Reference: 06/20/0618/F

Parish: Great Yarmouth Officer: Gordon Sutherland Expiry Date: 11-02-21

#### Applicant: Minster Property Group

#### Proposal: Development of 30 affordable homes

Site: Land east of Churchill Road & north of Estcourt Road, Great Yarmouth

#### REPORT

#### 1. Background

- **1.1** This is a full planning application for a "major" residential development (greater than 10 dwellings).
- **1.2** The application was submitted in 2020; in dealing with this application Great Yarmouth Borough Council has actively sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, to achieve a suitable and viable development of the site which has a number of constraints.
- **1.3** Members of the Development Control Committee may have previously read an earlier version of this report from November 2021 before the application had to be withdrawn from that meeting's Agenda. The application has since been amended in respect of the impacts on protected species and on-site drainage, and some clarity on the fate of the existing building on site. These all amend the recommendation slightly, and as such Members are invited to re-visit the entire report afresh.

#### 2. Site and Context

- 2.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.93 hectares (2.3 acres) in area and comprises previously developed land with a historic use as a hospital in the ownership of the NHS. Historic mapping demonstrates that a number of buildings have been removed from the site since 1900, and it now hosts a single building previously used for administrative purposes. The NHS has confirmed that the site is now underutilised and surplus to requirements, and therefore suitable for redevelopment.
- **2.2** The site is located partly within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3a (approximately 50% of the site is in each zone). Accordingly, a Flood Risk Assessment and Sequential and Exception Test Assessment have been provided in support of the proposals. Technical reports have been consulted on at length with the

Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority to demonstrate that the proposals are designed to address and mitigate flood risk. Evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sequential and exception tests are passed.

- **2.3** The site includes a protected tree in the north-east corner: an Alder TPO ref No.3 1998.
- **2.4** The application has been accompanied by the following technical assessments in respect of design, drainage, ecology and noise considerations and in relation to financial viability:
  - Financial Viability Assessment,
  - Design and Access Statement,
  - Habitats Regulations Assessment,
  - Heritage Statement
  - Environmental Noise Assessment
  - Arboricultural Survey and Implications Statement
  - Phase 1 and 2 Site Contamination Investigation Report
  - Soakaway Test Report
  - Flood Risk Assessment
  - Drainage Strategy Report
  - SUDS Maintenance and Management Plan
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- 2.5 One of the key material considerations in this case is the current need for affordable housing in the Borough; because the application proposes all 30 dwellings as affordable housing, this lends significant additional weight in favour of the proposals.
- **2.6** The site is located beyond Great Yarmouth Town Centre and is to the north of a row of workshops on the south side of Escourt Road behind which lies Conservation Area No 5 St Nicholas/Northgate Street Extension. The application site comprises previously developed brownfield land. There is a single existing building on the application site which will be removed to accommodate the proposals.
- 2.7 In its immediate context the application site is bounded to the east by existing residential development, to the west by the NHS Northgate Hospital site, and to the north by a commercial site currently in use as a depot operated by GYB Services. The Great Yarmouth New Cemetery site is located to the south, behind the workshops across from the site on Estcourt Road.
- **2.8** Beyond these areas, the wider context of the site is predominantly residential, with areas of public open space and recreational facilities including Beaconsfield Recreation Ground and Beaconsfield Play Park located in close proximity to the site. The seafront is located approximately 400m to the east. Great Yarmouth Town Centre is located approximately 700m to the southwest,

providing a wide range of shops and services and national bus and rail connections within a 10-minute walk of the application site.

2.9 The site is located in the Orange Habitat Impact Zone more than 400m but less than 2.5Km from an internationally protected wildlife site and for developments greater than 10 dwellings a bespoke Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required.

#### 3. Proposal

- **3.1** The application proposes a development of 30 affordable homes served off an adoptable access road from Churchill Road, with private drives off that. The 30 dwellings comprise:
  - 14 two bed 4 person houses,
  - 2 three bed 6 person houses,
  - 2 four bed 7 person houses,
  - 8 three bed 5 person houses, and
  - 4 one bed 2 person flats.

An acoustic barrier is proposed along the northern boundary and part of the eastern boundary adjoining neighbouring commercial uses (Great Yarmouth Borough Services depot) at Churchill Road. Each plot including the flats is provided with private external amenity space, and new tree planting and soft landscaping is proposed throughout. The layout includes open space and a surface water drainage attenuation basin. Private parking provision for each dwelling and visitor parking spaces are provided throughout.

- **3.2** A range of five house types and two material combinations are proposed. The proposed house types provide floor areas which meet the national guidance of minimum standards for house design.
- **3.3** The proposed development comprises 100% affordable housing. The housing mix, type and tenure of the proposed development has been developed in accordance with local requirements.

#### 4. Relevant Planning History

**4.1** The site itself has a long history of alterations and ancillary development related to its former use by the NHS. The land to the east adjoining this site was also formerly part of the hospital, but it has since been successfully redeveloped as sheltered housing under planning permission ref. 06/10/0351/F - *Construction of 20 flats for sheltered housing and 5 general needs housing (all affordable) and associated access road and external works*, which was approved 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

## 5. Consultations: - All consultation responses received are available online or at the Town Hall during opening hours

**5.1** One representation has been received from a member of the public, which seeks to retain the existing building and convert it.

