



## **PROPOSED CARE HOME**

**AT FORMER BULL & MONKIE PH SITE,  
CHURCHGATE, SPALDING. PE11 2RA**

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

**OBO ABBEY HEALTHCARE**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Statement is submitted in support of a proposed Care Home to be erected at the former Bull & Monkie PH site on Churchgate, near the town centre of Spalding.
- 1.2 The proposal has been subject to pre-application submissions and discussions with Officers at the Council, and amendments have been made to the scheme in response to this. Discussions have also been held with local Councillors, and the adjacent Church to help ensure stakeholders have been aware of intentions and their thoughts are taken account of in the scheme's evolution.
- 1.3 The site has been subject to a previous Care Home proposal, which was granted planning consent but not constructed. This was due to a variety of reasons including evolving Quality Care Commission (CQC) requirements, build/excavation costs of the original scheme, plus layout/operational concerns. The revised scheme has responded to such matters and the intended operators and Applicants, Abbey Healthcare, are fully focussed on obtaining this revised consent in order to develop the site promptly, enhance its appearance and help serve the notable demand for such accommodation.

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## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site contains the former two storey building and associated grounds of The Bull & Monkie PH. The brick building sits almost centrally within the site and has been abandoned for some time, with shuttered window openings, security fencing on the exterior and overgrown areas of previous hardstanding apparent. The land levels fall gently to the lowest point at the southeast corner of the site.
- 2.2 The site is at the junction of Churchgate and The Vista, the latter of which runs along the southern boundary of the site, with off-street public parking spaces, and leads to the listed St Mary and St Nicolas Church, and the adjacent South Holland Community Church Building, which lies to the east of the application site.
- 2.3 The western boundary of the site is defined by the security fencing on the Churchgate (B1173) frontage. Beyond Churchgate to the west is a planted verge and the River Welland. A very narrow two storey brick building, occupied by 'The Crystal Inn' restaurant, marks the northern boundary of the application site, and beyond this Ye Old White Horse, former Public House, three storey historic building can be found fronting Churchgate.
- 2.4 In addition to the close proximity to the listed buildings referred to above, the site also lies within the Spalding Conservation Area. As a result, the application is also supported by a specialist Heritage Appraisal, prepared by Turley Associates.
- 2.5 The site is in very close proximity to the town centre, which lies directly to the northwest, on the other side of the River Welland, and is accessible via the road network or a pedestrian footbridge to the front of The Crystal Inn. This connects with London Road, the main route into the town centre with Bus Stops directly opposite the application site providing stops for Services 301 and 302, connecting with Bourne and Stamford.
- 2.6 The town centre itself provides supermarkets, food and drink venues, a variety of shops, theatre, cinema, church, college and a rail station. The station offers regular direct links to other large settlements in the region such as Lincoln and Peterborough.

- 2.7 The application site is therefore in a very sustainable location, in close proximity to the town centre with a wide variety of facilities and services and good public transport links to other settlements.

### **3. Planning History**

- 3.1 The application site has been subject to a number of previous planning applications which are relevant in considering the currently proposed scheme.
- 3.2 In 2008 planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the site to accommodate 11 houses and 11 apartments in a 3/4 storey development fronting both Churchgate and The Vista under reference H16/1070/07.
- 3.3 In 2009 planning permission was granted for the introduction of a 71 bed Care Home and this consent was renewed in 2012 under reference H16-0591-12. This involved the introduction of a four-storey building (including a lower ground floor) that fronted both Churchgate and The Vista, with parking and amenity space to the rear of the building, and a vehicular access off The Vista, directly to the east of the site. Images of the approved scheme are included within the accompanying Design & Access Statement.
- 3.4 The approved Care Home scheme was not built out for a number of reasons. In operational terms, the entrance to the building on the lower ground floor was considered to cause management and user problems. Also, extensive ground investigations undertaken after planning consent was obtained identified major issues with site conditions that in turn impacted on the viability of the basement and parking/services arrangement.
- 3.5 It therefore followed that an alternative design would need to be put forward if a viable solution was to be found. A revised scheme was drawn up for consideration at pre-application stage by Officers in 2022, which has evolved to form the application now under consideration.

