PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STEEL/BLOCK CLAD INDUSTRIAL BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF THREE TOWN HOUSES.

UNIT ONE, CARSONS YARD, WARMINSTER, WILTSHIRE.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This is a re-application following Planning Approval 14/02782/FUL (now lapsed) for the demolition of the steel clad building and erection of three town houses. This application is exactly the same as the lapsed consent although the surrounding land and buildings have changed significantly.

EXISTING BUILDING

Unit One, Carsons Yard is a concrete block built structure with timber roof trusses, steel clad gables and roof covering. This building once formed part of a number of small businesses located in the surrounding buildings which have gradually, over the intervening years, moved away and the buildings converted to residential use. Unit One is the single remaining industrial building within Carsons Yard.

Currently under construction is a terrace of town houses erected adjacent to the access track running up from East Street.

Unit One is an older workshop erected many years ago and will soon require extensive refurbishment of the timber roof structure and general upgrading with insulation to the walls and roof covering.



SURROUNDING AREA

Carsons Yard has been the subject of extensive investigations over the years with a view to a larger redevelopment as a whole. Unfortunately this did not come to fruition and redevelopment by individual landowners has prevailed with some unfortunate schemes being approved.
As stated above, the application site is the last remaining industrial building in Carsons Yard.



PROPOSALS

The owner has decided that it is time to move out of, what is now effectively, a residential area of the town and perhaps move the business to one of the local trading estates.

The proposal is to isolate all services, dismantle and demolish the existing structure entirely, break up the floor slab and clear all away. Retain the existing brick retaining walls to the North West and South West boundaries and construct three new terraced two storey town houses.

The buildings have been designed and located within the site to respect the existing residential properties around them especially those to the South including the tree close to the boundary outside the applicants ownership.

The building is already served by electric and water supplies together with connection to the Public Sewer.

The houses are two bedroom town properties extending to approximately 69 square metres in floor area over two floors with generous rear south facing gardens of around 50 square metres. The footprint of the three houses will cover 119 square metres which represents 39% of the overall site as opposed to the existing structure which covers around 75% of the site.

Recently completed buildings and those currently under construction have been approved using red brick walls under a profiled concrete tiled roof with upvc windows and doors. The three town houses are proposed to use the same materials to blend in with their surroundings.



LIVING STANDARDS

The floor area has been increased slightly to achieve a figure closer to the 70 square metres recommended in the space standards document used by Wiltshire Council as guidance.
Each property has a rear access for the storage of bins.

ACCESS

Unit One has been used for various different types of business but is currently a vehicle repair business. The workshop has unlimited and unrestricted access from East Street.

The same proposal 14/02782/FUL as approved provided only pedestrian access with no vehicular access. These new proposals are also providing only pedestrian access.

There are a few recently completed buildings that have been approved with pedestrian access only. In particular the current on going construction of six terraced houses to the rear of 90 Market Place (ref. PL/2021/05479/FUL) has also been approved without parking provision. The attached extract from the Case Officers Planning Report clearly sets out the Council's reasoning and rationale for their decision to allow a pedestrian access only scheme.

CONCLUSION

As this is the last remaining industrial building within Carsons Yard, and is now surrounded by Residential development, it seems only sensible to allow for its demolition and erection of three similar residential properties providing smaller more affordable houses within the town centre environment.

This and the surrounding housing would seem to adhere to the policies and wishes of both the Warminster Town Council and Wiltshire Council.

EXTRACT FROM CASE OFFICERS REPORT FOR APPLICATION REFERENCE PL/2021/05479

As the site is just a patch of wasteland, it is not considered to be of any particular historic significance, and therefore no harm to historic significance would occur. Even if harm could be identified, it would be 'less than substantial harm' to which there is clear public benefit from the provision of 8 dwellings to the housing stock.