#### Consultations – External

- **5.2 Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.** No objection provided the proposal is constructed in accordance with the Building Regulations.
- **5.3** Local Highways Authority The point of access was determined in consultation with the Highway Authority (HA). The HA raise no objection subject to conditions specifying the dimensions required for various aspects of the internal road layout.
- 5.4 Historic Environment Service Archaeology The NCC Historic Environment Service (HES) considers that the proposal will not have a significant impact on the historic environment. In response to concerns from the Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeology Society (relayed by the Council's Conservation Officer) regarding the demolition of the former hospital building, the HES has provided a condition that requires the recording of the building prior to demolition and the provision of those records to the County for archival.
- 5.5 Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) The applicant has worked with the LLFA on the design of the newly-revised proposed surface water drainage system in line with SuDS features and the LLFA raises no objection subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the drainage scheme shown on the revised layout plan received in January 2022.
- **5.6 Ecology** The Natural Environment Team (NETI) at Norfolk County Council have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the Bespoke Habitats Regulations Assessment submitted with the application. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy CS11 of the Councils adopted Core Strategy states that developments should avoid harmful impacts on biodiversity, priority habitats and species, and take measures to create biodiversity features. The HRA concludes that there would be associated recreation pressure on proximate sites important for nature conservation and that mitigation in the form of an impact payment would be an appropriate way to address that impact.
- **5.7** The application site is a brownfield site which has been vacant for several years. Surveys have identified that site has occasionally been used as a habitat for a protected species, but notes the site was not their predominant residence; based on this a licence has been granted for the habitat to be closed off and for mitigation and protection measures to be put in place to prevent occupation by protected species during construction. An update is required to the bat survey, which should be carried out this Spring, and a condition is recommended such

that there shall be no demolition of the existing building prior to the provision of bat boxes within the development. Conditions are also recommended to enhance the site for biodiversity (using bird and bat boxes) in accordance with Core Strategy policy 11.

- **5.8** Infrastructure Requirements [Updated 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2021] In accordance with the County Councils planning obligation standards for provision of infrastructure, NCC request contributions to library service and schools, this is discussed further under the section of the report regarding planning obligations and viability.
- **5.9** NCC advise, based on planning permission at Northgate Hospital (69 dwellings ref 06/18/0582/F), there is spare capacity in the Early Education sector and Secondary School sector, however, it is advised there are insufficient spaces at Northgate Primary School for this development and NCC therefore seeks a contribution for a projected 7 spaces (age 4-11) of 7 x £14,022 = £98,154. For increased pressure on the library service NCC seeks £75 per dwelling (75 x 30) = £2,250.
- **5.10** The NCC infrastructure team's consultation responses are valid for only 6 months due to the changing nature of school rolls and other commitments through funding from other permissions. So long as the application is determined within 6 months of that advice, the recommendations and implications for viability will be as presented within this report. As stated above the response was refreshed on 19<sup>th</sup> November.
- **5.11** Natural England (NE) No objection NE considers that the proposed development will not have any significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes (assuming the relevant perdwelling Habitats Mitigation and Monitoring Scheme payment is made).
- **5.12 Environment Agency -** The site is located partly within Zone 3a as such having a high probability of flooding. The agency requires that the finished floor level of the development shall be 300mm higher than the projected 1 in 200-year flood event allowing for climate change, as such the finished floor levels at ground floor will need to be 3.24m above datum (AOD). The existing levels of the site range between 2.65m AOD at the southern end and 2.73 at the northern end. Revised plans have been received which comply with these dimensions.
- **5.13** The Agency advises consideration of the sequential and exceptions test is a matter for the local planning authority. This is discussed later in the report.
- **5.14** The Agency has reviewed the submitted phase 1 and 2 site investigation report regarding potential for contamination of groundwater from the redevelopment of this brownfield site and recommend conditions to further investigate and mitigate any contamination that may be present on the site, and for conditions to prevent use of piled or penetrative foundations, without prior agreement (which overlap with conditions recommended by the Environmental Health Officer).

- **5.15 Water Management Alliance -** advise that the site is downstream of the watershed and make no comment.
- 5.16 Statutory Undertakers Anglian Water confirm with regard to wastewater treatment and foul drainage that the Caister Pump Lane water recycling centre will have capacity for the flows, and defers to the Lead Local Flood Authority in consideration of the design of a suitable system to address surface water associated with the proposal. Cadent Gas confirms that there are gas services in the vicinity.
- **5.17** Norfolk Constabulary Designing out Crime Provides various advice that has been shared with the applicant regarding secure design and the provision of lockable access gates.

#### **Consultation - Internal GYBC**

- **5.18 Environmental Services Resilience Officer** raises no objection based on the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.
- **5.19 Trees** There are a number of trees on the site and where possible these are retained within the proposed layout such as at the northern boundary of the site. The tree officer has reviewed arboricultural assessment, is familiar with the site and has no objection to the proposed development. It is noted that tree loss is disappointing however the trees on site are not of good condition and have limited retention span including the protected Alder (TPO ref No.3 1998). The tree officer advises that replacement planting would be the best course of action.
- **5.20** Affordable Housing The Housing Service notes that the development is for 100% (30 dwellings) affordable housing and advises that the proposed dwelling mix has been discussed and accepted. The proposed inclusion of 8 shared ownership properties provides a mix of tenures on the site while meeting the Borough's highest need un the form of affordable rent. The inclusion of 4 bed properties is very welcome given the increasing need for 4 bed properties in the Borough. Discussions have taken place with the applicant to achieve the size as per the national design space standard for each unit.
- **5.21 Conservation -** The Conservation Officer notes the site is located outside the borders of a Conservation Area; however, it has local historic value and accommodates the following non-designated heritage assets: Cobble and brick boundary wall towards Estcourt Road and Churchill Road; and, Former Ward Block, originally dating from 1894.
- **5.22** Whilst the Conservation section do not raise objections against the proposed housing development, it has expressed concern regarding a potential loss of a non-designated heritage asset which has a local historic significance. It notes a blue plaque was erected on its boundary wall by the Great Yarmouth's Local History and Archaeological Society to commemorate the site of the former Isolation Hospital.

