site. Furthermore, we note that the Site is not located within an AQMA and so will not introduce new residents to such an area.
- 5.114 On the basis of Mayer’s Brown’s assessment, the scheme complies the relevant policies of the Development Plan, namely Policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 1 and Policy GOD14 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.115 This application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy produced by Mayer Brown.
- 5.116 Mayer Brown note that the Site is partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3, associated with the River Ock that flows through the Site boundary. The majority of the Site is within Flood Zone 1.
- 5.117 Mayer Brown also conclude that:

- With mitigation measures, the flood risk (from groundwater) to the development is low;
- The Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Map indicates that most of the site is at low risk of surface water flooding with a small area of high-risk which is immediately adjacent to the channel of the River Ock that flows through the site. The building is proposed in an area at low risk of surface water flooding, the existing flow paths will be maintained, and the mitigation measures proposed for the fluvial flooding will be sufficient to manage the surface water flood risk;
- There have been four recorded incidents of external sewer flooding in the area and no recorded incidents of internal sewer flooding. This covers a large area and there is no evidence that any of the events occurred within or near the application boundary;
- The Environment Agency's flood map indicates there is a risk of reservoir flooding. The north and eastern parts of the site are at risk when river levels are normal whereas the south and west of the site is at risk when there is also flooding from rivers. As stated in Waverley Borough Council's Level 2 SFRA, "*as breach occurrences are low probability events, this risk is not considered of great concern*". Therefore, the risk of sewer flooding is considered to be low.

5.118 A series of mitigation measures have been taken, including the location of all (built) development within the low-risk Flood Zone 1. Surface water discharge into the River Ock will be restricted (which Mayer Brown note is a betterment to the existing situation). Finished floor levels of the building will be set a minimum of 300mm above the modelled 1in100yr+climate change event flood level at the site. The flood modelling note concludes that all flooding up to and including the 1in100yr+70% climate change event is confined to the channel. All areas of the site, including the access road, are set above this maximum flood level of 38.40m AOD.

5.119 In the event of a flood, a safe access and egress route for residents and emergency services, is provided along the access road and out onto Station Approach to the north. The flood modelling shows that the fluvial flood extent is confined to the channel for up to and including the 1in100yr+70% climate change event. The minimum top of bank level within the site boundary is 38.80m AOD and the maximum flood level for the 1in100yr+70% climate change event is 38.40m AOD meaning water would not leave the channel.

5.120 The existing pedestrian access via a gate in the southern boundary wall will be retained which also provides safe access/egress for pedestrians to Mill Lane.

5.121 In addition, Mayer Brown's report explains how the drainage strategy has been designed, including the following measures:

- The proposed SuDS features will reduce the rate of discharge by providing storage during heavy rainfall events, reducing the risk of flooding.
- A green roof is proposed that will capture and store surface water at source slowing its release into the rest of the system.

- Any surface water not captured by the green roof will drain via rainwater downpipes and into rainwater planters that will also provide storage and slow the release of water into the rest of the system.
- The car parking areas will be constructed with permeable paving which will collect and store surface water falling onto these and the surrounding areas.
- A flow control will restrict surface water discharge into the River Ock. Any excess water will back up and be stored in the attenuation tank provided.
- The green roof, rainwater planters, permeable paving and filter trench in the attenuation tank will provide surface water treatment before water is discharged into the River Ock. The permeable paving and tank will both be lined to avoid the mobilisation of contaminants.
- The existing access road is to remain unchanged and therefore will continue to drain via the existing system.
- The existing car park on the eastern side of the river is to be reduced in size and therefore this will continue to drain via the existing system.

5.122 It is proposed to continue to discharge foul effluent from the development into the existing Thames Water foul sewer that runs through the Site.

5.123 Therefore, it is demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk in line with the requirements of Policy CC4 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Flood Risk Sequential Assessment

5.124 Part of the Application Site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

5.125 During the course of pre-application discussions (associated with a Planning Performance Agreement) with the LPA, Officers indicated a need for the application to be accompanied by a sequential test in relation to flooding matters.

5.126 Accordingly, this application is accompanied by a standalone Flood Risk Sequential Assessment report prepared by Turley, with input from Mayer Brown to establish the flood risk classification of other candidate sites.

5.127 The Applicant's consultant team has discussed the methodology for the assessment with the LPA's Officers. Those discussions resulted in agreement that the Assessment would only need to consider sites at the Borough's four main settlements and sites within their settlement boundaries.

