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PLANNING STATEMENT

**FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING TO
ACCOMMODATE 14 APARTMENTS WITH ANCILLARY CYCLE AND
BIN STORAGE FACILITIES
FOR**

GURU NANAK DARBAR GURDWARA

CLARENCE PLACE

GRAVESEND

KENT

DA12 1LD

Project: CLARENCE PLACE, GRAVESEND,KENT, DA12 1LD

Client: GURU NANAK DARBAR GURDWARA

Document: Planning Statement

Ref: JLH/181

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
1	08 th July 2022	Issue

PLANNING STATEMENT

1.0 The following policies have been identified as being relevant to these proposals:

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development;
- CS11 – Transport;
- CS14 – Housing Type and Size;
- CS15 – Housing Density;
- CS19 – Design & Development Principle;
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment.

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- H5 – Increasing the Housing Stock by the Conversion of Existing Buildings
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development;
- Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Section 7 - Requiring Good Design;
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land;
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places;
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - Residential Layout Guidelines (2020);
- Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards.
- Windmill Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2007)

1.1 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following submitted documents:

- i) Historic Analysis Report prepared by HCUK Group
- ii) Daylight and Sunlight Report by Richard Staig –MRICS
- iii) Ecology Report and Bat Survey by K.B.Ecology Ltd
- iv) Design and Access Statement by Haskins Designs which provides a detailed analysis of the existing building and the general character of the surrounding area.

- 1.2 The proposals consist of the conversion of the existing building, previously known as Milton Mount Church, and the introduction of 14 residential apartments together with ancillary bin and cycle storage facilities. The scheme also includes for a communal library facility within the building.

The associated works incorporates the partial demolition of recently constructed extensions to the original structure that will return the building to its original form. Please refer to the submitted drawings and the Historic Analysis in the Design and Access Statement.

- 1.3 The following policies have been identified on being relevant to these proposals:
Development Plan.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development and NPPF Section 2.

The Proposals to convert the building into residential apartments will provide a much more sustainable use for the building which has previously been used for a number of different activities. The demand for residential accommodation will serve a long – term use for the building.

- CS11 – Transport

The site is in close proximity to Gravesend Town Centre with excellent public transport facilities including local bus routes and a main line railway station with regular services to London Medway and East Kent. The previous pre-application submission included consultation with the Highway department and they confirmed that due to the location of the site in context with Gravesend Town Centre, it would be acceptable for this development to be car-free. The scheme has allowed for 28 cycle spaces that will be located at the rear of the building within a secure enclosure with access for all of the occupants.

- CS14 – Housing Type and Size

Careful Consideration has been given to the internal layouts of the proposed apartments to fully comply with National Space standards and the proposals include a mix of one and two bedroom units.

- CS19 – Design and Development Principles
NPPF Section 7 and Section 12.

Further consideration has also been given to the supplementary Planning Guidance SPG2 and Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards. The apartment designs have all undergone a detailed analysis by specialist consultants, Richard Staig MRICS who have carried out a full Daylight and Sunlight survey to ensure that there is sufficient natural light to all primary rooms . Each apartment exceeds the required floorspace as stated in the New Housing Technical Standards.

- CS15– Housing Density.

The original proposals that were submitted under a pre-application submission included for the conversion of the building into 19 residential apartments. Although the principle of converting the building into residential use was deemed to be acceptable, there were concerns regarding the density.

Consequently, the number of proposed units have been significantly reduced to just 14 apartments. This now provides a scheme with reasonable density that will not conflict with the general character of the area.
- H5 – Housing Stock converting existing buildings (Saved policy – Nov 1994) and NPPF. Section 11 – making effective use of the land .

It is noted that the Council currently are not meeting their target figures for the general demand for residential homes. This proposal for 14 new apartments will make a positive contribution towards achieving there important requirement.
- CS20 Heritage and the Historic Environment

It is noted that the building is contained within the windmill Hill Conversation Area and full reference has been made to the Supplementary Planning Guidance Character Appraisal (2007).

A full and detailed assessment of the building and the surrounding area was carried out by specialist Consultants HCUK Group and a copy of their document forms part of this application.

The proposals involve the removal of the recently constructed single storey extensions to the building in order to restore the main building to its original form. The works also include for the reintroduction of the main entrance from Clarence Place and the introduction/replacement of some existing windows with an emphasis on the original fenestration and architectural detailing together with boundary treatments that reflect the general character of the area.

It is agreed that the final details of external materials and detailing can be dealt with under a suitably worded planning condition.
- NPPF Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment and Local Plan Saved Policy TC3.

The original proposals for developing the site included the demolition of the existing building. After much debate it was concluded by the Appeal Inspector that the building contributed to the conservation Area and that demolition was not deemed acceptable.

A subsequent pre-application was submitted for the retention and conversion of the building into 19 residential apartments. The principle of conversion to residential accommodation was acceptable but the number of units were considered excessive. Furthermore, consideration to include enhancements to the external appearance of the building should also form part of the proposals.

As mentioned above , the current scheme includes substantial restoration and repair works that collectively will enhance the appearance of the building to fully comply with these policies.

- 1.4 Special consideration is required to be given to the issues raised by the Inspector relating to the Appeal Decision for the previous planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of one new building accommodating 19 residential with associated parking, cycle storage and bin storage facilities. The main issue related to the potential to demolish the existing building which would impact upon the significance of the Conservation Area being a designated heritage asset.
On this basis the Inspector concluded that the building should not be demolished.
- 1.5 Our current scheme of course retains the existing building and indeed includes a number of renovation and restoration works that will enhance the appearance of the original structure that would also significantly benefit the Conservation Area.
On this basis the concerns of the demolition and removal of the building has been fully addressed. In order to carefully consider an appropriate scheme that would fully comply with current planning policies, a detailed pre-application submission was made to Gravesham Council Planning Team.
The proposals involved the retention of the existing building and its conversion into 19 residential apartments.
The Pre-application submission included consultations with the Councils Conservation Officer, Senior Planning Officer, KCC Highways Officer, Kent Police and the Ecological Advisor.
The general principle of retaining and converting the building into residential apartments was deemed to be acceptable, but there were concerns about the density of the scheme.
As a result of this, the current proposals have been reduced to just 14 units with associated cycle and bin storage facilities.
The conservation officers response included a requirement for restoration and repair works to enhance the appearance of the building.
The proposals to remove some of the recent extensions to the original structure were also supported.
Full details of the external changes are given in the submitted drawings.
- 1.6 Reference was also made in the Appeal Decision to the previous marketing strategy for the sale of the existing building for its retention and potential conversion. It was noted that the main interest from the potential buyers was to convert the building for residential use, as this would provide the most sustainable use for this building. It was also noted that the council are currently unable to demonstrate a long term housing supply and this proposal will make a positive contribution to this important shortfall. Furthermore it is clear that surrounding area consists of predominantly residential properties and the current scheme will fit well into this established residential area.

- 1.7 In terms of parking requirements, the Inspector mentions that due to the accessible location of the site, with good connection to local public transport and the centre of the main town with all local facilities, including retail, school, cafes/restaurant and general offices, then a car free scheme would be appropriate. The current scheme does provide for 28 secure cycle spaces with full access from all apartments.
On this basis we conclude that a car free scheme is appropriate and fully compliant with KCC Highways requirements.
- 1.8 In conclusion we are confident that the scheme fully responds to the issues raised by the Planning Inspector and is fully compliant with the relevant Planning Policies.