- **5.23** Environmental Health The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has steered the applicant to ensure the proposal will comply with acoustic standards for amenity and wellbeing, to mitigate noise (from the GYBS depot, and the garage on Estcourt Road). The EHO recommends the mitigation measures set out in the acoustic report supporting the application as detailed below:
  - The provision of a 4 metre high acoustic barrier constructed along the northern boundary and partly along the eastern boundary of the site to reduce noise emissions from GYB Services. The minimum specification of the barrier is given in Appendix 4 of the submitted Acoustic Report.
  - The existing 1.8 metre high perimeter wall along Churchhill Road and Estcourt Road shall be retained.
  - The gardens should be surrounded by standard 1.8m close-boarded fences.
  - Installed windows shall achieve a minimum sound reduction index of 30 dB Rw.
- **5.24** A condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the acoustic report is recommended. Conditions are also requested to require further investigation and mitigation of any contamination identified within this brownfield site, with standard informatives regarding the protection of air quality during construction and hours of working.
- **5.25 Property Services -** Have been requested to review the assumptions of the financial viability assessment submitted with this application. A verbal update will be provided at the committee meeting.
- 5.26 Strategic Planning (Open space provision for new housing development) – Policy H4 of the newly adopted Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) policy requires new residential development to make provision for publicly accessible recreational open space where there is an identified deficit in local provision (defined by Ward). 103 m2 is required per dwelling and is broken-down into space for outdoor sport 24%, play space 6%, informal amenity 18%, parks and gardens 10%, accessible natural greenspace 40% and allotments 2%. In the case of sites over 20 dwellings this will normally be achieved as a combination of onand off-site provision. For this development there is a total overall requirement of 138.6m2 (30 x 4.62m2) for play space and 554m2 (30 x 18.48m2) for informal amenity space that should be provided on-site for this development.
- **5.27** The layout includes some on-site provision of informal open space approximately 1,400m2 in the form of land accommodating the surface water drainage in the SE corner of the site (1,000m2) and around trees being retained at the northern end of the site (400m2). This is considered to meet the requirement for on-site informal open space. The site also benefits from proximity of play areas at the Lea and Beaconsfield Road. Based on an assessment of the current surplus/deficit of each type of open space and an allowance for maintenance in the Central & Northgate Ward, the Borough Council would expect a financial contribution of £1,106.15 per dwelling for offsite open space provision made up of £547.13 towards outdoor sport and towards accessible natural greenspace £599.02 for off-site open space. Total contribution £33,184.50. In this case, please note for the purpose of this assessment and application of the policy that while the beach can and does

have a role in meeting people's recreational needs it is not classed as "as accessible natural greenspace."

**5.28** If the Borough Council were to adopt the open space to be provided on site it would need to contribute a further £7040.10 for the long-term maintenance (20 years) of the area.

#### 6. Assessment of Planning Considerations: Policy Considerations:

#### Relevant policy

- 6.1 Planning law at Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is reiterated at and paragraphs 2 and 47 of the National Planning policy Framework (NPPF).
- **6.2** Whilst the Council has an up-to-date development plan and 5-year-housing land supply the National Planning Policy Framework remains a material consideration but the development plan retains primacy.

#### Adopted Core Strategy 2013-2030

- **6.3** Great Yarmouth Borough adopted Local Plan Policy CS2 "Achieving sustainable growth" in the Core Strategy (2015) ensures that new residential development is distributed according to the policy's settlement hierarchy which seeks to balance the delivery of homes with creating resilient, self-contained communities and reducing the need to travel. The settlement hierarchy identifies Great Yarmouth as one of the Borough's 'Main Towns' due to wide range of services, opportunities for employment, retail and education and large catchment area that it serves. Therefore, a greater proportion of the plan future housing requirement is directed to it.
- **6.4** The proposal is located within a 10-minute walk of the town centre, schools and a large range of services within it. It is adjacent the Northgate Street local centre and close to the seafront area and recreation facilities, and the proposal is therefore considered to be in a sustainable and accessible location.
- **6.5** Policy CS2 (e) encourages the reuse of previously developed land and existing buildings. The proposal is therefore seen to aid the delivery of the local plan in this respect.
- **6.6** Policy CS4 "Delivering affordable housing" The site lies within Affordable Housing Sub-market Area 1. Ordinarily a scheme of 30 dwellings in this location would be required to provide 20% affordable housing (6 dwellings) but the proposal is for 100% affordable homes which attracts significant weight in the determination of this application.

- **6.7** Policy CS9 "Encouraging well-designed, distinctive places" and Policy CS10 "Safeguarding local heritage assets" The site is vacant, the building on site has been much altered. While of some local interest, a view must be taken on whether the value of the existing building justifies retention or whether the provision of affordable housing provides sufficient benefit to outweigh the need to require retention on site.
- **6.8** Policy CS11 "Enhancing the natural environment" requires the authority to assess the impacts of development on natural assets. In this case in accordance with Habitats Regulations a bespoke Habitats Regulation Assessment is required. NETI have recommended conditions for the provision of bird boxes within the development.
- **6.9** Policy CS13 "Protecting areas at risk of flooding or coastal change" (a) directs new development proposals away from areas of highest risk of flooding unless the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exception Test (where applicable) are met, and a satisfactory Flood Response Plan has been prepared.
- **6.10** The proposal also needs to demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking into account the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Local Plan Part 2 (2021)

- **6.11** Policy GSP1 (Development limits) retains the emphasis on development in sustainable locations within development limits.
- **6.12** Policy A1 (Amenity) requires particular consideration on the form of development and its impact on the local setting in terms of scale, character and appearance.
- **6.13** Policy A2 (Housing design principles) pushes the design quality of residential developments to a higher standard in terms of their creation of place and urban design and a group of dwellings, and on an individual dwelling basis requires dwellings to meet otherwise-optional building regulations standards, and to be designed with regards to the local context such as local townscape and urban grain and other detailed design requirements. Principles include that developments should be designed to be adaptable to changing needs and existing and emerging technologies such as home-working, digital connectivity and electric/autonomous vehicles. Developers should also ensure plans are in place for the long-term stewardship and management of public spaces.
- **6.14** Policy E1 (Flood risk) the proposal is for residential development within the town of Great Yarmouth, therefore for the purposes of the sequential test, the search for alternative sites can be limited to Great Yarmouth town.
- 6.15 Policy E5 (Historic environment and heritage) seeks to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets. Proposals which involve the loss of non-designated heritage assets will only be permitted *where "b) measures to sustain*

the existing use or find an alternative use/user have been exhausted and the building risks falling into dereliction".

