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Amit Patel  
East Herts Council  
Wallfields  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford  
SG13 8EQ

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Mr Patel

**Re: Pre-Application enquiry for the erection of six single-storey bungalows (Use Class C3) at the Bull Inn, High Street, Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, SG10 6BU.**

CPC Planning Consultants Limited (“CPC” or the “Agent”) have produced this pre-application planning statement (the “PAS”) on behalf of Punch Partnerships (PML) Limited (the “Applicant”), in support of the proposal to develop land at the rear of the Bull Inn (the “Site” or the “Land”).

This PAS has been informed by, and should be read in conjunction with the following documentation:

Pre-Application Advice Application form – prepared by CPC  
Site location plan, proposed floor plans and elevations plans – prepared by PLC

The PAS is ordered under the following headings:

The Proposals  
Planning History  
Planning Policy Context  
Key Development Considerations  
Conclusion

## **The Proposals**

Six single storey dwellings are proposed on vacant land at the rear of the Bull Inn, accessed via the Bull Inn car park. The Bull Inn is unaffected by the proposals, although its car park and beer garden will be reconfigured. A proposed layout plan along with indicative elevations are included with the submission.

This submission follows the recently withdrawn application (3/21/2640/FUL) which comprised the same quantum of development, albeit with a different design and layout. The planning application was withdrawn to allow for a detailed discussion of heritage issues and to explore ways to minimise the impact of the proposed development on the continuing operation of the public house.

## **Planning History**

3/21/2640/FUL - Erection of six three-bedroom bungalows to the rear of the Bull Inn public house with associated landscaping and parking, and reconfiguration of the public house car park and beer garden. – Withdrawn May 2022

3/18/0358/FUL - Erection of 2 no. 4 bed dwellings, creation of paddock, and associated works. - Withdrawn April 2018

## **Planning Policy Context**

The **East Hertfordshire District Plan** was adopted in October 2018 and sets out the Council's planning framework for the district. It identifies how East Herts will grow and develop to become an even more desirable and prosperous place to live, work and visit. It covers the period 2011–2033 and consists of a Written Statement (District Plan) and a Policies Map.

Policy DES4 Design of Development - All development proposals, including extensions to existing buildings, must be of a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness.

Policy DPS5 Neighbourhood Planning - The Council will support in principle development brought forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans, where such development is in general conformity with the strategic objectives and policies set out in this District Plan.

Policy HOU7 Accessible and Adaptable Homes – All new residential development should meet the Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Category 2 – Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings.

Policy HA1 Designated Heritage Assets - Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment of East Herts.

Policy HA4 Conservation Areas - New development in Conservation Areas will be permitted provided that they preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area.

Policy HA7 Listed Buildings - Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where the setting of the building is preserved.

The **Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan** has reached an advance stage, with an independent examiner recommending that the Plan proceed to referendum, which is scheduled for 23 June 2022. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore carries significant weight in decision-making. The Plan sets out a community vision for how the parish of Much Hadham will develop over the period 2019 to 2033.

Policy MH H2: Village Development Boundary - The Much Hadham village development boundary is amended to include three development site allocations which are located outside but adjacent to the boundary. These are at Hopleys, The Bull Inn and South Plot Culver.

Policy MH H3: Type and Mix of Housing - To meet the needs of younger people and downsizers, preference will be given to schemes comprised entirely of 1, 2 and/or 3-bedroom homes.

Policy MH H6: The Bull Inn – Land behind The Bull Inn is allocated as a residential development site to accommodate at least 5 new homes, to meet the identified local need for smaller, single storey homes. Priority should be given to elderly parish residents wishing to downsize, and be designed to meet that need.

Development will be supported provided that it complies with the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and meets these criteria a) – j):

- a) Site layout, height/mass and design to be sympathetic to the character of the neighbouring properties.