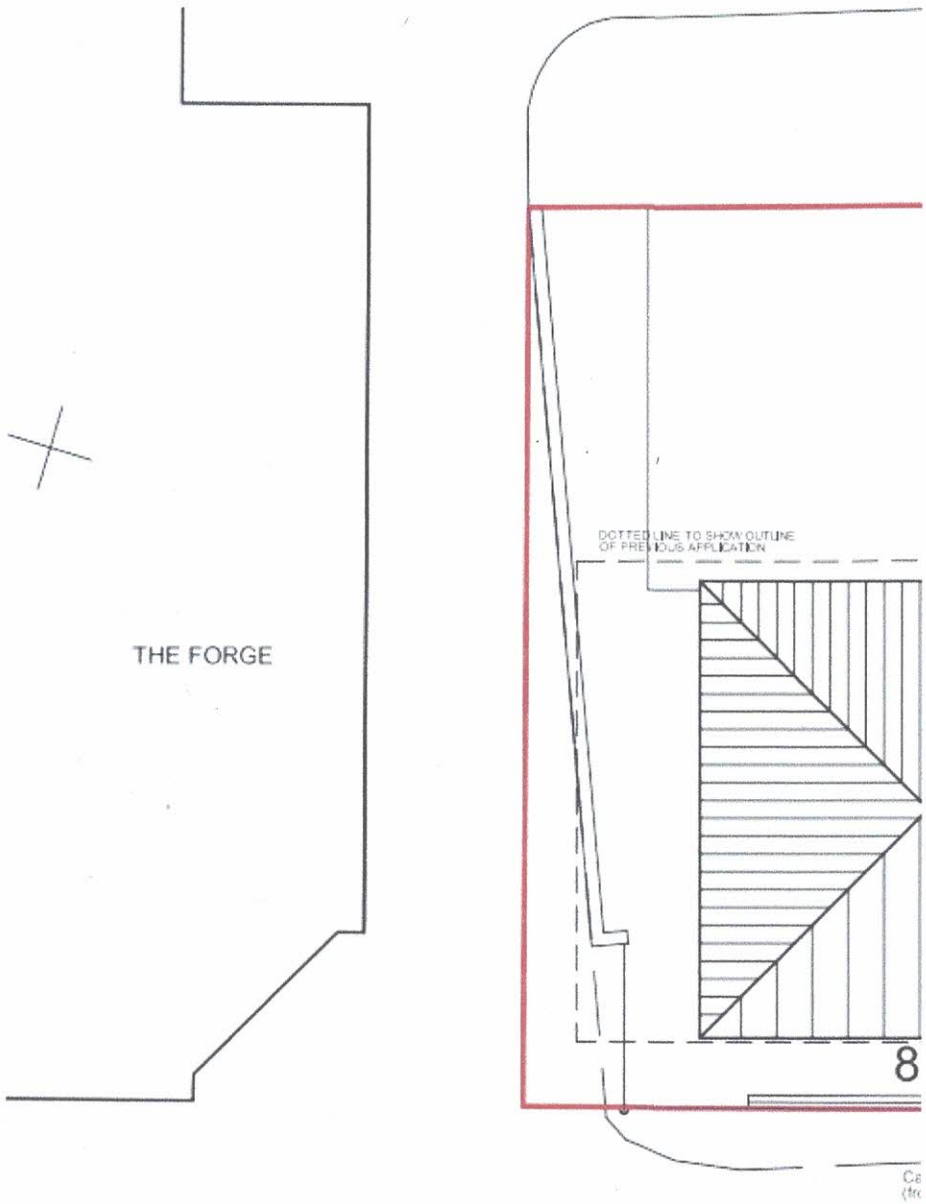
Car Parking and Highway and Pedestrian safety:
The revised plans have meant that the proposal is now a 'car free' proposal which is fairly common for town centre locations. Being a highly sustainable location means that occupants would have access to a wide range of services and facilities within Warminster and should limit the need for the use of the private car. It is estimated that between 19-23% of UK homes don't have access to a car and therefore there could clearly be demand for housing without cars. Furthermore, there are public car parks where permits are available for purchase should occupants need access to a vehicle.

Throughout the application representation letters have been concerned over the resultant width of the access road and from people parking and blocking the road. Officers have considered this very carefully and provided some mitigations that should discourage such parking. However, Officers cannot prevent potential bad behaviour and inconsiderate parking - should any issues arise they would be private civil matters or potentially within the remit of the police.

The mitigations officers have sought include adding brick walls and railings to the front of the properties. This would stop cars from being able to squeeze between the front wall and the resultant access road, thereby potentially blocking it as could have occurred under the superseded plans.