- **6.16** Policy E7: Water conservation in new dwellings and holiday accommodation New residential development, and holiday accommodation in buildings, will be supported only where it meets the higher water efficiency standard of requirement of 110 litres per person per day.
- 6.17 Policy H3 (Housing density) seeks to make effective use of land with minimum housing densities of 50 dwellings per hectare in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston-on-Sea town centre.
- **6.18** Policy H4 (Open space provision for new housing development) requires the provision for publicly accessible recreation open space of 103 square metres per dwelling comprising approximately: 24% for outdoor sport; 18% for informal amenity green space; 6% for suitably equipped children's play space; 2% for allotments; 10% for parks and gardens; and 40% for accessible natural green space.
- **6.19** Policy I1- Vehicle parking for developments requires parking to meet current NCC standards and requires developments to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low-emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.
- **6.20** Policy GSP8 (Planning Obligations) development viability with respect to planning obligations will be considered at the planning stage under limited particular circumstances where the scheme is on previously developed land.
- **6.21** Policy GSP5 (Internationally protected habitats and species impact avoidance mitigation) Protects Natura 2000 designated sites in and around the Borough from potential adverse impacts associated with new housing development including recreation.

#### Main issues:

The main issues in the assessment of this application are:

- Principle of development
- Housing mix, type and tenure
- Flood risk and mitigation
- Design and heritage
- Residential amenity & noise protection
- Ecology
- Planning obligations
- Viability

#### Principle of development

**6.22** The site lies within the Great Yarmouth town Development Boundary wherein development will be supported in principle unless material considerations outweigh that principle. In this case those would be matters of the character

and appearance of the locality (heritage), amenity, highway safety, and flood risk. In this case the issue of viability and the balancing of proposed planning obligations is also a consideration.

#### Housing mix, type and tenure

- **6.23** A range of five house types and two material combinations (brick and brick/render walls) with roof tile are proposed to provide variety in respect of appearance, materials and detailing throughout the site. The two material combinations are interspersed throughout the site to maintain visual interest and create an attractive street scene.
- **6.24** The proposed house types provide floor areas which meet the minimum standards for house design.
- **6.25** The proposed development comprises 100% affordable housing. There is currently an acute and urgent need for affordable housing to be consented and delivered within the Great Yarmouth plan area. This need has been established in detail in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). 30 affordable homes are more than the average annual delivery of affordable housing for the whole Borough since 2013, which represents only 7.5% of the estimated annual requirement of 400 units.
- **6.26** The housing mix, type and tenure of the proposed development has been developed in accordance with local requirements and is considered acceptable.
- **6.27** Policy H3 (Housing density) has an indicative minimum density of 50 dwellings per hectare housing. The proposal of 30 dwellings on a site of 0.93 hectares equates to 32 dwellings per hectare density. This is less than prescribed by policy H3, but the development is consistent with the character of the locality and is reduced due to the need to provide infrastructure such as the sustainable drainage and open space, and due to accounting for the retention of trees on the site where possible, and the historic wall.
- **6.28** Policy A2 (Housing design principles) requires dwellings to satisfy enhanced Building Regulations standards for 'accessible / adaptable' housing. The development has not specified this, given the recent addition of the requirement through the Local Plan Part 2 adoption, but there is a likelihood the development of affordable housing would include a requirement to provide a certain quota provision; a planning condition could be used on a site as large as this to secure details and any relatively modest means to accommodate this requirement should not be adverse to the site's delivery.
- **6.29** Residential development on this site's Flood Zone 3a area would normally be inappropriate, but the proposed provision of all 30 dwellings as affordable housing would be a significant public benefit to justify the conflict with policy.

#### Flood risk

- **6.30** Local policy sequential test requirements direct new development proposal away from areas of highest risk of flooding unless the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exception Test (where applicable) are met, and a satisfactory Flood Response Plan has been prepared.
- **6.31** The site is located almost equally across Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3a and therefore considered as having a high probability of coastal and fluvial flooding. The planning practice guidance expects site-specific flood risk assessments to provide the evidence for the local planning authority to apply the sequential test. The applicant provided an assessment of currently available sites within the vicinity, that concludes there are no sites less at risk of flood in the vicinity that could accommodate the number of dwellings proposed. The Local Plan Part 2 makes clear that within the town of Great Yarmouth there are very few sites that are not at risk from flooding (particularly when allowing for climate change over the next 100 years) and so the Local Plan has a housing supply windfall allowance for the town meaning the Sequential Test will only need to consider whether at the time of the application there are any suitable and available sites within Great Yarmouth at a lower risk of flooding than the application site. As such it is considered that the sequential test has been passed.
- **6.32** Although having satisfied the sequential test, the proposed development within flood zone 3a means it is necessary for the proposal to also pass the Exception Test (being a 'more vulnerable use' within Flood Risk Zone 3a), as set out under paragraph 164 of the NPPF.
- **6.33** For the Exception Test to be passed the development will normally need to demonstrate that the wider sustainability benefits emanating from the proposal would outweigh the flood risk. This takes into consideration relevant factors including the highly sustainable location (as indicated by its compliance with Policy CS2) and that the development is for 100% affordable housing.
- **6.34** The proposal also needs to demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking into account the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- **6.35** It is noted that the finished floor level of the units will be 300mm higher than the 1 in 200-year worst case flood event allowing for climate change and that the first-floor level would provide safe refuge in the 1 in 1000-year coastal flood event.
- **6.36** It is considered that the proposed finished floor level of 3.24m is compatible with the existing levels of adjoining developments, not giving rise to any issues of overlooking or being out of character with the locality. Safe refuge will be available within upper floor levels of the new dwellings which will be set at a minimum of 5.64mAOD, in the event of a 1 in 1000 + plus climate change and/or breach event. A condition is recommended to provide a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan to be implemented onsite.
- **6.37** It is proposed to dispose of surface water drainage via infiltration on the site in including the provision of a detention basin.