5.128 The Flood Risk Sequential Assessment found that there were no suitable or available sites which would be sequentially preferable to the proposed development.

5.129 Therefore, the Sequential Test has been passed, meeting the requirements of Policy CC4 of the Local Plan Part 1 and NPPF Policy 168

Daylight & Sunlight

5.130 This application is accompanied by a Daylight & Sunlight Report produced by eb7 who conclude that:

- Daylight and sunlight impact to neighbouring properties:
 - 117 (98%) of 119 neighbouring habitable windows assessed will exceed BRE targets for daylight. Two windows will retain 0.74 and 0.79 of their former values respectively, clearly very close to the 0.8 target and should therefore be considered acceptable when applying a degree of flexibility as advised by BRE guidance.
 - Assessment has shown that 79 (99%) of 80 neighbouring habitable rooms assessed will exceed BRE targets for daylight distribution. One room will retain 0.67 times its former value but should be considered acceptable when applying a degree of flexibility as advised.
 - For sunlight, the results of the assessment have demonstrated full BRE compliance.
- Overshadowing impact to neighbouring properties
 - The assessment of sunlight amenity (overshadowing) to the neighbouring gardens has shown that the sunlight amenity of both gardens analysed will remain unchanged as a result of the proposed development. This is therefore fully compliant with the BRE guidelines.
 - The development's impact upon the neighbouring properties is therefore considered to be entirely consistent with the BRE guidance and relevant planning policy in terms of daylight and sunlight.
- Daylight and sunlight within the proposed residential units
 - The assessment of daylight within the proposed residential units has shown that the vast majority of rooms receive good levels in excess of the relevant BRE targets. The Daylight Illuminance assessments have indicated that 82% of the proposed habitable rooms will meet or exceed the 2022 BRE targets.
 - Whilst direct sunlight levels are more orientation specific, 66% of the units meet the 2022 BRE targets which is considered to be a very good level of compliance. All of those units falling below the standard BRE targets are north-facing flats which have no windows that face within 90 degrees of due south.
 - Overall, the daylight and sunlight results within the proposed residential units indicate a very good level of compliance.

- The assessment of sunlight (overshadowing) within the proposed areas of shared amenity space have shown that 91% of the amenity space will receive more than two hours of sunlight on 21st March and thereby exceed the BRE targets.

5.131 On the basis of eb7's assessment, the proposal is consistent with relevant policies in the Development Plan (namely Policies DM1 and DM5 of the LPP2 and GOD5 of the Neighbourhood Plan).

Noise

5.132 This application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment Report produced by Auricl.

5.133 Based on the noise survey results, Auricl have undertaken calculations to determine the acoustic requirements of the new façades, so as to achieve internal noise levels within the residential properties that are commensurate with the standards.

5.134 Auricl's calculations indicate that the internal noise standards should be achievable using standard, non-acoustic glazing and ventilation configurations throughout the development.

5.135 When considering the use of open windows to control overheating, Auricl's assessment indicates a negligible/low risk category for the whole of the development site, with the predicted internal noise levels less than the Approved Document O (2021) building regulation limits.

5.136 Auricl conclude that the "use of opening windows as a primary means of mitigating overheating is not likely to result in adverse effect".

5.137 On the basis of Auricl's assessment, the proposed development is considered to be consistent with relevant policies of the Development Plan, namely Policy GOD5 of the Neighbourhood Plan and Policies DM1 and DM5 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Ecology

5.138 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been produced by Lizard is submitted in support of this application.

5.139 The EclA explains that the Site is relatively complex containing both low, moderate and high value habitats including Priority Habitat River Ock, which leads into the nearby The River Wey Priority Habitat and SNCI.

5.140 The site offers limited potential for protected species, most notably bats, reptiles and birds and mitigation measures are proposed in the EclA to ensure that protected and notable species are protected at all costs, and that widespread species are protected and mitigated for.

5.141 The EclA also explains that the Site offers some suitable habitat for reptiles, bats, invertebrates and breeding birds. Avoidance and mitigation measures have been built into the design of the scheme in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and BS42020: 2013.

5.142 Lizard's conclusion is that once avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been taken into account, the impacts of the planned development upon biodiversity will be negligible and non-significant.

