

## Design & Access Statement



**Site:** The Lion, 2 Church Street, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2JY  
**Proposal:** Demolition of existing building and erection of block of 15 flats ( outline consent )

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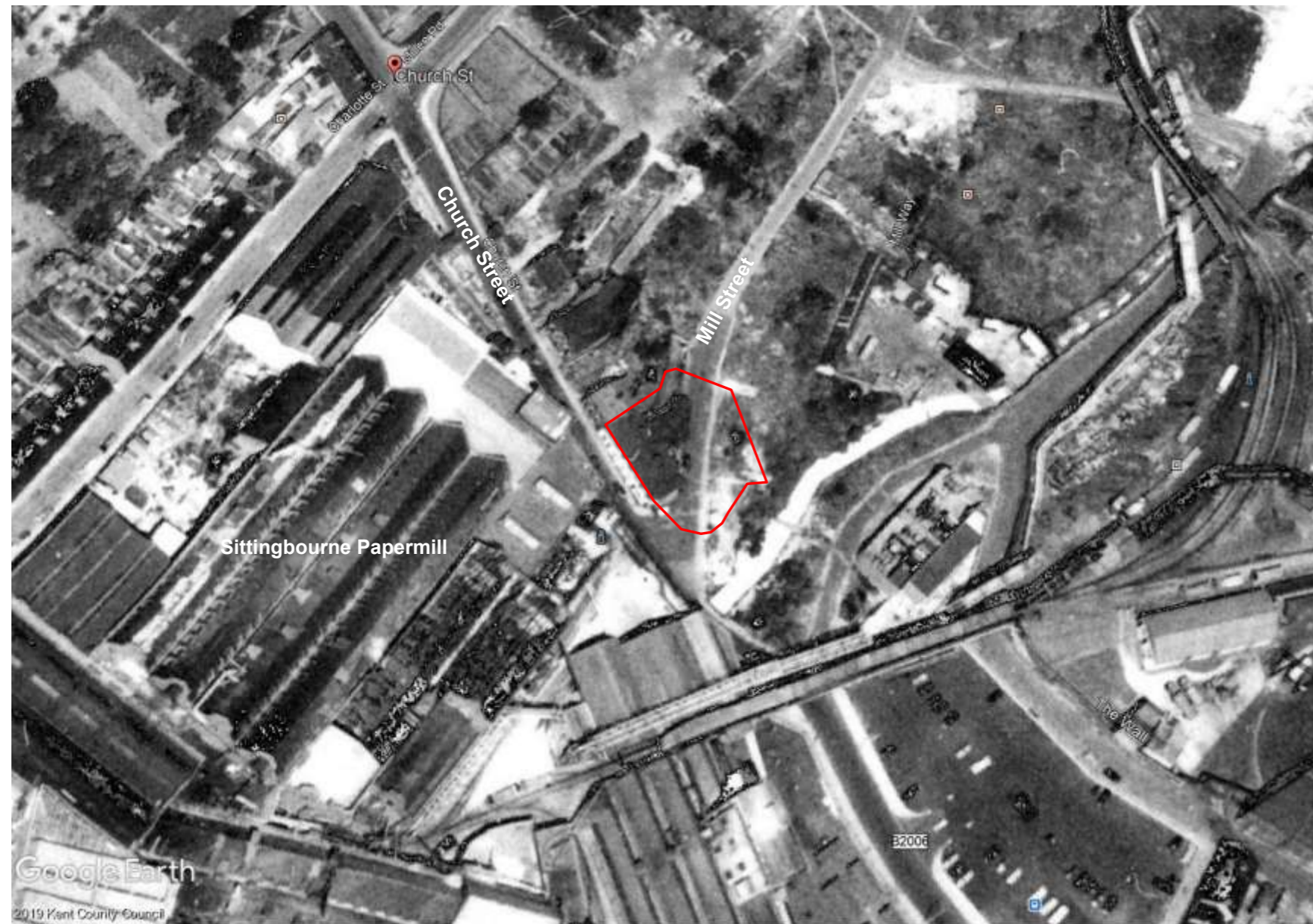
## Background history

1940



Up until the 1940s, the former Lion Public House stood on the corner of Church Street and Mill Street, facing Sittingbourne Paper Mill's large site to the south of Church Street. The Lion was abutted by a row of 5 cottages ( with a narrow alleyway between the third and fourth cottage ) to the north east, with a Methodist chapel beyond, and was set in an area of terrace houses and gardens.