- b) Due to the topography of the site and its sensitive location, the development will consist only of single storey homes.
- c) Development proposals must preserve or enhance the significance of the neighbouring listed properties.
- d) A Construction Management Plan will be required to ensure that the commercial operation of The Bull Inn is not adversely affected during construction of the new homes.
- e) Vehicle access is to be from the High Street only as shown on the indicative site allocation map, including making adequate provision for refuse collection from each house plot boundary.
- f) Sufficient parking is provided in accordance with Policy MH D3 Vehicle Parking Provision, with no net loss of car parking for the pub.
- g) All appropriate site boundary trees to be retained, together with the existing mature willow and ash on either side of the access drive.
- h) Site surface water drainage to be designed to avoid run off on to the B1004 under all conditions.
- i) The character of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced.
- j) Mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures will be required to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity.



Sketch plan extracted from the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan, showing 6no 3 bed units

## **Key Development Considerations**

### **Principle**

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to amend the village development boundary to include the site, and to allocate the sites for at least 5 single storey homes suitable for downsizing. The Neighbourhood Plan highlights a need for 1, 2 and 3-bedroom homes to cater for first-time buyers and downsizers. The Neighbourhood Plan thus establishes the principle of developing the site for housing. As noted above, the Neighbourhood Plan is at an advanced stage, and carries considerable weight in decision-making.

The pre-application proposals show six single storey dwellings, in the same arrangement as the sketch plan in above, and thus comply in principle with Policy MH H6 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Heritage**

The Bull Inn is a Grade II listed building, and the site is located within the Much Hadham Conservation Area. Whilst the principle of developing the land at the rear of the site for a minimum of 5 single storey dwellings is potentially established in the Neighbourhood Plan, with the sketch layout in the Neighbourhood Plan showing an indicative arrangement of 6 x 3 bed bungalows, careful consideration must be given to the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets, in accordance with national and local policies.

The Conservation and Urban Design Team commented on the withdrawn application as follows;

*Whilst there have been similar developments to the rear of Much Hadham high street, we consider that this proposed development would constitute over development in this location and in particular in close proximity to the rear of the listed Bull pub.*

*We welcome the sensitivity to the context that has resulted in the development being formed of bungalows, however we consider that three bedroom bungalows would introduce a sub-urban density of development that is not appropriate in this historic village location.*

*A reduction in the number of dwellings may be acceptable providing that they are withdrawn to the rear of the site, allowing plenty of space between the listed pub and new dwellings.*

*In its current form we consider that the proposed development would be harmful to the setting of the Listed Building and to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.*

Responding to the comments of the Conservation and Urban Design Team, the following changes have been made to the previously-submitted scheme, as shown in the layout plan below.



#### Proposed site layout

- The separation distance between the Bull Inn and the proposed units has been increased by more than 5 metres, to exactly reflect the separation distance shown in the Neighbourhood Plan sketch layout, with a boundary hedgerow proposed beside the units.
- The vehicular access to the proposed units has been rerouted to the northern boundary, reflecting the Neighbourhood Plan sketch layout. This has the advantage of pushing the proposed units closer to the southern boundary, ensuring that views through the site from High Street to the open countryside are maximised.
- By relocating the access to the northern boundary, the pub car park/beer garden are no longer bisected, allowing a larger beer garden to be laid out behind the pub, and more customer parking spaces to be provided than the withdrawn application.
- The units are laid out as two terraces of three dwellings, reflecting the Neighbourhood Plan sketch layout. By linking the units in this way, the scheme responds to the historic character of terraced dwellings in the High Street and elsewhere in the village.
- The appearance of the units is much more traditional, reflective of almshouses, which represent a historic form of linked single storey dwellings. The design of the scheme is discussed in more detail below.