#### Design, layout and heritage

- **6.38** The surrounding neighbourhood has a mixture of ages and styles of residential dwellings, mainly two storey including terraces and an apartment block to the east. The traditional design of pitched roof house in brick and brick and render in semi-detached and terraces is compatible with the local character. The proposed dwellings are of a traditional form using materials compatible with the character and appearance of the locality.
- **6.39** The proposed layout makes best use of the established boundary wall to provide private garden areas. The wall will be retained and will help to blend the new with the existing buildings.
- **6.40** Parking provision and space within the highway is provided throughout the site to allow for safe and convenient parking and manoeuvring.
- **6.41** Notwithstanding the presence of trees including a protected tree on site, their value is limited and the Tree Officer advises that replacement planting would be the best course of action within a successful scheme. A landscape scheme condition is recommended to secure this.
- **6.42** The row of workshops on the south side of Escourt Road lies between Conservation Area No 5 St Nicholas/Northgate Street Extension and the application site. The intervening buildings are a continuous row of two-storey buildings with steep roof, which means there is no inter-visibility between the application site and the conservation area so the proposal will not affect the character and appearance of the Northgate Cemetery and conservation area.
- **6.43** The applicant has considered the integration of the existing historic building and boundary wall within the new development. Except for a new access that will be created in a modern section of the boundary wall on Churchill Road, the proposal will retain the distinctive boundary wall and will extend it where it is missing at the south eastern corner of the site.
- 6.44 In support of the application, the applicants undertook a heritage statement, and the remaining building on site is described as follows: "The building.... is a late 19th century structure with atypical decorative flint diamonds on its faces). A late 20th century extension has been added. The interior of the building does not retain any original features and is in a poor state of repair."
- **6.45** The applicant was asked to consider the retention and conversion of the building. The heritage statement notes that the existing building (former Ward Block) has suffered several later (post WWII) alterations. In consideration of its loss, while the original design is distinctive, it is not considered sufficiently exceptional that its retention must be paramount; whilst the conversion potential of the building has not been documented, its retention in situ would preclude the construction of at least 8 of the dwellings and additional gardens in the layout as proposed, as well as complicating the access arrangements and parking requirements for the rest of the site.

**6.46** Overall, it is the considered opinion of Officers that the retention of the existing building would not outweigh the wider community and public benefit of the redevelopment and regeneration of the site for the quantum of affordable housing that its removal allows. However, in acknowledging the concerns of the Local History and Archaeology Society, a condition is recommended to be imposed on any permission, which requires the formal recording of the building prior to demolition, and for that to be placed on the public historic record, and for a publically visible interpretation feature (e.g. plaque / marker / art) to be provided within the scheme.

#### Residential amenity

- **6.47** The proposed dwellings are oriented to protect the privacy and amenity of the houses to the east. For new residents, an acoustic barrier is proposed along the northern boundary and part of the eastern boundary adjoining neighbouring commercial uses (the Great Yarmouth Borough Services depot) at Churchill Road, to ensure acceptable noise levels within the development.
- **6.48** To secure these protection measures, the measures recommended by the Environmental Health Officer have been incorporated into the designs of the development, and shall be required by conditions. A condition is proposed requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the acoustic report and will include those aspects discussed at paragraph 5.23, namely:
  - The provision of a 4 metre high acoustic barrier constructed along the northern boundary and partly along the eastern boundary of the site to reduce noise emissions from the adjoining commercial activity site. The minimum specification of the barrier is given in Appendix 4 of the submitted Acoustic Report.
  - The existing 1.8 metre high perimeter wall along Churchhill Road and Estcourt Road shall be retained.
  - The gardens should be surrounded by standard 1.8m close-boarded fences.
  - Installed windows shall achieve a minimum sound reduction index of 30 dB Rw.
- **6.49** Conditions should also be used to require further investigation and mitigation of any contamination identified within this brownfield site.
- **6.50** Each plot is provided with suitably sized private external amenity space, and new tree planting and soft landscaping is proposed throughout the scheme to provide an attractive green neighbourhood environment.
- **6.51** The Environment Agency has specified conditions to protect the groundwater environment and aquifers which shall be required by conditions.
- **6.52** In the interest of the amenity of adjoining residents, it is proposed to use a condition requiring a construction management plan to be agreed, regarding the protection of air quality, noise and dust during construction, as well as controlling hours of working.

#### Highways safety and access

**6.53** Access for the site is provided off Churchill Road towards the centre of the site, a modern section of the boundary wall will be removed providing forward visibility splays to required standard. An existing access at the SE corner of the site was considered but was determined to be substandard for visibility and in conflict with an existing access to the east, The Highways Authority have worked with the applicant and the layout, parking and turning on site meet expected standards, including 2 parking spaces per unit for the 2 and 3 bed houses and 3 spaces per dwelling for the four bed houses, the car spaces are adjacent each dwelling. The layout provides for service access for refuse vehicles. A condition that the layout parking and turning shall be provided as per the revised layout is recommended.

#### Ecology – internationally protected sites

**6.54** The site is located in the Orange Habitat Impact Zone more than 400m but less than 2.5Km from an internationally protected wildlife site and for developments greater than 10 dwellings a bespoke Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required. If minded to approve the application, planning permission would need to be subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement including a contribution to the Borough Council's Habitats Monitoring & Mitigation Strategy (£110 per dwelling, £3,300 total), as required by LPP2 Policy GSP5.