5.143 The mitigation measures include:

- An appropriate 8.0m protective buffer from the top of the riverbank to protect the River Ock from any pollutants contaminating the waterways leading to the River Wey SNCI; in the absence of mitigation, inappropriate drainage, storage of materials, or inappropriate construction methods might degrade the river or riparian habitat resulting in a moderate impact at the local level.
- A requirement for a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- A managed approach to vegetation removal and the removal of debris to mitigate potential impacts from construction on reptiles.
- In relation to bats, any trees offering low bat roost potential shall be soft felled under ecological supervision. A sensitive lighting scheme must be employed with light spill upon the surrounding vegetation avoided, and boundary trees should be retained. New planting proposals should include pale and night scented species to attract nocturnal insects for bats to feed on, to replace lost ruderal species. Planting should be used to screen the river and trees from light and noise. The proposed external lighting shall be designed by a lighting professional and reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure compliance with best practice. Such design could also be secured through planning condition.
- In relation to breeding birds, the clearance of any trees and demolition of buildings will be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (avoiding March-August as a minimum). Should this not be possible, vegetation will be checked prior to removal by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist. All scrub shall be cleared under ecological supervision. Any active nests must be retained with an appropriate buffer and signage/barriers to prevent disturbance until chicks have fledged.
- In relation to mammals, debris and rubble will be carefully cleared by machinery operating under ecological supervision. Any mammal holes will be manually excavated. Any excavations and pipes over 200mm diameter will be capped overnight or fitted with mammal escape ramps. All excavations will be checked daily, and the ecologist contacted if any wildlife is found within. A pre-works walkover check for badgers shall be undertaken immediately prior to commencement by an appropriately experienced ecologist, within the site and where possible within 30.0 m of the site. Should any evidence of active badgers be discovered, a mitigation strategy shall be devised and submitted to the LPA for approval. Any fencing on the site will have appropriate badger and hedgehog gaps or gates to allow commuting through the site.
- In relation to invertebrates, trees removed will be turned into log piles along the riverbanks. New habitats will be created on the site to replace those lost. A sunny area on the river's edge to the northeast of the site shall have a bee bank

or similar invertebrate feature, to increase diversity of habitats and replace the limited habitat that rubble piles provide. A strategy for the enhancement of the site for invertebrates, with a focus on stag beetles shall be produced prior to commencement of works and could be secured through condition as part of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.

5.144 As for ecological enhancements to be provided as part of the proposals, Lizard summarise these as follows:

- The use of flowering plants with a recognised wildlife value such as those listed within the RHS 'Plants for Pollinators' plant list to provide year-round interest for invertebrates, including pale and night-scented species to attract food for bats;
- Integrated bird boxes should be included, with a particular focus on 'red-listed species' such as swift and house sparrow;
- Further bird boxes within woodland and along the riverbank, to support both woodland species such as treecreeper and nuthatch, and riparian species such as yellow wagtail;
- Creation of new native species-rich hedging. Species should include a minimum 5 woody species such as hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, dogwood, spindle, and guelder rose;
- Creation of wildflower grassland to the margins of the site;
- Bat boxes suitable for a range of species to be incorporated into the southern aspect of mature trees and integrated into the building;
- Installation of invertebrate boxes in both sunny and sheltered locations to cater for a range of species;
- Woodland to be enhanced and enlarged through new planting, thinning, seeding, improved management, addition of further deadwood.

5.145 On this basis, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with relevant policies of the Development Plan, namely Policies NE1 and NE2 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Biodiversity Net Gain

5.146 However, the applicant has worked to retain existing features where possible and have proposed new tree planting and shrub planting in areas where opportunities for larger trees are limited. In addition, the proposed development includes a green roof to provide additional opportunities for biodiversity gains. Additional measures to enhance on-site biodiversity include:

- The use of flowering plants with a recognised wildlife value such as those listed within the Royal Horticultural Society 'Plants for Pollinators' plant list to provide year-round interest for invertebrates, including pale and night-scented species to attract food for bats;

- Integrated bird boxes, with a particular focus on Birds of Conservation Concern red-listed species such as swift and house sparrow;
- Further bird boxes within woodland and along the riverbank, to support both woodland species such as treecreeper and nuthatch, and riparian species such as yellow wagtail;
- Creation of new native species-rich hedging with a minimum of 5 woody species such as hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, dogwood, spindle, and guelder rose;
- Creation of wildflower grassland to the margins of the site;
- Bat boxes suitable for a range of species to be incorporated into the southern aspect of mature trees and integrated into the building;
- Installation of invertebrate boxes in both sunny and sheltered locations to cater for a range of species;
- Woodland to be enhanced and enlarged through new planting, thinning, seeding, improved management, addition of further deadwood.