By making these changes to the scheme, the plans align much more closely to the development envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as preserving the significance of the heritage assets. Responding to the concerns of the Conservation and Urban Design Team, the amended scheme:

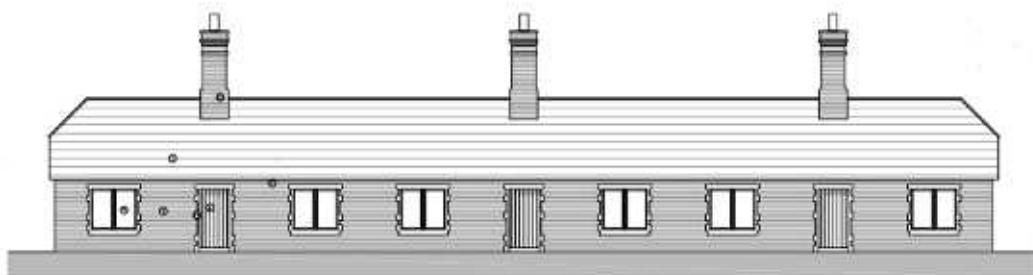
- The scheme has been pulled back, as envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan, allowing a much greater separation between the public house and the dwellings.
- The units, whilst still three bedroomed as envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan, have been completely redesigned to remove any trace of 'suburbia'.

We trust that the amended scheme is to the satisfaction of the Conservation and Urban Design Team, and look forward to engaging in detailed discussions about the scheme.

## Design

The design of the bungalows follows an almshouse style, incorporating the following features;

- Stone door/ window surround
- Exposed rafters feet
- Ornate detailed chimney stack
- Plain clay roof tile
- Red facing brickwork
- Recessed entrance door



## Proposed principal elevation

The design of the bungalows has drawn inspiration from the existing Much Hadham almshouses (1 – 8 Tower Hill, Much Hadham) which date back to before 1689, but were rebuilt in 1866. The

Almshouses are an attractive historic feature in Much Hadham and have been protected by a grade II listing since 1985. The almshouse style is well suited to the application site, with the low profile sitting well behind the public house, and a traditional design utilising high quality materials.



1 – 8 Tower Hill almshouses from the southeast



1 – 8 Tower Hill almshouse from the northeast

When viewed from the High Street, the proposed units will have a low profile and be seen as subordinate to, and separate from, the listed Bull Inn, as highlighted in the indicative street scene below.





Proposed view of the development from the public house access

### **Public house enhancements**

Punch are committed to operating the Bull Inn as focal community facility for the village, and to this end have no intention of closing the business either during the construction phase of the dwellings or in the future. To this end, Punch are happy to reconfirm their willingness for the public house to be designated as an Asset of Community Value, if this is the wish of the community.

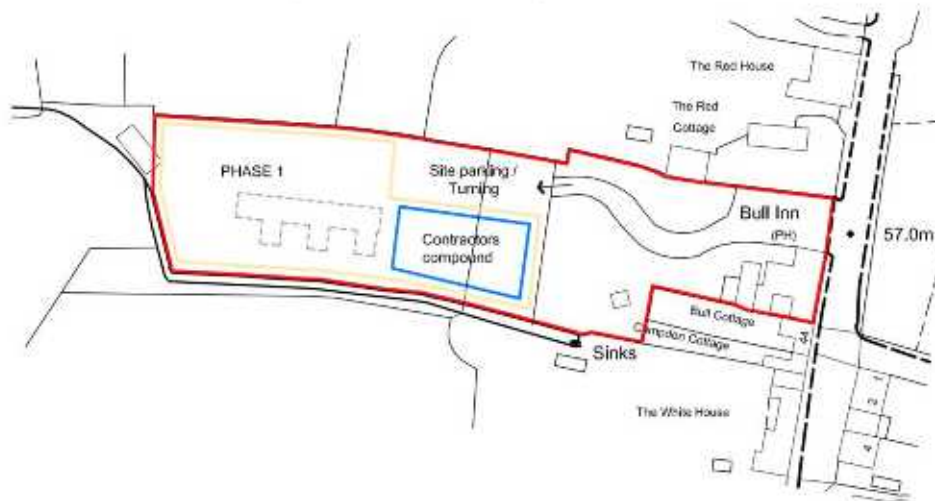
As noted above, the revised plans offer the opportunity to create a larger and more attractive beer garden behind the public house, as well as more customer parking. The improvements will be carried out as part and parcel of the development, and Punch are happy to commit to carrying the improvements as part of the planning consent, which could be controlled by condition.