1960



By the 1960s, the chapel and most of the houses are gone—whether as a result of bomb damage, slum clearance, or a combination of the two, it is not exactly clear from the map evidence.

1990



By the 1970s, all the cottages but the one abutting the pub are removed, and Mill Street is removed, to make way for an industrial estate— what is now B&M Steels. Church Street is turned into a cul de sac, disconnected from the new roadway, Mill Way or the B2005, that skirts around the estate.

Change of Use was granted to convert the former Lion public house into a residential property on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1979. The owners later acquired the next-door cottage in 1989 and joined it to the house.

2007



2018



Within the last few years, the Sittingbourne Paper Mill site has made way for a new residential development of 150 residential units. Most notable of these is Block 4, a 4-storey block of 27 apartments directly across the street from the house.



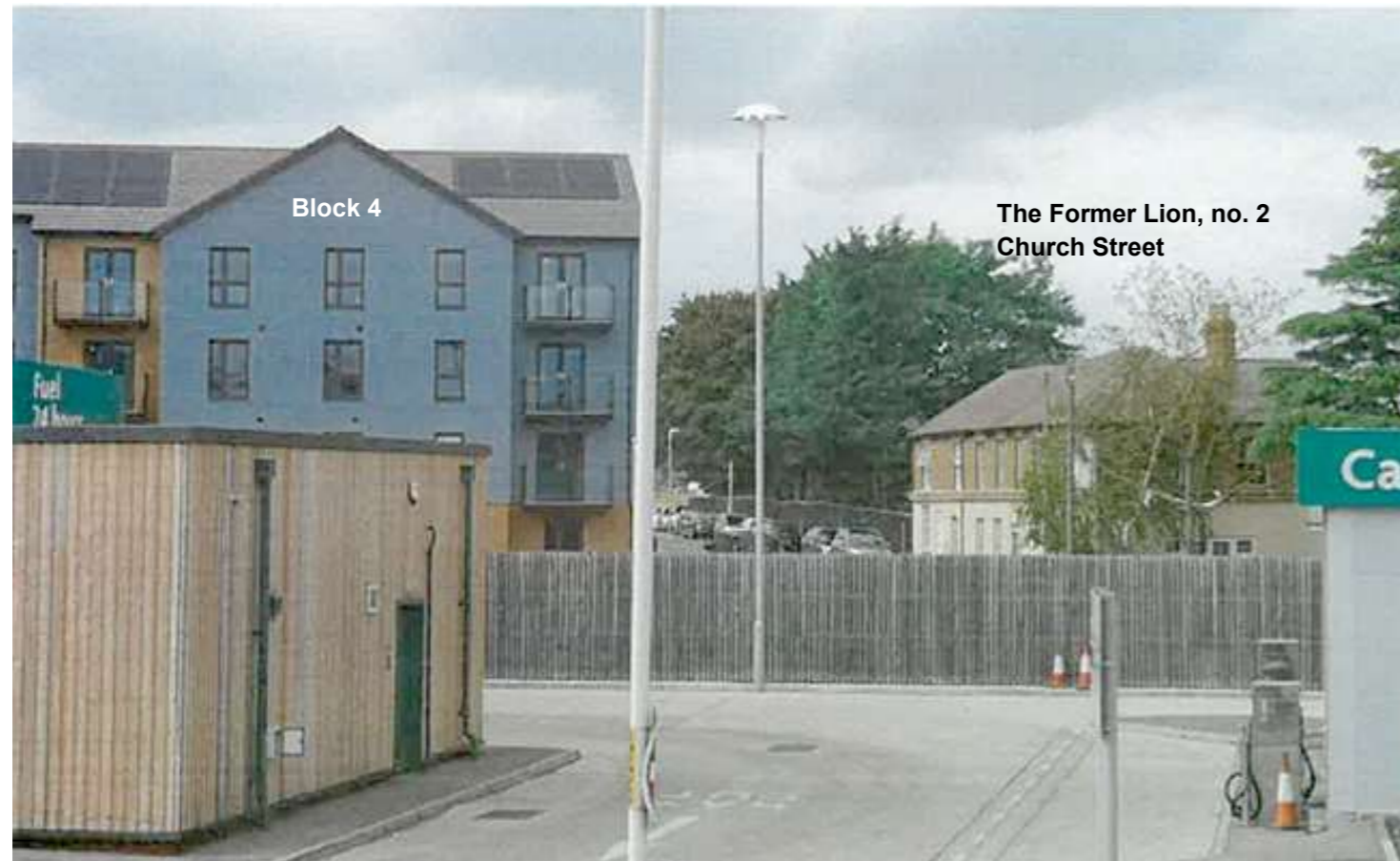




Squatter graffiti on first floor



View of Block 4 out of first floor window



Block 4

The Former Lion, no. 2 Church Street

The last owner occupant passed away some three years ago, and for a time the house has been occupied by squatters. The applicant ( next of kin to the last owner occupant ) has only recently been able to regain possession of the property. They approached Clay Architecture with a view to maximize its value.

Bearing in mind the bulk of the new apartments across the road, the condition of the property, and the flood zones, **we looked at options for retaining and converting the existing house into flats, and for replacing the existing house with a terrace of 5 houses, however:**

- On both the conversion option, and the optimum layout for new houses, proposed accommodation crosses into the flood zones
- Both options will be dwarfed by the 4-storey apartment block across the street.
- The development yield for both the conversion and for the new houses is relatively low.

We have therefore settled on an option for a multi-storey block of flats of equivalent bulk to the apartment across the road, with under-croft parking on the ground floor so that no accommodation crosses into the flood zone at all.

## Pre-application consultation and member engagement

A pre-planning application was submitted on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and validated on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

A site meeting was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019 to discuss the proposal. Attending were Swale Planning Officer Corina Griffiths, Ward Councillor Wheelan, the applicants, agent and Clay Architecture director Kasan Goh, and his colleague Jacob Hussey.

Written comments were received from Swale Borough Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

In summary:

- The site is situated within the built-up area of Sittingbourne and comprises a brownfield site with existing residential use and therefore the principle of residential development is acceptable.
