DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT incorporating Planning Statement

Erection of 6 apartments.

Westbury Police Station
Station Road
Westbury
BA13 3JL

For Gainsborough Group Construction Ltd

1. Introduction

Apex Planning Design Ltd has been instructed to submit a planning application for the erection of 6 apartments in a 3 storey block at the rear of the former Police Station on Station Road in Westbury.

The Police Station was sold by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire in 2023.

The site currently contains the former Police Station offices which benefit from prior notification approval for conversion to dwellings. This building forms a terrace along Station Road.

The development is proposed in the car park to the rear of the former police station. The existing garage will be demolished to make way for the flats, which have been designed so as to make the most efficient use of this brownfield site which is sited within the development boundary of Westbury.

The proposal has been designed to minimise overlooking and overshadowing and to provide properties that accord with building regulations and national space standards and above all fit within the context of local development in terms of style and scale.

The approved dwellings at the front of the property, within the former police building, have large front gardens and it is proposed that parking will be provided for these dwellings directly off the road, as shown on the accompanying plans.

2. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF is framed as a positive, responsive and enabling document, seeking to facilitate sustainable development and growth, supporting and securing, rather than impeding, sustainable economic growth and ensuring the planning system operates to this end; indeed, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Applications for sustainable development should be approved wherever possible, consistent with an overarching approach that demands 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It advocates a proactive, creative and solution-seeking approach to planning.

This proposal optimises the development potential of the site, whilst taking into account the density of the site surrounds and will provide a well-designed scheme that sits comfortably within the plot and will be in keeping with the appearance and massing of surrounding buildings and as such, is considered to be consistent with National Planning Policy.

Westbury Neighbourhood Plan

The WNP is currently in the process of examination and has not as yet become part of the Local Development Plan for Wiltshire. However as part of the evidence gathering process a number of reports have been delivered, among them a character statement and design guide. This document summarises the area of Westbury most closely linked to the proposal site:

Westbury Neighbourhood Plan Character Statement and Design Guide

Area L: Station Road



Station Road is a linear road that connects the town centre with the railway station and beyond to the Westbury Area Trading Estates. As a road and routeway it showcases Westbury's pre-war development based on the success of the railway, woollen cloth and iron workings which largely no-longer exist.

The road connects the town centre to the railway station and the Westbury Area Trading estates. Because of this it is heavily trafficked. There is local ambition for the routeway to be

reclaimed as a shared space to encourage more walking and cycling as part of a wider sustainable transport network. There is now a weight limit in place which has done a lot to reduce traffic and stop any heavy goods vehicles.

The road is subdivided and defined by a series of roundabouts. Where it begins at the base of Haynes Road and West End, where it forms a junction with Eden Vale Road and Meadow Lane, connects with Oldfield Road and Rosefield Way and with Spinnaker near the Railway Inn.

Development began along the road around 1927 and was largely completed by 1936, although there are infill developments including a 1950s Police Station, 1980s Merlin Court, 1990s Bramley Mews.

After the formation of the Great Western Railway in 1923 a series of railway worker's cottages were developed on the left-hand side after the roundabout that continue most of the way to the railway station interspersed with bungalows and modern infill. The railway workers cottages were largely completed by 1931. These cottages highlight the importance of Westbury as a railway centre in the 1930s and 1940s.

After the bridge on the left there is a short railway worker's terrace that leads to the Station Road sailing lake, a former open cast mine hole. Up over the hill beyond the railway station there are industrial units which occupy the buildings that are remnants of the Westbury Iron Works (a Blast Furnace). It is also the location of Westbury's largest industrial employer.

On the right of Station Road there is a series of 1990s and 2000s dwellings in Neptune Close and Primmers Place. This is also the location of the Railway Inn which is a late 18th Century building, now part Public house and dwelling and part warehouse with crane still in place

The above except from the document highlights the setting of the proposed development. Highways infrastructure is good, with direct links to the centre of town, the industrial area and the train station (which is also within easy walking/cycling distance.)

Policy DDH6: Housing to Meet Local Needs

This proposed policy encourages the production of smaller, 1-3 bedroom homes (backed by the findings of the Westbury Housing Needs Assessment), as well as mentioning the benefit of ground floor flats with level access showers/wet rooms. Both of these needs can be delivered by the proposed scheme. This is a small scheme for 6 flats and as such there is no requirement for a provision of affordable housing within the scheme. The point should be made, however, that these properties, by their nature as 1 bedroom flats, will provide more affordable accommodation in a sustainable location near the town centre on brownfield land.

It should be noted that there are currently (1/11/23) only 4 properties available for rent within Westbury, of which only 2 could be considered in any way 'affordable' and are 2 bedroom properties.

Of the 183 properties available for sale in Westbury 7 are one bedroom properties, of which 5 are over 55/retirement complexes.

There is clearly a significant shortfall in provision of modest homes to rent or buy in the town, which this proposal will help to alleviate.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Of particular relevance to this application are the following local policies;

CP1: Settlement Strategy identifies the settlements where sustainable development will take place. The proposal sits within the centre of Westbury, within the development boundary and on a brownfield site. It is therefore considered to be in accordance with this policy.

