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Neighbour Amenity Assessment for the proposed development at The Former Labour Club, 3 Lowbourne, Melksham, SN12 7DZ

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1.0 Extant and current schemes

1.1 Planning was originally granted in January 2015 for the erection of a block of 17 two bedroom apartments (13/07076/FUL). Due to our client making a material start on the site, the scheme is extant and therefore forms a material consideration.

1.2 The massing of the extant scheme was much greater than the proposed nine dwellings. It is noted that the Case Officer has shown concern regarding the potential overshadowing and subsequent overbearing impact of plots 1-4 on the properties to the north (nos. 16b-16e Union Street).

1.3 The extant scheme consists of a mix of three and two storey elements, with the step down to two storey occurring between plots 4 and 5 (diagram one).



Diagram One: Massing of 13/07076/FUL from south elevation (not to scale)

1.4 The height difference between the proposed scheme and extant ranges from 1.77m (plot 1), to 0.8m (plot 4). Although, the extant scheme is 1.58m taller on parts of plot 4.

1.5 In terms of distance to 16e Union Street, plot 1 is 6.8m from the closest gable, with plot 2 being 7.2m away. This gable, also, has only a bathroom window (diagram two) and there is no right to light to bathrooms as these are not classed as habitable spaces.



Diagram two: floorplan of no.16e Union Street

1.6 With regards to the location, it is accepted that in town centre locations there is a greater density of properties and the associated potential overbearing impact, when compared to more suburban development. However, this does not outweigh the merits of delivering this sustainable development.

OTHER EXAMPLES

1.7 Within the wider area of Melksham, there are examples of three storey buildings next to bungalows.

1.8 Planning was granted in November 2018 for the erection of four three storey dwellings (18/07286/FUL). These are in close proximity to bungalows, the nearest of which is 12m to the east. The bungalow was granted consent in May 2018. In the Officer Report for the three storey dwellings, the Officer acknowledges that the bungalow would be subject to overbearing impacts from the three storey dwellings, however it was concluded that this was still acceptable in policy terms. The proposal for the nine dwellings is for two and a half storey near a two storey building and therefore there is a much reduced overbearing affect.

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2.0 Conclusion

2.1 The overall scheme is more sympathetic to the Conservation Area and has much reduced massing and scale, when compared to the extant consent. This reduction in massing will act to reduce the impact on no.16e Union Street and provide better quality amenity for both the new residents and existing residents. Furthermore, the green buffer by way of garden space will lead to less noise creation than the carpark, as per the extant consent.

2.2 Town centre locations are known for higher density living and reduced amenity in terms of light and space, when compared to suburban developments. The proposed scheme will not cause loss of light to no.16e Union Street due to no habitable rooms having windows on the gable closest to the site and therefore the scheme is acceptable in terms of amenity.

2.3 Whilst Officer concerns surrounding neighbour amenity are acknowledged, on balance this is not sufficient to warrant a refusal for the delivery of sustainable housing in a sustainable location.

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