- Taking into account the existing 4-storey flat block opposite the site, it is considered a proposal of a similar scale and massing may well be acceptable on this site, if it can be demonstrated that the development would be of a high quality of design as befits the prominent site.
- With regard to the future residential amenity, the area of external amenity space outside the building is small but each flat would have an external balcony which is considered to provide a suitable level of amenity for these 1/2 bedroom flats.
- The KCC residential parking standards ( Kent Design Guide Parking: Interim Guidance Note 3 ) outlines that there should be one parking space for each 1-2 bedroom flats. The proposal provides 1 car parking space per flat plus 2 additional parking spaces for the development which is considered to accord with the adopted parking standards. The provision of 15 bicycle parking spaces is a positive aspect of the scheme.

- There was concern about the siting and the massing of the apartment block. It was suggested that the building be set-back from the street to allow space for landscaping, that the bulk of the apartment block should be broken up by staggering the building line, and that careful placement of balconies and windows should be used to create visual breaks in the building.
- Councillor Whelan was concerned about the lack of play space.

## Design and massing

In response to the pre-application meeting and comments, we redesigned the scheme, changing it from

- a 4-storey block with a pitched roof, undercroft parking on the ground floor, and 15 apartments spread between the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor,

to

- a 5-storey block with a flat roof, undercroft parking on the ground floor, and 15 apartments spread between the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

The submitted design proposes 15 apartments in all, with 11 nos. 2-bedroom apartments and 4 nos. 1-bedroom apartments.

The bulk of the apartment block is broken up by staggering the building line, and by careful placement of balconies and windows to create visual breaks in the building. The 4<sup>th</sup> floor is stepped in to reduce its visual impact on the form of the building.

This redesign reduces the footprint of the building ( from 468m<sup>2</sup> to 360m<sup>2</sup> ) without increasing its overall mass or height, and enables the building to be set-back from Church Street, releasing more land for soft landscaping.

To undercroft car park will be enclosed with a physical screen ( a perforated brick wall ) along its periphery, with a gated pedestrian and vehicular entry for greater security.

The apartments are orientated on a NW - SE axis, each apartment will have a 5m<sup>2</sup> balcony ( 1.5m deep ) as a private amenity area.

Level access to all floors will be provided by a single passenger lift, and 1 stairwell. Flood protection measures— to be worked out as part of the more developed design under Reserved Matters— will protect the staircase ( and if required, the lift ) from flood.

Gross Internal Floor Areas for the apartments are based on the London Housing Design Guide Interim Edition August 2010, which we find to be compatible with most local housing standards.

An enclosed bin-store area is sited on the ground floor.