CP2: Delivery Strategy outlines how development within the life of the pan will be spread throughout the sustainable settlements. Again, considering the location and nature of the site it is considered that this proposal is policy compliant with regard to CP2.

CP32 Spatial Strategy for the Westbury Community Area includes a provision of 1500 homes in Westbury itself.

CP41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy. As per latest building regulations requirements the development will be constructed using sustainable techniques and materials, which can be first referenced in the retention of the existing police housing buildings, thus negating the loss of captured energy from their construction.

CP45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs. The provision of smaller dwellings falls within the criteria raised by the Westbury Housing Needs Assessment, which highlights the relatively low provision of 1-3 bedroom homes within the town.

CP50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity; Due to the brownfield nature of the site there is very little by way of geo- and bio-diversity. However this does not mean that the situation cannot be improved and effort will be made to do so.

CP51: Landscape; Efforts will be made to negate any negative impacts on areas covered by this policy.

CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping requires a dialogue with the local context in order to ensure that development will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire. This is covered in more detail in the relevant section further on in this document.

CP60: Sustainable Transport. The site is located in close proximity to local facilities and the Westbury railway station, providing public transport opportunities practically from the doorstep.

3. Layout, Scale & Appearance

It is proposed to build a three storey block of flats at the rear of the existing building. This will provide a total of 6 one bedroom flats, within close proximity to the town centre, services and the public transport network.

The flats are to be situated at the rear of the existing large parking area for the former police station. The block will be aligned with existing development albeit set back from the road.

The design has taken its cues from the local area including the existing building at the front of the site, the relatively recent development across the road at Westbury Court and the prevalence of brick as an external facing material within the town.

The central entrance and stairway is provided with extensive natural light through the large full height glazing that runs the height of the building.

It is considered that the scale of the building is appropriate to the proportions of the site and the distance from the existing buildings that line Station Road.

Internally flats have been aligned so as to reduce any overlooking to the front of the building and so to any neighbouring properties by placing as much as possible those rooms least likely to be occupied throughout the day. Hence kitchens, bathrooms and home offices align along the northeast elevation, with bedrooms and living rooms predominantly overlooking the open space to the rear (south west) of the site.

The interiors of the flats have been designed to provide the most efficient use of space with open plan living/dining/kitchens, large bedrooms, en-suites where possible and family bathrooms. Also there are a number of flats with study facilities that are a core requirement in the modern age of working from home. These rooms can also provide storage facilities for cycles for those who do not wish to rely on the shared facilities outside.

4. Access

Highway access to the site is proposed to continue from the existing vehicular access. This will serve the new flats and allow access to the rear of the former police station building. It is proposed that the large gardens to the front of the existing building will be repurposed for parking spaces for the residents of that building. This will also serve to reduce the impact of the new development on the existing access to the highway.

It is considered that the proposal will therefore not increase vehicular traffic over that of the historic use of the building aa police station.

Parking provision is on a level of one space per proposed flat with two visitor spaces. Security gates will be placed at the entrance, set back from the highway and opening inward as shown on the plans, so as not to impact on access to the site from the highway, with enough room for a car to exit the highway before having to stop to open the gates. Likewise when exiting there is sufficient space to allow a vehicle to exit the gates and for them to close without forcing the vehicle to make an entry into the highway. Additionally there is sufficient space for any vehicle exiting the site to reverse back into the site and await any vehicle that they may meet entering the site.

Parking spaces are provided at the required size of 2.4 x 4.8m with a 6m area for turning.

Cycle storage is provided as well as there being sufficient space within each flat by way of the office space to provide for internal storage of the more expensive cycles that one would not leave outside. Considering that 20% of spend on cycles is for e-bikes, which retail for in excess of £3000 it is considered that in-home storage options will prove popular and will dovetail with ground floor secure parking proposals to cover more of the cycling demographic.

Bin storage is also provided and as there is insufficient room for a refuse truck to enter and turn within the site bins can be delivered to the front of the property where there is space in front of the former police station for storage on collection days.

The site lies on several bus quotes, both local to Westbury and local centres such as Trowbridge, Frome, Bath, Salisbury and Warminster as well as Westbury station:

D1 Bath-Trwbridge-Warmsinter-Salisbury
X47 Frome
45A/B Westbury town services
87/A Trowbridge - Devizes

Westbury Station is a mainline station with direct trains to London in under an hour and a half.

5. Landscaping

The current site is made over to hardstanding and a small area of grass. It is proposed to enhance the biodiversity of the area surrounding the hard landscaping and the proposed as best we can.

Space is limited due to parking and turning requirements, however these have been kept to a minimum and should allow for more soft landscaping to be provided on site.

6. Conclusion

It is considered that this proposal provides an excellent opportunity to provide a number of modest homes on a brownfield site at the centre of the town within easy walking distance to local facilities and public transport in a sustainable location to the enhancement of the local area and local housing need

This scheme will provide a quality modern housing development that will fit well within the existing context and provide a timely adjunct to local housing provision and the town centre built environment.

It is also clear that at present Westbury is under provided with small housing units either for rent or purchase and this development will provide a small addition to that housing stock.