

WORTHING LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION - POLICY A10 MARTLETS WAY

Hearing Statement

19 October 2021

This hearing statement has been prepared by Rapleys LLP on behalf of EM Goring Ltd, who:

- Own the land off Martlets Way (the western land parcel on the attached site location plan), and
- Have, in the last month, entered into a development agreement with the owners of the land known as “the Nib” (the eastern land parcel on the attached site location plan).

The owners of the Nib also own the land to the east, which accommodates the former HMRC site, and on which planning permission was granted by the local authority earlier this year to redevelop this land in favour of residential-led mixed use development.

The land off Martlets Way, the Nib, as well as the adjacent gasholder site, owned by a third party, are the three land parcels that make up the allocation covered by Policy A10. The three land parcels are vacant, but brownfield, land within settlement boundaries, close to Durrington on Sea railway station and local services and amenities - as such they are in highly sustainable locations, where development should be focused in principle. Further, development on these sites could, evidently, contribute towards meeting the local authority’s need for housing and employment land.

BACKGROUND

There have been a number of attempts at delivering employment development in isolation at the Martlets Way site since the previous sewage treatment use ended more than 20 years ago. However, employment development at Martlets Way has proved consistently unviable in isolation, and as such no schemes (even when they have been consented) have been implemented.

In the interests of delivering employment development, therefore, EM Goring and its representatives have entered into extensive discussion with the local authority and the owners of neighbouring sites, particularly the former HMRC site and the Nib. The focus of these discussions was delivering a more comprehensive and deliverable solution to bringing forward this unused brownfield land, to ensure that it could contribute to the local shortfalls in both housing and employment land.

This engagement has resulted in the following:

- A planning policy allocation that is broadly agreeable to all (notwithstanding the minor comments made by Rapleys in the Regulation 19 Consultation in March 2021), and
- A development agreement between two of the three main owners of the land covered by policy A10, in the interests of delivering both the Martlets Way and Nib sites, which will - in turn - physically enable development on the landlocked former Gasholder site.

EM Goring has already engaged with the local authority in pre-application advice, tabling development consisting of:

- A circa 6,500sqm employment (E(g)(iii) class (light industrial, former B1(c)), and/or B8 uses on the land at Martlets Way, which includes a vehicular and pedestrian access to the former Gasholder site, and
- Around 28 residential units on the Nib.

Feedback from the local authority has been broadly positive, and EM Goring, in association with the owners of the Nib Land, will be submitting a planning application across both sites in the coming months. The intention will be to build out these two consents at the earliest possible juncture.

In summary:

- The proposed policy allocation A10 is the result of discussions between the local authority and the landowners, and is supported by EM Goring, and
- EM Goring have already engaged the local authority in pre-application discussions, and will be submitting a planning application shortly which will deliver the Martlets Way and the Nib site, as well as provide a physical access to the remainder of the land within A10 (ie the former gasholder site), ensuring that the whole allocation can be delivered.

Policy A10 should, therefore, be supported by the Inspector. However, the Inspector's matters and questions have been noted, and EM Goring's response is as follows:

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS TO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TAKING PLACE?

There are no fundamental constraints to residential development taking place, as envisaged, on the Nib.

In terms of amenity issues, the land is surrounded by existing residential development on two sides - there are bungalows to the south of the site, on Barrington Road, and two storey housing, on Juno Close, is to the west. The HMRC site to the east is consented for residential development. It is recognised that the land to the north (the former Gasholders site) is envisaged to accommodate employment generating development, however it is considered that this can properly be addressed through sensitive design of the residential proposal on the Nib.

In terms of access, it is envisaged that the residential development at the Nib will be accommodated through the future residential development on the former HMRC site. The two sites are in common ownership, and the HMRC planning permission makes specific allowance for access to be provided onto the Nib.

GIVEN THE REFERENCE TO SUCH DEVELOPMENT 'FACILITATING' THE DELIVERY OF EMPLOYMENT FLOORSPACE AND THE FORMER GASHOLDER, IS IT ANTICIPATED THAT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE VIABILITY OF THE EMPLOYMENT USES?

A number of attempts have been made, over the years, to deliver purely employment generating schemes on parts or all of the Martlets Way site, resulting in a number of planning applications (in 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010 and 2013) - however, the site remains vacant as none of these schemes proved commercially viable. It remains the case that employment development at Martlets Way, in isolation, is not viable. In turn, and particularly in the context of the residential proposals on the former HMRC site, the former Gasworks site can only be delivered through, and as a result of development at, the Martlets Way site, as there is no other way of accessing it.

In the interests of bringing forward the Martlets Way site, EM Goring entered into discussions with the local authority and other landowners, and it was agreed that an element of residential development on part of the A10 allocation would provide an additional element of financial return which could - in turn - support the delivery of employment development on the remainder of the site. Further, the development of the Martlets Way site would enable the future delivery of the former Gasworks site. This resulted in the allocation that is currently before the Inspector.

WOULD RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BE LIKELY TO PREJUDICE THE DELIVERY OF THE 10,000 SQM OF EMPLOYMENT SPACE?

In short, no. The work carried out in preparation of the forthcoming planning application for the Nib and Martlets Way indicate that Martlets Way is readily capable of accommodating circa 6,500sqm of employment space, and that the former gasholder site is capable of accommodating at least 4,500sqm of

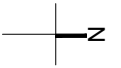
employment space. In this context, even with the Nib delivering 28 residential units, the A10 allocation is capable of delivering more than 10,000sqm of employment-generating floorspace.

IS IT CLEAR TO DECISION MAKERS, DEVELOPERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED IN TERMS OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WERE IT TO BE PROPOSED?

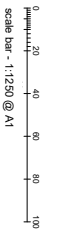
Rapleys, on behalf of EM Goring:

- Have liaised with the local authority relative to the wording of allocation A10 during the plan-making process, and are supportive of it, and
- Will be submitting a planning application, in the short term, that will deliver the residential development on the Nib, within allocation A10, in association with the Nib's landowner.

In this context, EM Goring are confident that the decision makers and the developer are aware of what is expected in terms of residential development.



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folkes architects
Architects
11-13 Old Market
Weymouth, Dorset
DT9 4JQ

CLIENT
EM Goring Ltd

JOB TITLE
Development at Merrills Way
Goring-by-Sea
West Sussex

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Location Plan
PRE - APPLICATION

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