Ground floor plan at Pre-app Consultation stage



Indicative South Elevation at Pre-app Consultation stage



Revised ground floor plan in response to Pre-App



Revised South Elevation in response to Pre-app Consultation

## Design and massing



Bearing in mind that this is an outline application, and that the fully developed design is a Reserved Matter, the intention is for the new block of flats to be at least of equivalent design quality as the apartment block opposite, if not better.

- It will be of contemporary design, with a mixed palette of materials, including a perforated brick screen to the undercroft car park
- Visual interest will be created by the stepped 4th floor, and variations in the placement pattern of inset windows and balconies, which reflect the difference in layouts between the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor.
- It will form a visual landmark in a prominent location on the northwest edge of the town centre, relatively unobstructed by other buildings.

View from the south— artist's impression

## Amenities



The site is not huge. At 0.0772 hectares, even the existing house conversion option ( 246m<sup>2</sup> ) would not have much space for a play area once vehicle access and car parking for 5 dwellings are factored in. Reducing the footprint of the building from 468m<sup>2</sup> to 360m<sup>2</sup> allows for additional soft landscaping, but not enough for a significant dedicated play area ( at least for older children )— not an unusual situation for an edge of town centre site.

However, we note that planning approval for the next phase of the adjacent Sittingbourne Mill and Wharf Sites ( SW/11/1059 ) includes:

- **Mill Pond:** A 200m linear park providing new open greenspace which will include a series of play areas featuring natural and pre-cast elements to climb and jump on rather than traditional play equipment, aimed at the younger age group between 3-7 years.
- A 1.37 hectare **Waterside Park** within the Wharf site which will provide further play provision for children of older age groups.

When completed both play areas will be less than a 2 to 3-minute walk from the application site.

Meanwhile, **Milton Creek Country Park** is a five minute walk from the site.

## Highways and Parking

The proposal has 17 parking spaces to serve the 15 apartments, this is equivalent to 1.13 spaces per dwelling.

The application is an edge of town centre location, a 5-minute walk from the train station and town centre, a 2 to 3-minute walk from Morrisons, Pizza Hut and the retail park.

The Kent Design Guide: Interim Guidance Note 3- Residential Parking ( November 2008 ) makes a clear distinction between those areas where maximum and minimum parking standards should be applied. Maximum parking standards ( in this case a maximum of 1 space per dwelling ) should be applied to town centre and edge of town centre locations. We note that the development at Mill Place obtained PP with a parking ration of 1.1 spaces per dwelling.

Based on the Kent Design Guide, parking provision for the development complies with Kent Highway Services parking standards.

It is proposed that 2 of the 17 parking spaces be allotted for electric car charging points.

The proposal will create a new vehicular access from Church Street to serve the undercroft parking area, and an extension to the dropped kerb to provide for parking spaces no. 14 to 17.

Drawing 5226/PL/118 demonstrates that there is suitable visibility for the new vehicular access.

## Water, Flooding and Drainage

A 'Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy Report' is submitted as part of this application.

The Report concludes:

- The site is located with Flood Zones 3 ( High Probability ), 2 ( Medium Probability ) and 1 ( Low Probability ).
- The use of under-croft parking, providing access and escape routes, early warning and having habitable space a minimum of 2.4m above the worse-case flood scenario are mitigating measures against the flood risks to future inhabitants. In addition, considering the overall improvement the development will bring to the area and the community compared to the existing site, it is considered that the requirements of the Exception Test have been met.
- All other potential sources of flooding have been considered and have been found to have an overall low risk to the development.
- The CCTV survey suggest that the existing foul water system ( and half of the surface water for the site ) discharges to the unmarked private pipeline crossing the site. Further on-site investigation is required ahead of the detailed design to confirm the existence and location of the pipe.
- The flood risk to the site, the Alluvium ( Clay, silt, sand & peat ) head material anticipated to be present, coupled to an anticipated high ground water level somewhat limit the available drainage options– infiltration techniques are not considered viable.
- Surface water will be collected by rainwater pipes and channel drains, conveyed by gravity to an attenuation tank before being discharged to the tributary of Milton Creek at a

maximum of 2l/s, via a flow control chamber and an outlet headwall with a non-return valve. The attenuation tank will be sized to accommodate the entire volume of rainfall during a 100 year + 40% design storm, to allow for the outlet to be blocked due to high water levels in the adjacent ditch. 2l/s is considered the minimum practical rate it is possible to restrict flows to and will have a negligible effect on the overall input to this tributary. Subject to approval by the LLFA and / or the EA.

