



Planning Potential secured a resolution to grant planning permission, subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement, for the regeneration of the former gasholder site in Tonbridge Town Centre to deliver 144 residential units, Class E floorspace and a range of public realm enhancements.

Acting on behalf of our client, Blueberry Homes, in December 2022 Planning Potential secured a resolution to grant planning permission for the regeneration of the former gasholder site in Tonbridge for a landmark urban regeneration scheme at a highly prominent location in the heart of Tonbridge. The site was initially allocated for residential-led development since 2008; however, owing to site-specific complexities including site remediation costs, no viable development proposals had successfully progressed.

Blueberry Homes are urban regeneration experts, with a proven track record in the regeneration of former gasholder sites. Initial pre-application discussions sought to establish a strong dialogue between the core project team and the LPA, who were keen to see the site redeveloped but acknowledged the complex planning challenges to overcome in order for development to be supported.

Planning Potential took a hands-on project management role from project inception, guiding the core design team through a series of pre-application discussions; and coordinating input from a wider team of technical consultants. We also engaged in pre-application discussions with the Environment Agency. We established strong relationships with the LPA's Planning Team and successfully overcame LPA resourcing issues through a collaborative approach to progress the proposals, with our front-loaded approach critical to making progress amid a challenging situation.

The planning benefits of the scheme sit at the heart of national planning policy, including facilitating housing growth at a highly sustainable location in central Tonbridge; the comprehensive remediation of a contaminated site; the delivery of a bespoke design which offers a wharf style of architecture paying homage to the site's industrial riverside legacy; and significant public realm enhancements along the River Medway.

Our forensic approach to material planning matters successfully overcame matters of clarification with the Environment Agency and other environmental consultees in respect of Agent of Change matters. We also supported financial viability discussions associated with prospective site abnormal costs; and agreed a suite of planning obligations offering wider planning benefits.

We supported our client at Planning Committee and made representations in support of the scheme which was subject to an almost unanimous recommendation to approve. The high-profile project will become a landmark development and is an example of successful urban regeneration.

Summary of achievements

- Delivery of a resolution to grant planning permission for an allocated site.
- Project management and coordination of development team.
- Preparation and submission of planning application including Planning Statement.
- Negotiation / liaison with Local Planning Authority.
- Representation of client at Planning Committee.