

# Deputation Submitted by Mr Allsop, Tetra Tech

## Written deputation: APP/20/00875 Aura House

### Office use

In their efforts to improve the marketability of the office, the applicant secured planning permission for a two storey extension at committee in October 2018 and have been marketing the building thereafter (almost 3 years). The approved extension was never built due to the lack of demand, which in itself demonstrates that the office is no longer fit for purpose. We have provided a detailed marketing exercise as part of this application which exceeds the Council's 12 month requirement. All viewers of the office went elsewhere such as Arena, Regus and northharbour as these provided much better facilities such as meeting rooms, receptions. It was noted that the parking wasn't appropriate for an office use either.

Havant have a 65,000m<sup>2</sup> surplus of employment floorspace, the loss of 241m<sup>2</sup> is not considered harmful, especially when it is weighed against the housing benefits being provided. There is no evidence that the loss of this small space would be harmful. The planning policy comments agree that there is an oversupply of office space in the borough, therefore it seems perverse to recommend refusal when the harm cannot be identified. The site has never been safeguarded or allocated for office space, therefore the restriction of residential development and the retention of an office use is not justified by the Council. The impact of covid-19 has had a significant effect on the interest of this site as an office which has exacerbated the situation.

### Nosie

The Council refer to old appeal decisions from 8-10 years ago, however they have not given due consideration to the new solutions we are now providing as part of this application. The windows on the building will be fully openable and the proposals don't restrict residents' ability to open windows should they wish. The windows are triple glazed and a ventilation system will provide fresh air to all flats and remove odours from the property when needed. This is a common design practice in built up areas and will provide fresh air 24/7. Furthermore, the Council do not object to the level of noise when windows are shut. Care has been taken to site the bedrooms at the front of the site, away from the railway.

It is accepted that the proposed flats are located close to the railway line, however, so is every other home in the area, these all share the same built relationship with the railway line. This is not uncommon within the built up area, especially those which are highly sustainable. This can be seen throughout the country.

We have provided additional information to assist the case officer based on the previous report and the Council have confirmed the vibration impact is now acceptable. Additionally, the applicant has sought professional advice in relation to ventilation, this information has been submitted and again, the Council have confirmed this is achievable.

### External amenity space

We have revised the site layout to provide a more attractive living environment through the provision of soft landscaping and electric vehicle parking to the front of the site. In this instance, it is not appropriate to provide a garden area to the rear of the building. However, the omission of such does not warrant a reason for refusal and it is not unusual for a flats development to not provide this. Just like Chapel House, the other side of the railway crossing, less than 60m from the site. The councils SPD says the requirement for garden area would depend on local context. The site has great access to attractive and high quality open spaces in the area such as Bidbury mead and Havant park. There is also access to a riverside walk and Leigh park which will encourage healthy lifestyles for residents.

### Principle

The Council do not have a 5 year housing supply. The proposals provide a great opportunity for the council to address the housing shortage in a sustainable location and on a brownfield site, making an efficient use of land. The area is highly sustainable and would enable people to get on the housing ladder, there are no reasons for refusal in relation to character, appearance, neighbouring amenity or highways. This site would make a positive contribution to the housing shortage and will help prevent greenfield sites or more protected land being developed to meet their housing need.

Therefore, it is requested that this application be supported.