- Preferred proposed foul drainage is a gravity system which will discharge to the private pipe believed to cross the site. Alternatively, a new connection will be made to the public sewer. Subject to approval by Southern Water.
- A desktop study into contamination on the site does not highlight any specific risks, however further on-site investigation and subsequent testing is required to confirm this. Investigation should be given to the area surrounding the damaged foul sewer system currently serving the site to establish whether the soil is contaminated and will need removal. Removal will be undertaken with care to ensure no leeching into the ground occurs as a result.
- Drainage for the proposed development will be entirely new, and does not include for any form of permeable paving, and piled foundations are likely, which have a minimal impact on the ground close to the surface, which is where any possible contamination would likely be. It is therefore considered there is little or no risk of ground contamination as a result of the development.

## Ecology and bio-diversity

The site is in a built-up area with little to no habitat, and is thus very unlikely to support protected species.

The soft landscaping will, in a modest way, support biodiversity. Native species will be chosen in the planting scheme to help maximise the potential for biodiversity.

## Sustainable Design and Construction



From the Spirit of Sittingbourne website

The proposed development meets 5 out of Swale Borough Council's 12-point agenda for sustainable development as set out in its local plan strategy 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

It:

- **Ensures the vitality of town centres, and promotes sustainable transport**
  - Sited within easy walking and cycling distance of Swale Borough Council's plan for regenerating *The Spirit of Sittingbourne*, the proposed development is in an ideal location to help bring footfall to the town centre and to the much-needed night-time economy without impacting on either parking or traffic.
  - Its edge of town centre location and proximity to the train station and local bus routes means fewer cars per dwelling and therefore a lower transport carbon footprint.
  - The scheme will provide 2 electric car-charging points and parking for 15 bicycles.
- **Delivers a wide choice of high-quality homes**
  - The 1 and 2-bedroom apartments are ideal for singletons, young families and retirees looking to downsize to a near town centre location.

- **Provides good design**
  - The completed scheme will be of relatively high-quality design as detailed in 'Design and Massing'.
  - Given the prominence of the site and the nature of the scheme, Swale Borough Council have encouraged the applicant to have the scheme reviewed by the Design Review Panel. As an outline planning scheme, however, the design is at too early a stage to be submitted for design review. The applicant reserves the right to consider the Design Review Panel as an option should we progress to the next stage of detailed design as a Reserved Matter.
- **Meets the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**
  - With undercroft carparking, the design is a robust response to climate change, rising sea levels, and flood risk.
  - See section on flood, water and drainage for more detail

It is too early in the design process to detail the sustainable design or sustainable construction of the scheme in any significant depth. This will be detailed as part of Reserved Matters or as a Planning Condition.



## Environmental Health

An **Air Quality Assessment Report** providing a qualitative assessment of key impacts associated with the constructional and operational phase of the proposed development is submitted as part of this outline application:

- The largest risk, demolition activities, are considered to be 'Medium Risk' with regards to dust soiling and 'Negligible' with regards to human health. All construction activities are considered to be 'Low Risk' with regards to dust soiling and 'Negligible' with regards to human health. Mitigation measures appropriate to the proposed development have been presented in Section 6 of the report. Overall, the impacts from disamenity dust and PM<sub>10</sub> from the demolition and construction phase of the proposed development are considered to be 'not significant'.
- Based on the Defra background data presented within the report, the proposed development is deemed suitable for residential uses.
- The report concludes that the proposed development is not considered to conflict with any national, regional, or local policy.

An **Acoustic Assessment** is submitted as part of this outline application. It is proposed that:

- The glazing will be specified to ensure that the internal noise levels detailed in section 2.3 of the report are not exceeded.
- A whole house ventilation or similar specialist system will be installed to each of the habitable rooms to provide adequate rapid ventilation. The installed units will be specified to not give rise to an increase of internal noise levels over the desired internal noise level values.
- We recommend that Swale Borough Council take a view on the balconies on the northeast and southeast facades taking into account site circumstances such as the nearby Milton Creek Country Park within 500m, with reference to paragraph 11 of the current planning practice guidance that notes noise impacts may be partially offset if residents have access to a relatively quiet, protected, external publically accessible amenity space ( eg a public park or a local green space

designated because of its tranquillity ) that is nearby ( within a 5 minutes walking distance ).