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#### **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 Abbey Healthcare operate many Care Homes across the country and have recognised that there is a shortage of quality care provision in Spalding and the surrounding area. The current application intends to help address the demand for such care provision against the background of a growing elderly population in the years ahead.
- 4.2 Whilst the approved Care Home on site offered a starting point for the current design, amendments have been required in order to address the Clients concern with regards the previous approval as referred to above, and to take account of Officers input at pre-application stage. Most notably the number of bedrooms has been reduced from 93 to 88 to allow a reduction in built floorspace from that considered at pre-application stage.
- 4.3 The proposed scheme introduces a four-storey building at the junction of Churchgate and The Vista, which falls away in height to the north and east. As with previous approved schemes on site, the building fronts both Churchgate and The Vista, with vehicular and pedestrian access now provided from Churchgate in a very similar position to that of one of the previous Public House car park access points. On The Vista frontage, rooms at fourth floor level are provided within the roof, whilst a part basement floor offers rooms for Plant, Kitchen and staff areas. The building reduces to three storey height as it approaches The Crystal Inn restaurant on Churchgate.
- 4.4 A Georgian style has been incorporated, reflective of buildings nearby, as highlighted within the DAS. A combination of multi-red and soft grey bricks will offer a simple palette, which will reinforce established materials in the vicinity. Stone and brick detailing within the design will help ensure a quality appearance, whilst providing the development with its own identity.
- 4.5 The first, second and third floors of the building primarily offer bedrooms for residents, with communal living and dining spaces plus medical areas also available. The ground floor offers a main reception area, facilities such as a shop, hairdressers, staff offices and other communal areas in addition to the bedrooms and living/dining spaces. A total of 88 bedrooms will be provided within the building.

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- 4.6 The set back of the building from the eastern boundary, of approximately 7.4m at the tightest point and 10m at the widest, has been dictated by detailed tree surveys, to ensure the protection and retention of the mature trees on the St Nicholas Road side of the boundary. This set back enables the provision of a 'Lower Lawn', one of a number of external amenity areas available to residents. A more enclosed central courtyard area is also accessible, as are a number of private and communal hardsurfaced and grassed areas, looking out towards the active streets of Churchgate and The Vista, plus a 'Garden Club' area with wheelchair accessible planters, seating and a potting shed.
- 4.7 In addition to offering amenity provision, some of the proposed open spaces within the scheme will be able to contribute towards Biodiversity enhancement at the site.
- 4.8 Thirteen off street parking spaces (including two disabled and four EV charging spaces) are provided towards the northern boundary of the site, most of which will be out of view from passers-by. Fourteen cycle spaces are included adjacent to the car park area, and at the front of the site.
- 4.9 With regards servicing of the building, in-house laundry and catering will minimise the number of vehicles needing to visit the site on a daily basis. Refuse will be managed via a private commercial contract, with Refuse Vehicles stopping at Churchgate.



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## **5. Assessment against Development Plan Policy**

- 5.1 If the proposed scheme can be shown to adhere with relevant development plan policy, then it should be granted planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the development plan is made up of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, adopted in March 2019, relevant policies of which are considered below.