5.147 The application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment undertaken by Lizard. That Assessment demonstrates that the proposals would result in the delivery of a net gain of -0.55 Habitat Units, which would equate to a net change of -9.78% Habitat Units. Net gains in Hedgerow Units of +0.07 which would equate to a net change of 112.30% and, a net gains in Watercourse Units of +0.06 which equates to a net change of 28.24%.

5.148 On this basis, the application accords with Policy NE1 in that it seeks to enhance biodiversity within the Borough as well as to the existing river corridor.

5.149 Policy DM1 explains that schemes should follow the mitigation hierarchy to avoid negative impacts upon biodiversity deliver the minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% as required by the Environment Act 2021. The biodiversity net gain should be compared to the baseline and calculated using the most up to date national Biodiversity Metric and to protect and enhance geological assets.

5.150 It is acknowledged that the proposed development would not meet the 10% net gains required by the Environment Act in relation to Habitat Units, the BNG Assessment records improvements of greater than 10% against the Hedgerow and Watercourse Unit categories. The applicant has engaged with habitat banks to secure offsite credits in order to meet the 10% requirement; at this stage there is confirmation that there are locally available BNG units and the applicant will work with the Council to ensure that these are secured.

Designated Habitats

5.151 The Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment submitted with this application assesses whether the site would generate likely significant effects to the Wealden Heath (Phase 1) SPA. In terms of recreational pressure, although the proposed development will

result in a net increase of 56 dwellings, the development is an over 60's retirement community and as such general levels of mobility and dog ownership will be lower than that which is expected within the general population. In addition, there are numerous alternative green spaces which are suitable for recreational purposes and are more likely to be utilised by the retirement community. Details of this are contained in Table 3 of the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment.

- 5.152 The Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment also highlights that Wealden Heaths Phase I has a much lower level of recreational pressure than surrounding SPA's, such as, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Dorset Heathlands SPA and has far fewer houses allocated to be built within 5km than other surrounding SPAs.
- 5.153 Therefore, the report concludes that the change in visitor activity would result in a change in visitor activity to be below 5% when viewed in combination with permissions granted since the start of the plan period. Given the evidence detailed that the proposed development at the site is unlikely to lead to any significant effects to Wealden Heaths Phase I SPA.

Lighting

- 5.154 The proposed lighting scheme has been designed to limit external upward light pollution to a minimum and to use the minimum energy necessary to provide a safe and secure premises. The proposed strategy means that the lighting would not make a direct contribution to upward light pollution.
- 5.155 As outlined in the Ecology sub-heading above, the proposed lighting scheme must be sensitively designed to minimise ecological impacts, particularly due to the potential presence of bats locally. The proposed lighting is a maximum of 2700K, which is below the minimum of 3200K recommended in the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted with this application. In addition, only wall mounted lights and low-level bollards are included to minimise any ecological impacts.
- 5.156 Therefore, the proposed development would create a safe and secure premises required by Policy DM7 and would not be harmful to protected species as required by Policy NE1.

Archaeology

- 5.157 This application is accompanied by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment produced by RPS who note that no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wrecks or Registered Battlefields lie within the site or in its immediate vicinity.
- 5.158 The Site is located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP), known as Godalming Historic Core, as designated by Waverley Borough Council.
- 5.159 RPS comment that multiple phases of development and demolition at the site throughout the 19th and 20th are likely to have had a cumulative, negative impact upon any potential, earlier archaeological assets with their footprint, as also indicated by the results of a recent phase of Site Investigation (SI) works undertaken at the site.

- 5.160 As for this proposal, RPS conclude that since the development proposals are largely focused within an area of the site currently occupied by the Mountain House building (which is to be demolished), it is considered unlikely that any archaeological assets would survive within its footprint. As for the remainder of the site, if any buried archaeological remains pre-dating the 19th century are encountered, RPS note that these are likely to be very localised and truncated by modern building foundations and activity. If encountered, any archaeological assets are anticipated, by RPS, to be considered mostly of local significance.
- 5.161 RPS therefore explain that a proportionate response would be that any archaeological works that may be required by the Local Planning Authority, could follow the granting of planning consent and be secured by an appropriately worded condition.
- 5.162 On that basis, the application accords with relevant national and local policies regarding the impact of development on archaeological heritage assets, including Policy DM25.