Ecology – on site

- **6.55** Evidence of protected species has been found within the site, but conditions shall be able to address these and provide suitable mitigation both during construction and as compensation for potential loss of habitat on site.
- **6.56** Ordinarily, a site with high potential for hosting protected species should not be granted permission for redevelopment unless there is an up-to-date and verified protected species survey confirming presence / absence and mitigation measures. In this instance the bat survey is outdated and requires a new bat survey to be undertaken within the Spring; the LPA should only allow permission that affects potential roosting sites in exceptional circumstances. There is a possibility that there are still bats present on site so the precautionary principle should be applied, and on further investigation it is considered that the bats that were present on site during the outdated survey were species which are known to roam and be nomadic and adaptable to use various roost sites which can be provided within the remainder of the site. As such it is considered there are two options to the LPA:
  - 6.56.1 To expect the bat survey and mitigation proposals to be undertaken before the permission is issued, with conditions requiring mitigation to be in situ before the demolition of the building occurs;
  - 6.56.2 To use conditions to prevent demolition of the former ward building until the survey is completed and mitigation measures have been in installed and usable in the most appropriate places.

Neither of these processes would hinder the delivery of the site, given that there are going to be discussions required to agree the Section 106 agreement and pre-commencement conditions to be resolved prior to works beginning. The important aspect is that the County Ecologist is confident that the site contains enough space and/or potential alternative roosting options to be able to mitigate and compensate the loss of existing bat roost spaces.

6.57 A condition will be attached to any permission for a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan securing provision of bird box enhancement. It is suggested a minimum of 30 bird boxes (including swift).

#### Public open space provision

- **6.58** The development should be expected to address the needs of open space and play facilities for its future residents within the site, but on this occasion the proposal has sought to maximise the number of affordable housing dwellings. There is a small area of public open space proposed for on-site informal recreation in the north-east corner. This is not the optimal site for on-site public open space because it is not accessible or convenient to all the dwellings within the scheme, but it is proposed as a means to provide a buffer between residential and commercial uses on the other side of the boundary and is at least overlooked by 9 dwellings so should feel secure. The water attenuation area in the south east corner provides additional informal natural greenspace which can contribute towards the quota for on-site open space requirements.
- **6.59** The amount of on-site provision is unfortunate, but the benefits of additional affordable housing and the on-site drainage requirements are significant mitigating factors. As a result of the deficit of on-site play and open space provision, however, LPP2 Policy H4 expects some £33,184.50 to be provided for public open space mitigation elsewhere, in order to address the impacts of the development and be compliant with policy. This is considered below, in respect of planning obligations and development viability.

#### Environmental enhancements

- **6.60** The proposal to make beneficial use of a brownfield and redundant site is a significant material consideration in this proposal, supported by policy CS2 Achieving sustainable growth, which encourages the reuse of previously developed land and existing buildings.
- **6.61** The water efficiency requirements of Local Plan Part 2 policy E7 can be address by the development with a recommended condition.
- **6.62** An informative is recommended that the development design should where possible enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low-emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations as encouraged by Local Plan Part 2 policy I1. It is possible that Building Regulations may require this also.

#### Planning obligations

- **6.63** To address the impact of this development, planning obligations are required for:
  - £98,154 for local education to address the primary school impact of this scheme (7 spaces).
  - £2,250 for libraries.
  - £3,300 habitats mitigation and management strategy contribution for mitigation of impacts on internationally important sites designated for nature conservation (Natura 2000 sites).
  - £33,184.50 for off-site public open space (LPP2 Policy H4) £1,016.05 per dwelling,
  - Possibly an additional £7,040.10 for long term maintenance of on-site open space if GYBC were to maintain the on-site open space, but in this case the applicant has advised the affordable housing Registered Provider is expected to maintain the open space, likely through the establishment of a management company.
  - A minimum of 20% up to 100% affordable housing as proposed.

However, it is noted that the scheme has challenging viability and may not be able to realise all these aspirations.

#### Viability Assessment

- **6.64** The planning application is accompanied with a site-specific viability assessment. The assessment sets out the expected costs and expenditures for the proposal (i.e. reasonable land acquisition and build costs) and compares them with development income / value (i.e. in this case social housing grant, and affordable housing funds).
- **6.65** There are some challenges to the site's viability because of slightly higher costs for the design requirements associated with flood mitigation and remediation of contamination, and a reduced residual land value by virtue of this being proposed as an entirely affordable housing scheme. The assessment concludes that providing all 30 dwellings as affordable housing, means only £57,000 is available for financial contributions towards community infrastructure.
- **6.66** Local Plan Part 2 Policy GSP8 recognises the challenging nature of previously developed land in terms of viability and allows for flexibility when requiring planning obligations in specific circumstances, such as those described above.
- **6.67** The final decision regarding use of limited available funds for planning obligations rests with the Local Planning Authority as decision maker, both in respect of whether to accept a development which in unable to address its impacts, and in respect of the balancing of limited available contributions, whether in relation to the County Council's or any other contribution requests.
- **6.68** In this proposal, for the development to address it's impacts it should provide financial contributions of at least £136,888, but only £57,000 is proposed,

representing a shortfall of £79,888. This is a notable inability to address the impacts of the development and requires the decision maker to carefully consider the principle of the development in the form proposed.