### SE Lincolnshire Local Plan

- 5.2 Policy 1 of the Local Plan confirms that Spalding is one of the two sub-regional centres in SE Lincolnshire, at the top of the settlement hierarchy and considered to be the most sustainable to accommodate future development.
- 5.3 Policy 17 recognises that the growing ageing population will make up over 10% of the housing needs over the Plan period, and these should be met partly through specialist care home provision. The policy goes on to advise that such care homes should be located in the most sustainable settlements, such as the sub regional centres. Spalding is such a centre and as a result the principle of the introduction of a care home in the settlement is absolutely supported by relevant policy.
- 5.4 With regards the more detailed location of the site within Spalding, it is in very close proximity to the town centre and as a result has excellent accessibility to many facilities and services. This is highlighted within Policy 17 as an important consideration when assessing the appropriateness of a location for a Care Home and further highlights why such a use is ideally suited for the current site.
- 5.5 The above identifies that there is considerable 'in principle' policy support for a Care Home at the site, as further illustrated by previous consents at the site, and Officer's most recent pre-application support for such a use on site.
- 5.6 Policy 2 of the Local Plan advises that development will be permitted provided that a number of sustainable development considerations are met. Those relating to design and appearance are assessed in detail within the accompanying Design & Access Statement. The policy also requires access and vehicle generation levels to be carefully considered, plus flood risk. Such matters are addressed in

response to Policy 36 (parking provision) and Policy 4 (flood risk) in detail below, and are found to be appropriate.

- 5.7 Reference is also made in Policy 2 to the capacity of existing community services and infrastructure. Given the nature of the proposed development, it will actually contribute to community services, helping to take care of elderly residents, most of whom will already live in the area.
- 5.8 Policy 2 also requires an appropriate impact upon neighbouring land uses. In this instance the site fronts highways on three of its four boundaries, and the most direct interaction with neighbouring buildings and uses is to the other, the northern boundary. At the front of the northern boundary the site adjoins The Crystal Inn restaurant. This building offers a brick wall with only one minor opening facing the application site. As a result, whilst the Crystal Inn directly adjoins the application site it has no direct visual interaction with it, with no overlooking towards the site and no loss of outlook resulting. The proposed use of the application site will have no adverse impact on the operation of the restaurant and may generate additional trade for it.
- 5.9 To the east of the Crystal Inn building the northern boundary of the site adjoins some residential units and parking spaces accessed off Church Street. Relevant windows from the unit fronting Church Street (No.17) are over 15m from the application site boundary and approximately 25m from the building itself, which is at a lower ground level as illustrated in Drg 1315PL-RDT-ZZ-XX-DR-A1155\_PL1 . Given the separation distances involved, across which mature planting is to be retained, the proposed development will have an acceptable impact upon the residential amenity of No.17 Church Street.
- 5.10 There is another existing residential unit, tighter against the northern boundary of the application site with its main outlook in an east and west direction. Any outlook to the east from the property is largely screened by an established tree to be retained and will not be notably affected by the introduction of the proposed development. The western outlook from the property does however face towards the proposed development. There will be a separation of approximately 14m and as a result careful consideration has been given to ensure that element of the proposed building does not have a notable adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed from the residential property. The proposed building will not be at full

height in close proximity to the northern boundary, and three second floor windows that would potentially generate overlooking between the two buildings, have been shown as blocked/obscure glazed on the submitted drawings. The internal space within that part of the Care Home has been arranged to ensure that openings are not needed to serve those parts of the building, and the blocked/obscure nature of them can be confirmed by way of condition. Such a design will ensure an acceptable relationship between the proposed building and neighbouring properties and the detail of this part of the design was amended through the pre-application process in order to address Officer's initial concerns.

- 5.11 Policy 2 also requires the impact upon historical buildings and heritage assets to be properly considered. This is very relevant to the proposed scheme, given the Conservation Area location and proximity of listed buildings and registered Park & Garden nearby. As a result, a separate Heritage Appraisal accompanies the application to address such matters in detail. This explains why the impact of the scheme is appropriate in this respect and concludes at 6.6 as follows;

*'Overall, the proposed development offers a good opportunity to redevelop the site with a high-quality and contextually appropriate new development, which respects and responds to the existing architectural variety and language of existing historic buildings within the Conservation Area. Indeed, the proposed development proposes a form, which is aligned with the existing arrangements of buildings in this locality, and would provide an attractive and well-defined development edge, which responds to (and to a degree reinstates) a traditional arrangement of built form'*