Feedback received from patrons has highlighted the need for a better food offering, and consequently Punch will invest in the Bull Inn's kitchen facilities to ensure that a more varied food offering is possible. Customer toilets are in need of an upgrade, and this will form part of Punch's investment in the Bull Inn. As well as this, a significant investment will be made in the internal décor of the public house, to improve the customer experience. Punch will offer these improvements as part of the resubmitted planning application, and are willing for a condition to be attached to the planning

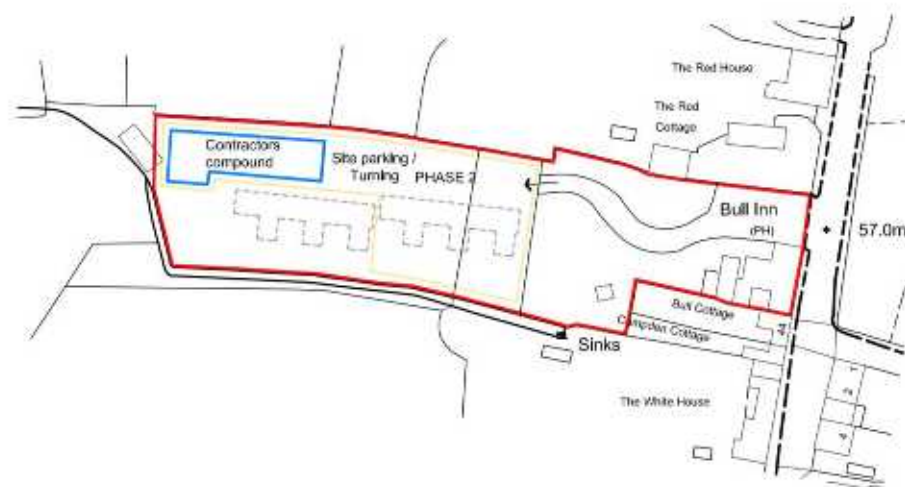
permission to ensure that the improvements are undertaken at the same time as the new houses are built.

### Construction phase

Punch will keep the Bull Inn open for the duration of the construction period, and a detailed Construction Management Plan will be submitted with the planning application setting out the arrangements. There will be no need for construction vehicles or materials to be stored within the grounds of the public house, with the plans below showing where the construction compound will be located for the different phases of the development.



Phase 1 – construction site development plan



Phase 2 – construction site development plan

## **Highways**

The proposed vehicular access to the public house will be from the northern side of the car park, in order to maximise visibility splays as recommended by Punch's transport consultants. The number of parking spaces for customers will be increased from the current c 10 spaces to 19 spaces, the same amount as shown in the Neighbourhood Plan sketch layout.

Two parking spaces will be provided per dwelling, in accordance with local standards. A turning head will be provided for commercial vehicles to turn within the site.

## **Drainage**

The application will follow the same approach as the withdrawn scheme, which received no objection from the Thames Water Consultee.

## **Trees**

The proposals would result in the same number of trees to be removed as the withdrawn application, which was supported.

## **Ecology**

Following advice from the Council's Ecologist we instructed a series of reptile surveys which started in May, and will comprise 6 separate surveys continuing into June.

## **Residential amenity**

A noise survey was previously conducted which assisted the withdrawn application, which showed that the noise associated with the road traffic, public house garden and the car park will not have an adverse impact on the residential dwellings. As the development location is staying the same its expected there will be no change in levels of noise.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the pre-application scheme is a materially stronger scheme than the withdrawn application, paying closer regard to heritage constraints and the operation of the public house. The revised scheme takes on board comments received during the course of the previous application from both East Herts Council and local residents.

We look forward to discussing it with officers in due course.

If you have any queries relating the pre-application proposals, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 01243 697707 or [lauren@cpclanningconsultants.co.uk](mailto:lauren@cpclanningconsultants.co.uk)

Yours sincerely



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Cc. Punch Partnerships (PML) Limited  
Encl. Application documents as above