- The results of the assessment indicated that, with the correct glazing specification and ventilation strategy, as well as having suitable regard to the acceptability of any balconies on the northeast and southeast facades, there are no further reasons on noise grounds why planning permission may not be granted.

A **Desktop Contamination Survey and Report** is submitted as part of this outline application. The findings of the report indicate that the site represents a very low to moderate environmental risk and that a Phase II intrusive investigation of the site is required.

## Conclusion

- The submitted outline proposal has gone through pre-planning consultation and member engagement.
- At the pre-planning consultation, Swale Borough Council's planning department had no objection to the principle of development, or to the proposed apartments being of equal mass and scale to the apartment block across Church Street, or to the number of car parking spaces provided.
- We listened to, and responded to concerns with a redesign ( which was accepted by SBC's planning department ), and highlighted significant existing and future outdoor play areas and amenities very close to the property that will be available when the Mill Pond Linear Park and Waterside Park are completed.
- We presented justification for the demolition of the existing house, which is neither listed nor in a conservation area, is not in a great condition, is now dwarfed by the new apartment block directly opposite, and is sited within flood zones 2 and 3— all factors which limit viable development options for the site.
- We put forward the proposal for a new apartment block with undercroft carparking as a robust response to flood risk and climate change, and as a viable, sustainable and appropriate edge-of-town-centre residential development.
- The proposal outlines a strategy for a high-quality design that will form part of a visual landmark to the north west edge of the regenerated town centre.
- The proposal presents a viable and sustainable response to flood risk, protected ground source water protection, and a strategy for a Sustainable Drainage system— within the limitations posed by the flood risk, the Alluvium ( clay, silt, sand & peat ) head material anticipated to be present, and an anticipated high ground water level.
- The proposed development meets 5 out of Swale Borough Council's 12-point agenda for sustainable development.
- An Air Quality report ( which includes appropriate mitigation measures ) assesses overall key impacts associated with the constructional and operational phase of the proposed development as 'not significant'. The proposed development is deemed suitable for residential uses and is not considered to conflict with any national, regional, or local policy.
- An Acoustic Assessment indicates that, with correct glazing specification and ventilation strategy, as well as having suitable regard to the acceptability of balconies on the northeast and southeast facades, there are no reasons on noise grounds why the application should be refused.
- We trust that the information presented is in order, and that Swale Borough Council and its counsellors will view the proposal as a positive contribution to a vibrant, regenerated townscape.

## Appendices

# Photographs



Rear of former Lion Pub, Garage



Rear of former Lion Pub, View from garden



Rear of former Lion Pub, View from garden



Mill Place development from Lion Pub site



Rear of former Lion Pub, View from garden



Rear of former Lion Pub, Garage



South view. Church Street



Rear of former Lion Pub, View from garden

# Drawing and document list

Job No: 5226				
Project: The Former Lion Pub Sittingbourne. Proposed residential development.				
Sheet No: 01				04/10/2019
Drwg No	Size	Title	Scale	
<b>Outline Planning</b>				
5226/PL001	A3	Location plan	1/1250	/
5226/PL002	A3	Site Plan	1/500	/
5226/PL100	A3	Existing ground floor plan	1/200	/
5226/PL101	A3	Existing First floor plan	1/200	/
5226/PL102	A3	Existing roof plan	1/200	/
5226/PL105	A3	Existing south elevation	1/200	/
5226/PL106	A3	Existing view from south east	NTS	/
5226/PL107	A3	Existing view from Charlotte street	NTS	/
5226/PL110	A3	Proposed ground floor plan	1/200	/
5226/PL111	A3	Proposed typical 3rd floor plan	1/200	/
5226/PL112	A3	Proposed typical 1st and 2nd floor plan	1/200	/
5226/PL113	A3	Proposed 4th floor plan	1/200	/
5226/PL115	A3	Indicative south elevation	1/200	/
5226/PL116	A3	View from south east	NTS	/
5226/PL117	A3	View from Charlotte street	NTS	/
5226/PL118	A3	Visibility Splay	1/500	/
<u>Assessments and reports</u>				
Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy report				
Acoustic , traffic noise assessment				
Air quality assessment				
Soil contamination report				
Design and Access Statement				
<b>TO:</b> File:				
Client: : <b>Simon Ward</b>				
Planner: Swale XXX Borough Council. Corina Griffiths				