- 5.12 Policy 3 of the Local Plan refers to the design of new development, requiring the use of high quality and inclusive design and layout. The policy sets out a list of criteria for development proposals to consider, against which the proposed scheme is assessed briefly against the relevant criteria below. Cross reference should also be made to the accompanying Design & Access Statement which considers such matters in detail;

*1. creating a sense of place by complementing and enhancing designated and non designated heritage assets, historic street patterns; respecting the density, scale, visual closure, landmarks, views, massing of neighbouring buildings and the surrounding area.*

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- 5.13 The proposed scheme achieves this requirement for reasons set out in detail within the accompanying Design & Access Statement and Heritage Appraisal.

*2. distinguish between private and public space*

- 5.14 Much of the site boundary consists of an established and notable stone wall which marks the boundary of the site very clearly along The Vista and St Nicolas Road frontages and will be retained as part of the redevelopment. With regards the Churchgate frontage, this is currently marked by palisade security fencing. The proposed scheme will remove this and introduce a brick wall, perforated with openings for pedestrian and vehicle access. As a result, there will be a clear understanding of which areas are public and private.

*3. the landscape character of the location*

- 5.15 The site is primarily hard surfaced, within a built-up area, close to the town centre. It is however recognised that a number of mature trees are located close to and overhang the site boundary. The proposed building has been deliberately sited to ensure that these will be retained, and hence can continue to contribute to the streetscene and soften the appearance of the building in some views.

*4. accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways.*

- 5.16 The site is well located to ensure that there is not a dependence upon the use of the private car to access it. Residents, staff and visitors will benefit from the edge of town centre location of the site in this respect. In addition to bus routes which connect with and pass through the town centre, Spalding rail station connects with notable settlements such as Peterborough, Doncaster and Lincoln, and is located only 600m to the north-west of the site.

*11. residential amenity*

- 5.17 As explained in response to Policy 2 above, there are a small number of residential properties to the north of the site, the impact upon which has been given careful consideration, and found to be appropriate as a result of the specific design and layout proposed.

- 5.18 With regards the amenity of future residents of the Care Home, all bedrooms benefit from an attractive outlook, either looking out beyond the site to the historic surroundings, or within the site across the carefully laid out and landscaped areas. A number of amenity gardens are identified on the proposed site plan, offering both an immediate outlook for residents and an opportunity to walk and sit within the grounds.

#### *12. mitigation of flood risk*

- 5.19 The site, which is primarily hard surfaced, lies within Flood Zone 3, as does the entirety of Spalding. A sustainable urban drainage system will be incorporated within the scheme to ensure there is no greater risk of flooding as a result of the development. As explained within the accompanying 'FRA & Surface Water Drainage Strategy', prepared by EAS, the SuDS strategy comprises of lined permeable paving and a cellular storage crate. This will provide a significant reduction in runoff rates when compared to the existing situation.
- 5.20 It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme does adhere with the relevant criteria of Policy 3.
- 5.21 Policy 4 of the Local Plan relates specifically to Flood Risk. This issue is addressed fully within the accompanying 'FRA & Surface Water Drainage Strategy', prepared by EAS. The report explains that whilst the site lies within Flood Zone 3, when existing flood defences are taken into account they provide protection against a flood event with a 1% chance of occurring in any year (1 in a 100). The site has a very low risk of surface water flooding.
- 5.22 In preparing the application mitigation measures have been agreed with the EA and include;
- A finished floor level (FFL) set at least 1m above the existing ground level (6.752m AOD)
  - Flood resilient construction to a height of 300mm above predicted flood depth and demountable defences to 600mm above FFL
  - No habitable accommodation in the basement level