Arboriculture

- 5.163 This application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Report and Tree Condition Survey produced by Ruskin Tree Consultancy.
- 5.164 Ruskin's report explains that the tree resource consists of a mix of planted ornamental trees dominated by silver birches which are contemporary with the office building, a couple of mature pollarded willows and a number of self-set ash and sycamore trees. There is a mature, multi-stemmed walnut growing to the eastern side of the stream. Beyond part of the western boundary is an area of off-site unmanaged sycamores and ash.
- 5.165 The report identifies a total of ten trees to be removed, nine of which are classified as 'Category C' trees, with one being a 'Category U' (poor quality tree). Ruskin explain that the tree removals will not have a significant impact on the wider area and that the removals can be mitigated through proposed tree planting. Furthermore, Ruskin explain that the proposed landscaping design includes provision of a garden area to the southern side of the building in an area currently occupied by car parking and retention and enhancement of the stream corridor. The proposed new tree planting will serve to increase the tree species and age-class diversity within this site. This planting also gives the opportunity to secure the long-term future and amenity value of the tree resource within the proposed development.
- 5.166 Ruskin's report also explains that tree protection methods would be set out within an Arboricultural Method Statement.

Energy

- 5.167 The application is accompanied by an Energy Statement produced by ESC. The proposed development will include an air source heat pump and photovoltaics (PVs). The development would also seek to minimise energy use through the use of 100% low energy LED lighting and restricting water use to 125 litres/person/day. Therefore, the requirements of Policy DM2 are met.

Ground Conditions

- 5.168 Policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 1 states that development should avoid significant harm to the health or amenity of future occupants of the development and that, in areas where contamination is known or likely to be found, a desk based assessment should be undertaken followed by an intrusive investigation where appropriate to identify mitigation / remediation measures.
- 5.169 The Desk Top Assessment submitted with the application which identified a moderate level of harm as a worst case scenario and recommended further survey work.
- 5.170 This was followed by a Ground Condition Assessment which involved:
- 5.171 Two days machine trial pitting and soakage testing (2no.). Trial pits were advanced using a tracked 8t machine, with water supply for the soakage tests from a truck mounted bowser.
- Two days windowless sample borehole drilling (8no.) with a tracked dynamic sampling rig. Four boreholes were installed with a 50mm diameter standpipe to allow groundwater gauging and gas monitoring.
 - Hand trial pitting across the site for additional coverage.
 - Contamination laboratory analysis.
 - Subsequent monitoring of groundwater levels and gas monitoring in installed wells.
- 5.172 The report concludes, as a worst case, there is a low / moderate risk of contamination from Made Ground soils in proximity to the existing building. The report recommends a capping layer of 300mm is installed in areas in close proximity to the existing building to reduce risks to future residents of the site. This is shown in Extract 10.1 in the Ground Condition Assessment as shown below