- **6.69** Some of the shortfall arises because there is less value within the development due to the absence of open-market dwellings and the proportion of affordable rented tenure accommodation proposed in comparison to shared ownership / intermediate tenure options. Substituting some affordable housing for open-market dwellings, or changing the balance between affordable rent and shared ownership / shared equity tenures, would both raise available funds for addressing the pro-rata planning obligation shortfall, but it would complicate the site layout and land disposal and management.
- **6.70** Officers note the dwelling mix has been proposed in conjunction with the Council's strategic housing team and the mix as proposed is considered to represent a significant public benefit. Officers advise that the application should be determined on the basis of the proposals submitted, but if the Committee as decision maker were minded to seek any amendments the proposed contributions : affordable housing content, it would alter the planning balance and require a reappraisal of officers' recommendation.
- **6.71** In accordance with the Habitats Regulations there is a legal requirement to make a £3,300 contribution for mitigation of impacts on internationally important sites designated for nature conservation (Natura 2000 sites), and the contribution is established as outlined in LPP2 policy GSP 5. This reduces the available sum for other section 106 contributions to £53,700.
- **6.72** The accompanying viability assessment demonstrates that it is a not an economically viable site and the applicant has not proposed to include market housing to improve the scheme's viability, instead preferring to offer public benefits (significant) in the form of a 100% affordable housing scheme.
- **6.73** There is a shortfall in the site's ability to satisfy all planning obligations that would ordinarily be required, to the amount of £136,888.50. Excluding the required £3,300 HMMS payment, £53,700 is available. The applicant is content for the Local Planning Authority to determine the preferred allocation of the restricted funds towards local infrastructure, amounting to a projected £53,700. Requests for community infrastructure payments are set out at paragraph 6.62 of this report.
- **6.74** As an affordable housing project, it is considered a significant public benefit that the application offers 24 more dwellings as affordable housing than a market-led housing application would be required to provide, and so the principle of development should be supported despite not being able to address the full range of impacts that the section 106 would ordinarily be used for.
- **6.75** The allocation of limited section 106 funds must meet the tests for the use of planning obligation contributions, but aside from that it is a matter for the decision maker to determine where the greatest need and benefits lie. A development of 30 affordable dwellings will give rise to pressing needs on both

the education services and the local recreation, play and public open space providers, and arguably to a lesser extent the library service.

- **6.76** Public open space and play areas have not been able to be provided on site as to do so would likely reduce site capacity to be fewer than 30 dwellings. Given the proximity to the Beaconsfield Road playing fields and other local areas of informal open space it is considered some of those impacts would be provided for within a relatively short walk, though not ideal for families of smaller children given the distance and roads that need crossing. It would be possible to apportion some of the funding to multiple justified projects, for example if there was a location that could host play facilities for young people closer to the site, but it is the Officer's recommendation that it is more appropriate to use the limited funds towards addressing some of the educational impacts of the development to reduce the shortfall in that respect.
- **6.77** In this case it is considered that the provision of affordable housing is the paramount objective and the balance of the remaining available funds which amount to approximately £53,700 should be included in a Section 106 Agreement as a contribution towards the Primary Education Sector, which will go some way towards addressing the £98,154 expected to address the educational impact of this development.

#### 7. Local Finance Considerations:

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are defined as a government grant such as new homes bonus or the Community Infrastructure Levy. It is noted that the Borough of Great Yarmouth does not have the Community Infrastructure Levy. Whether or not a local finance consideration is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority. It is assessed that financial gain does not play a part in the recommendation for the determination of this application.

#### 8. Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment

8.1 The site lies within the Orange Habitat Impact Zone more than 400m but less than 2.5Km from an internationally protected wildlife site and for developments greater than 10 dwellings a bespoke Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required. The applicant will provide a contribution to the Borough Council's Habitats Monitoring & Mitigation Strategy (£110 per dwelling). NETI have confirmed the Appropriate Assessment is fit for purpose and the section 106 agreement will secure the impact payment contribution.

#### 9. Concluding Assessment

- **9.1 The principle of development** is acceptable if the flood risk concerns are satisfied and the public benefits of redeveloping the brownfield site and providing 100% affordable housing demonstrate enough justification to allow development in the higher flood risk area.
- **9.2** Character and Appearance of the Locality is improved by the development and it is considered to comply with Policies CS9, CS10, A1 and A2 despite not retaining the existing building on the site. Overall, on balance the provision of affordable housing is considered to outweigh the suggested aspirations to require the existing building's retention. The feature boundary wall will be retained and extended where missing on Estcourt Road at the SE corner of the site.
- **9.3 Amenity** The site is able to accommodate 26 family dwellings and 4 flats with parking to standard and with private gardens, and the buildings are oriented to protect the privacy and amenity of the houses to the east. The development will include measures to minimise noise from existing commercial uses adjoining the site.
- **9.4 Highway Safety** the County Highways Authority raise no objection, and the proposal has been designed to meet highway standards for access and parking and on-site manoeuvring of service vehicles.
- **9.5** Flood Risk The site is located Zone 2 and Zone 3a as such having a high probability of flooding. The dwellings have been designed to be flood resilient and will provide safe refuge at first floor level. It is considered that the sequential test and exceptions test are satisfied.
- **9.6 Viability** The accompanying viability assessment demonstrates that it is not an economically viable site when providing all dwellings as affordable housing and trying to address all the financial contributions expected, but a reduced sum of £3,300 for habitat protection and £53,700 is available to help address some of the £136,888 contributions that would ordinarily be required.
- **9.7** In this case it is considered that the provision of affordable housing is the paramount objective and the £53,700 available should be used as a contribution towards some of the Primary Education Sector costs required to address the impacts of the development, rather than off-site public open space and play enhancements or library service contributions.

#### 10. RECOMMENDATION: -

**10.1 Approve** - The proposal complies with the aims of Policies CS2, CS3, CS4, CS9, CS13 and CS16 of the Great Yarmouth Local Plan Core Strategy, and also Policies A1, A2, E1, E5 and GSP5 of Local Plan Part 2.