- 5.23 As explained above the proposed surface water drainage strategy will significantly reduce run-off rates compared to those which currently exist. It is therefore considered that the issue of flood risk has been comprehensively assessed as part of the application, and mitigation measures appropriately applied within the proposal to enable a beneficial impact in this respect.
- 5.24 Policy 6 relates to Developer Contributions. It advises that schemes over 1,000 sq m will be required to mitigate their impact upon infrastructure, services and the environment. The proposed scheme has a floorspace of 4,650 sq m, so Policy 6 is relevant, as is Appendix 9 of the Local Plan which relates to Developer Contributions towards Health Care Facilities.
- 5.25 Such contributions are typically required in order to ensure that any pressure put on existing health care facilities by new housing developments is reasonably addressed through associated contributions with such developments. Specific reference is made at 18.3.1 to contributions for Care Homes being assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.26 The Care Home proposed in this instance will primarily serve elderly residents who already live in the local area, and hence use the existing health care facilities already. In addition, the provision of Care on site will actually result in residents needing to use other existing health care facilities less so than the same elderly residents living in standard residential accommodation. It is also noted that 18.1.3 of the Local Plan refers to there being capacity at GP Surgeries in Spalding to accommodate additional patients in the short-medium term.
- 5.27 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development will not place existing health care facilities, or other elements of Spalding's infrastructure and services under additional pressure and may even reduce the demand for other health care facilities given the level of care that can be provided on site. As a result, the application does not propose any financial contributions in this respect, but if Officers do have any concerns with such an approach the Applicants would be happy to discuss further.
- 5.28 Local Plan Policy 36 requires parking to be provided in adherence with the minimum Parking Standards unless a high-quality design can demonstrate that a lower standard of provision satisfies relevant requirements. In this instance the

standards (at Appendix 6 of the LP) require 1 car parking space per 3 residents. If adhered to that would result in 29 spaces serving the proposed scheme. Such provision is considered excessive and unnecessary given the sustainable location of the site and the likely operation of it.

- 5.29 The Applicant in this instance is an experienced Care Operator and typically runs homes (including those in less sustainable locations) with approximately 1 parking space per 6 residents. By way of context the previously approved Care Home scheme on site incorporated a layout providing for 12 spaces for a scheme of 71 residents, equating to approximately 1 space per 6 residents.
- 5.30 The provision of 13 parking spaces to serve the proposed 88 bed care home (at 1 space per 6.8 residents) is therefore considered to be appropriate and consistent with ratios used by the Operator elsewhere, and similar to that approved by the Council previously.
- 5.31 During the course of pre-application discussions, Officers did suggest further justification for a sub-standard parking provision would be necessary. In response to this a local parking survey has been undertaken, the findings of which are included within the submitted Transport Statement at its Appendix F.
- 5.32 The local parking survey established that there was considerable capacity for parking within 500m of the site in mid-week and the weekend. On-street parking spaces and public car parks were monitored, with more than half of the 538 potential spaces un-occupied during the survey times of 10am til 2pm on a Saturday and 8am to 5pm on a Tuesday. Full details of the survey and its findings are set out in the Transport Statement and clarify that if for any reason additional car parking is required beyond that provided on site, there is considerable capacity in the local area to provide for that.
- 5.33 Cycle parking is required by Policy 36 at a ratio of 1 space per 3 employees. In this instance the site is expected to employ up to 40 staff on site at any one time, which would equate to a need for 13 cycle spaces. The proposed layout incorporates 10 cycle spaces, increased from the pre-application submission in response to Officers request. Whilst noting this is slightly lower than the policy encourages, it is informed by operation of care home sites elsewhere, and the ability for staff to travel by public transport to this edge of town centre location.

