



On behalf Welbeck Land, Planning Potential secured a resolution to grant outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for access, for a residential development of up to 62 units including 35% affordable housing provision, for a site in Storrington, Horsham. Members of Horsham District Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant permission, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement, in January 2020.

We secured the largest housing allocation within the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in September 2019. The site received a resolution to grant outline permission four months after the Neighbourhood Plan became part of Horsham DC's Development Plan.

The site is an undeveloped land parcel that abuts the settlement boundary of Storrington. Planning Potential were initially instructed on the project in 2017, to engage with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan process in respect of the site's promotion for residential development. Under a previous draft Local Plan, which was subject of an Examination in Public in March 2016, the site was proposed to be allocated as a Local Green Space. Under the NPPF, allocated Local Green Spaces become heavily restricted from future development, and so the prospective allocation would inhibit the site's residential development potential. However, the draft Neighbourhood Plan was found to be unsound.

Despite the conclusion of the Examiner, a subsequent draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan sought to safeguard the site as Local Green Space. Planning Potential made representations at several stages of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process setting out the following:

1. The evidence base prepared to support the designation of Local Green Spaces is insufficiently robust to underpin a Local Green Space allocation.
2. The proposed designation of the field at the top of Downsview Avenue as a Local Green Space is inappropriate as it fails to satisfy the statutory tests for Local Green Space to be designated, at paragraph 100 of the NPPF.
3. It would be appropriate for the site to be allocated for residential development, to help meet local housing needs.

Planning Potential undertook a detailed analysis of the site's credentials as a prospective Local Green Space and compared its performance against each of the NPPF requirements to other prospective Local Green Space allocations. Our assessment concluded that the site performed considerably worse than other sites in the vicinity. We argued that the number of Local Green Spaces proposed within the Neighbourhood Plan area diluted the ability to demonstrate a "demonstrably special" nature required by the NPPF.

Planning Potential participated in the Examination in Public of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, to explore the matter of whether the site satisfied the statutory NPPF tests to be designated Local Green Space. Following the hearing sessions, the Examiner's Report recommended the following, as part of a series of Main Modifications:

- That the site should be excluded from the list of proposed Local Green Spaces;
- That the Built-Up Area Boundary of Storrington should be amended to include the subject site; and
- That the site should be allocated for residential development for at least 60 dwellings.

The Plan was subsequently subject to a referendum in July 2019, with the community voting in favour of its adoption. The Plan was adopted in September 2019.

Following the Examiner's Report, Planning Potential engaged in pre-application discussions with Horsham DC. While a proactive approach to engaging with the Local Planning Authority was supported, Officers recommended that the submission of an application was pursued only once the Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted.

Prior to the submission of an application, Planning Potential coordinated discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The discussions were collaborative, allowing for changes to be made to the layout and orientation of units prior to submission. We also subsequently supported a public exhibition, which was well-attended by members of the local community.

Our early engagement with Planning Officers established a very strong working relationship which culminated in the rapid progression of the planning application. Officers were supportive of a relatively dense scheme of 62 units (around 30 dwellings per hectare), which prioritised the delivery of both smaller residential units and smaller housing – for which there was a significant need for both in the locality. We were able to proactively address several technical matters during the application, with matters reserved by condition where it was practical and expedient to do so.

Upon signing of the Section 106 Agreement, which is expected imminently, the development will also secure improvements to an existing public right of way through the site and the provision of a large area of public open space.

Summary of achievements

- Promotion of development site through the Neighbourhood Planning process
- Client representation at Neighbourhood Plan Examination in Public
- Stakeholder engagement
- Project management of the consultant team
- Coordination of outline planning submission
- Negotiation / liaison with Local Planning Authority
- Securing a resolution to grant planning permission

Planning Potential Ltd
Magdalen House
148 Tooley Street
London SE1 2TU
T: 020 7357 8000