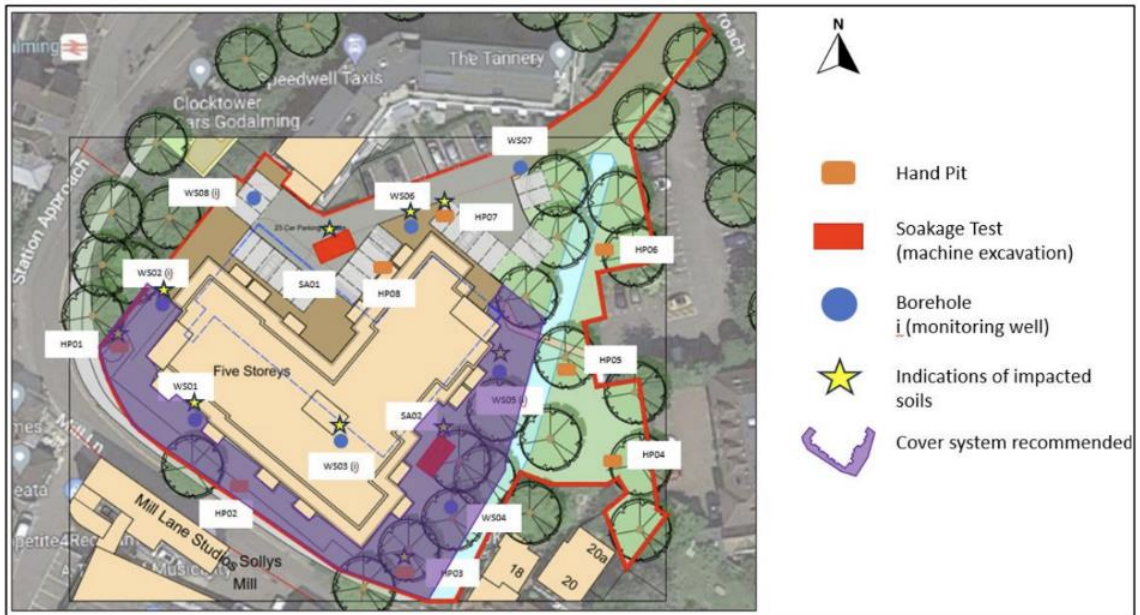


Figure 3: Proposed cover system

- 5.173 The report also finds that a Remediation Method Statement and Piling Risk Assessment should be completed; these works can be conditioned as part of a planning approval.
- 5.174 Therefore, it has been demonstrated that that the low-moderate risk of contamination can be mitigated against and the requirements of Policy DM1 have been met.

6. Planning Obligations and Conditions

- 6.1 The Applicant will engage with the LPA to review draft proposed planning conditions.
- 6.2 In relation to any planning obligations, including financial obligations, to be secured by a Section 106 Agreement, the Applicant is willing to agree to such measures, but only where they are fully in accordance with Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 6.3 Provided that the proposal makes provision for such infrastructure, the Applicant considers that Policy ICS1 of the LPP1 would be satisfied.
- 6.4 Before agreeing to any such obligations, the Applicant therefore requests that the LPA and statutory consultees set out the necessary justification in line with the Regulations.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 This application proposes (in full detail), 56 'later living' apartments for occupation by the over 60s. The delivery of this accommodation must be seen in the context of the Government's recognition (in the NPPG) that meeting the housing needs of older people is 'critical', and the Local Plan for Waverley Borough recognises that it is necessary to meet the needs of the ageing population in the area. The Site comprises an existing, albeit vacant, office building. Despite the loss of the employment floorspace, the proposed development provides housing for older people (in the context of a recognised ageing population), in an area with a housing land supply shortfall and in a highly sustainable location. The scheme is a well-designed, high quality response to the Site's context and the character of the area.
- 7.2 This section of this Planning Statement sets out how we consider the decision-taker should approach the determination of the planning application in relation to the land at Mountain House, Godalming on the following approaches:
- The application of the 'flat' balance
 - The application of the 'tilted' balance
- 7.3 It is also essential that the decision-taker considers the matter of whether the proposal complies with the Development Plan, 'taken as a whole'.

The application of the 'flat' balance

- 7.4 The analysis undertaken in this Planning Statement, supported by the other application documents, does not identify any conflict with other policies of the adopted Development Plan on development management issues or on matters of planning principles.
- 7.5 It is necessary for the decision-taker to have regard to other material considerations.
- 7.6 In this case, we consider that those material considerations are:
- The fact that this site is in a highly sustainable location;
 - The proposal contributes to the delivery of new homes;
 - The proposal specifically provides for housing where occupancy will be restricted to those aged over 60;
 - The adopted Development Plan does not include any policies which proactively plan for the needs of that group of the community;
 - Providing a well-designed, high quality scheme of new housing will lead to a range of economic benefits (including jobs and expenditure).

- 7.7 Consequently, the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, because the scheme complies with the Development Plan, taken as a whole.

The application of the 'tilted' balance

- 7.8 In any event the LPA is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites and so the most important policies for determining the application are out of date as confirmed by paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- 7.9 With the application of the tilted balance via paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF 2023, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 7.10 The beneficial material considerations are weighty, and further, the analysis undertaken in this Planning Statement and the supporting documents does not identify any conflict with the Development Plan or other harm arising which is sufficient to justify the refusal of the application.
- 7.11 There is no reason to conclude that any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and so the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied.
- 7.12 Consequently, the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF because the most important policies are out of date and because the adverse impacts of granting permission would not significant and demonstrably outweigh the benefits
- 7.13 In conclusion, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. When assessed against development plan policies on a 'flat balance', the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the development plan; and when the tilted balance is applied via paragraph 11(d) as prescribed in the NPPF, it compels the LPA to grant planning permission unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. In conclusion, therefore, the proposals are in accordance with the development plan when assessed against both a 'flat balance' or 'tilted balance' and planning permission should be granted without delay.

**Appendix 1: HBF Evidence on Challenges to
Development in the Retirement
Housing Sector**

Turley
The Pinnacle
20 Tudor Road
Reading
RG1 1NH

Turley