#### 10.2 Subject to:

- (i) the completion of a S106 Agreement to secure:
  - all 30 dwellings as affordable housing,

- £53,700 financial contributions for school infrastructure, and
- £3,300 habitats mitigation payment.

and,

- (ii) **Conditions** including but not limited to:
  - 1. standard time limit;
  - in accordance with revised plans, flood risk assessment, surface water and foul water drainage strategies, and protected species precautions;
  - 3. specified Finished floor levels at ground floor will need to be 3.24m above datum (AOD), Safe refuge to be available within upper floor levels at a minimum of 5.64mAOD
  - 4. controlled hours of working during demolition and construction

#### Prior to commencement:

- 5. no commencement until the pre-construction habitat protection measures are installed;
- 6. construction is to follow the protected species habitat measures in the submitted RammSanderson report.
- 7. provision of alternate bat accommodation prior to demolition of the existing building
- (a) recording of the building prior to demolition and the provision of those records to the County Council historic environment record public archive, and (b) details of on-site heritage interpretation or display consequential to the recording, to be installed prior to occupation.
- 9. provision of Construction Environmental Management Plan
- 10. scheme for providing on-site construction parking
- 11.full detail of contamination investigations and proposed mitigation strategy
- 12. further details of precautionary contamination measures.
- 13. details of foundations to be agreed preferably no piled or penetrative foundations.
- 14. details of accessible / adaptable housing measures.
- 15. Details of water efficiency measures to be submitted and agreed
- 16. Details of design to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra lowemission vehicles
- 17. Details of how the development is adaptable to changing needs and technologies

#### Prior to construction above slab level:

- 18. provision of biodiversity enhancement scheme (30 bird boxes).
- 19. provision of details of landscape scheme.
- 20. details of boundary treatments around the site including details of extending the wall to the SE corner of the site, and provide the extended wall prior to occupation.

- 21. details of boundary treatments within the site, and provision thereafter.
- 22. details of water efficiency measures
- 23. details of EV charging systems where possible

## Prior to occupation:

- 24.to be constructed in accordance acoustic report appendix 4 specifically, and provision prior to occupation:
  - The provision of a 4 metre high acoustic barrier constructed along the northern boundary and partly along the eastern boundary of the site to reduce noise emissions from GYB Services.
  - Excepting the new access the existing 1.8 metre high perimeter wall along Churchill Road and Estcourt Road shall be retained.
  - The gardens should be surrounded by standard 1.8 m closeboarded fences.
  - Installed windows shall achieve a minimum sound reduction index of 30 dB Rw.
- 25.provision of flood warning and evacuation plan and emergency warning as specified;
- 26. all landscaping, boundary treatments, parking to be available;
- 27. retention of new landscaping and replacement trees as necessary.

And any others considered appropriate by the Development Manager.

#### Appendices:

- 1. Site location plan
- 2. Layout Plan (revised January 2022)
- 3. Example plans & elevations of 'House type DD'
- 4. Example plans & elevations of 'House type AAA'







Site Location Plan

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Source File: 19049 Model.pln					
Rev	Date	Drawn	Note		
P02	21/09/ 2020	JKG	Plots 28-30 mirrored.		
P03	02/10/ 2020	JKG	Footpath link to Estcourt Road added. Drawing status updated to 'Planning'.		
P04	24/02/ 2021	JKG	Site access moved. Site updated to suit. Mix / units sizes changed and SoA updated.		
P05	25/02/ 2021	JKG	Access amended.		
P06	03/03/ 2021	JKG	Plots 01-07 updated. Plot 25 parking moved. Visitor parking added. Parking added to Plots 08-09 and 14-17. Rear access to Plot 19 amended.		
P07	26/03/ 2021	JKG	SoA updated.		
P08	27/04/ 2021	JKG	Plots 01-04 updated.		
P09	27/05/ 2021	JKG	Plots 10-1 and 12-13 swapped. Access to Plots 01-09 and 26-27 amended.		
P10	07/06/ 2021	JKG	Access to Plots 01-04 amended.		
P11	01/07/ 2021	JKG	Access and red line amended.		
P12	01/07/ 2021	JKG	Plots 01-04 boundary amended and boundary treatment shown.		
P13	08/07/ 2021	JKG	Major scheme updates following input from Enhineer. SoA updated.		
P14	11/07/2 021	JKG	Updated following feedback from Engineer.		
P15	29/07/ 2021	JKG	Rear access updated, Plots 14-16 amended, visitor parking updated.		
P16	10/09/ 2021	JKG	Updated following comments from Highways. Attenuation Basin updated.		
P17	16/11/2 021	JKG	Site access relocated and carriageway / attenuation moved.		
P18	22/11/2 021	JKG	Site access relocated to Churchill Road, and scheme amended.		
P19	08/12/ 2021	JKG	Highway updated.		
P20	22/12/ 2021	JKG	Drainage updated.		
P21	13/01/ 2022	JKG	Highway and parking updated following comments from Highways.		





t: 07429 162 747 e: hello@jg-a.co.uk

Minster Property Group

Project Title Proposed residential development Land at Churchill Road / Estcourt Road, Great Yarmouth Drawing Title

Proposed Site Layout

#### Drawing Status Planning

19049	0102	P 2 1			
Project Number:	Drawing Number:	Revision:			
Drawn: JKG		Date: 17.09.20			
Scale(s): 1:500		Original Paper Size: A2			
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Front Elevation

Side Elevation



First Floor



Side Elevation



**Rear Elevation** 





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Project Title Proposed residential development Land at Churchill Road / Estcourt Road, Great Yarmouth

Drawing Title Housetype DD - Plans and Elevations Drawing Status

## Planning

<sup>Scale(s):</sup> 1:50, 1:100 Drawn: JKG Project Number:

Original Paper Size: A1 Date: 11.06.21 Revision: P01

19049

Drawing Number: 0208







Front Elevation

Side Elevation



**Ground Floor** 





Side Elevation

Scale (m)

**0** 

Scale (m)

**Rear Elevation** 



First Floor

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P02 02/10/2020 JKG Drawing status updated to 'Planning'. P03 15/06/2021 JKG Updated following changes to Site Layout.



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Project Title Proposed residential development Land at Churchill Road / Estcourt Road, Great Yarmouth

Drawing Number:

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Drawing Title Housetype AAA - Plans and Elevations Drawing Status

# Planning

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Project Number: 19049