According to the applicants submitted site plan (which title deeds plotted) the width of the access road from the dwarf wall and railings to the eastern side of the Carson's yard access is approximately 3.8m. Therefore any car parked in front of the railings would block the access - given that car parking spaces are usually 2.4m wide. Therefore by this logic, such situations should not occur.

As the access road turns around the corner to the west past plot 8 and 'the Forge' a splay (defined by a dwarf wall) has been included whereby there is space to be able to sweep and turn the corner as seen in the snip below. At its widest point the new wall would be c3.8m wide (narrowing to 2.6m), thereby not wide enough for a car to be able to park and still allow for another car to pass. In this context, the proposal should not result in unplanned opportunity for cars to be able to park on or immediately adjacent to the development.



Extract from the site plan

Officers note that Public Right of Way WARM92 runs up from Market Street up past the Forge and therefore is a shared space between pedestrians and vehicles. Representation letters state that people can currently get out of the way when vehicles pass and that this development will prevent this causing problems. However, the applicant/landowner could erect a barrier along their title deed boundary without requiring planning permission and could have long been an existing issue. Given that the proposal is car free, there shouldn't be an increase in car use, and there should still be the space to the east of Carson's yard instead. Furthermore pedestrians would also have the option to use the same gaps in the dwarf wall as occupants would use to get to their front doors offering similar points to move out of the way if required.

Lastly the road is quite straight so pedestrians should be readily seen by vehicles coming into Carson's Yard from Market Place. Cars leaving the car garage would have to turn the corner, but as it would be a reasonably blind bend, speeds should be kept to a minimum

It is also important to note that the access will not be made any narrower than already exists between the existing building 9No 90 itself) and No 1-3 The Foundry opposite.

The applicant has also sought to address concerns of construction blocking the access which is needed by other residents (see representation section). The garden areas should allow for storage of materials and the applicant has identified land (the eastern side of Carson's Yard for vehicle parking) that can be used. There would be some situations when deliveries will cause temporary blockages, but this is an inevitable situation which should be only for short brief periods of time, and is best managed by ongoing communication between the affected residents and the site manager/applicant. Nonetheless, a construction method statement condition will be required.

Living Standards of Occupants:
The buildings would be of a decent size for two bedroom dwellings, which officers acknowledge would be capable of family occupation. The space standards document recommends that 2 storey 2 bedroom dwellings should have a minimum of 70m2 of space whereas the dwellings would have approximately 68m2. Whilst this is undersize, it is not by a significant amount and consideration has to be given to the constraint's of this town centre location. The space standards document is not adopted by Wiltshire Council and therefore isn't adopted policy and can only therefore be guidance given moderate weight in the planning balance.

The internal rooms should also receive good levels of direct sunlight and borrowed light from morning and evening sun due to the north south axis of the building allow for the front and rear elevations to face east and west.

Officers engaged in a lot of negotiation to try to ensure that Building for Life 12 standards (adopted by the NP), where the garden is of a decent shape and the same size as the ground floor of the building. Plot 8 exceeds this standard and plot 7 is approximately 1m2 short whereas the others are approximately 6m2 short. Whilst Officers suggested that a dwelling should be removed from the proposal to allow for more garden space to meet the standard, the applicant chose not to submit revised plans on this basis. Therefore Officers have to consider whether a refusal, on this sole basis would be reasonable and in the context that Wiltshire cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply throughout the lifetime of this application. Furthermore, this is not a green field site; it is a town centre location with constraints on all sides and therefore this deficiency in terms of garden space is not considered to warrant the refusal of the application.

The quality of the amenity space also has to be taken into account. The gardens would be adjacent to a bungalow which should allow for a lot of direct evening sunlight into the garden, especially in the evening. Direct evening sunlight into gardens (i.e. west facing gardens) are considered to be better quality than east facing ones which would be in shadow at that time. Evenings tend to be when children play and there is outdoor entertainment in those garden spaces, which should mitigate any perceived lack of space by not meeting the building for life 12 requirement.

Other issues:
Each dwelling would have its own bin store space in the garden, with convenient rear garden access and therefore on non-collection days the bins should not be a problem. Officers acknowledge that on collection days (where it is understood that refuse vehicles do not access Carson's yard, requiring all occupants to leave their bins alongside No 6 East Street or on the main pavement itself.