- 5.34 Policy 28 of the Local Plan relates to the Natural Environment. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Focus Environmental Consultants, accompanies the application and makes a number of recommendations. This includes the undertaking of bat surveys given the condition of the existing derelict building on site, controlling the use of artificial night life, and the production of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. All such recommendations have either been undertaken as part of the application or can be a condition applied to any consent.
- 5.35 Policy 28 also includes a requirement for all development proposals to provide an overall net gain in biodiversity, as reinforced by the recent implementation of this aspect of the Environment Bill. This will be achieved by the proposed scheme, details of which will be set out in associated submissions.
- 5.36 Policy 29 relates to the Historic Environment with guidance on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, both of which need to be assessed in this instance. The accompanying Heritage Appraisal does precisely that, commenting in detail on the significance of the various nearby listed buildings and the contribution the site currently makes to the Conservation Area. The Appraisal advises at 5.22 that;
- 'Overall, the proposed development is considered to provide a carefully designed new building to reinstate a more appropriate development on the site. This in turn improves the poor quality and contribution of this site to the Conservation Area and within the setting of nearby built heritage assets.'*
- 5.37 Policy 31 of the Local Plan requires that development proposals demonstrate that the consequences of climate change have been addressed, minimised and mitigated. This includes the requirement to minimise water use and maximise renewable energy subject to no significant harm occurring as a result. The accompanying Energy & Sustainability Statement prepared by Harris Consulting, explains that energy efficiency in the scheme has been enabled through a number of design considerations, as has the reduction of water demand. It also explains why Air Source Heat Pumps and Photovoltaics will be the most feasible 'zero carbon' technologies to be incorporated within the current scheme.
- 5.38 Policy 33 relates to Community, Health and Well Being, and includes reference to community facilities including social care and health care. A Care Home provides



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such support, so presumably is considered to be a Community Facility in this instance. The policy goes on to advise that the development of new Community Facilities will be supported provided they are located so as to be:

- As close as possible to the community they will serve
- Readily accessible by public transport, on foot and bicycle
- Compatible with nearby uses and the character and appearance of the neighbourhood; and
- Located and designed to enable (where possible) shared use with other services/facilities

5.39 This statement has explained why the proposed Care Home achieves the first three of the above criteria. Due to the nature and residents of the Care Home it is not feasible to share its use with other services/facilities.

5.40 The above assessment of the proposed development against relevant development plan policies has shown that the scheme is in adherence with, and gains support from them. It therefore follows that planning permission should be granted for the proposed scheme unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

## **6. Material Considerations**

- 6.1 In this instance the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the underlying context of demand for elderly care are material considerations to allow for in determining the current application.
- 6.2 The NPPF confirms the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and at paragraph 62 confirms that this includes the provision of specific types of housing for different groups in the community, including older people.
- 6.3 And the number of older people is due to grow substantially in the years ahead. For example, the over 85 population is predicted to grow from 1.6 million in 2020 to 3.7 million by 2050. As explained within Knight Frank's report entitled 'Health Care Development Opportunities 2020' the number of Care Home beds per 100 people over the age of 85 has fallen from 33.7 to 28.7 between 2010 and 2020. The number of beds has risen in absolute terms during that period, but the growing number of elderly people means that the care provision for them is not keeping pace. Developments such as that currently proposed are essential if we are to provide properly and sufficiently for the growing number of elderly people in the decades ahead.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 This Statement has explained why the previously approved Care Home on site could not be built out, and the evolution of the current proposal, including pre-application liaison with Officers at the Council and local stakeholders. This has resulted in a proposed scheme that will offer a high-quality design solution to this important site on the edge of Spalding town centre.
- 7.2 The accompanying Heritage Appraisal explains why the proposed scheme will have a positive impact upon the Conservation Area and setting of nearby listed buildings, while the associated Transport Statement (and Parking Survey) has demonstrated why the scheme provides for an appropriate level of parking in this instance.
- 7.3 Detailed Design justification has been set out within the Design & Access Statement, whilst the Landscape Masterplan demonstrates how soft and hard landscaping proposals will complement the building itself and ensure an attractive environment for users of the Care Home and those passing by.
- 7.4 The proposed development has been shown to adhere with relevant development plan policy and as a result should be granted planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the content of the NPPF plus the current and expected future demand for quality Care Home provision as a result of the growing elderly population, provides further support for the application.
- 7.5 It is therefore strongly considered that planning permission be granted.