PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

In Support of a Planning Application for:

The demolition of the existing building and the erection
of two buildings to provide 22 Apartments
with 28 parking spaces

At

Acacia House, Reigate Hill,
Reigate

March 2014
## CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND
2. SITE AREA AND APPRAISAL
3. DESIGN PRINCIPLES
4. DESIGN & ACCESS SOLUTION
5. CONCLUSION
1.0 **BACKGROUND**

1.1 HW Planning Ltd has been instructed by Mr M Millar of Mistral Design and Management on behalf of JAK Blake Investments to prepare a Planning, Design and Access Statement (DAS) in support of a planning application to demolish the existing flats and garages on the site and erect two buildings comprising a total of 22 flats along with 28 parking spaces.

1.2 This application follows the refusal of planning permission under application reference 13/01397/OUT for the a proposal seeking two blocks comprising 22 apartments. Following that refusal a meeting was held between the architect and a representative of the Alma Road Residents Association and a representative of the residents of Conifer Close to the south of the site in order to seek to address their concerns.

1.3 This document details the design process through which the scheme has evolved, including discussion with the Council, and explains the design rationale.

1.4 The site lies within the urban area on the eastern side of the A217; adjoining uses to the south, east and west are residential, whilst to the north is a school. These factors along with the previous refusals of permission and the relevant development plan policies have influenced the plan preparation and discussions between the architect, the client and HW Planning Ltd as has the character of the wider area as recommended in the advice from CABE.

1.5 This details contained within this application are a response to comments made on those applications previously refused on the site and has also been amended in line with comments that arose from consultations with neighbours at Conifer Close and the Alma Road Residents Association.
2.0 **SITE AND AREA APPRAISAL**

2.1 The application site lies on the eastern side of the A217 (Reigate Hill) from which it is set up on higher ground with an open aspect to the road. The area in front of the existing building is grassed.

2.2 The existing buildings comprise a three storey building with a low pitched roof. To the rear is an expanse of flat roofed garaging. The existing building is of 1960’s style and is of little, if any, architectural merit. It occupies much of the width of the site. Access is gained via a driveway long the southern side of the

2.3 Immediately o the south of the site and on lower ground are dwellings within Conifer Close. The buildings in that development are primarily two storeys in scale and are sited along the northern southern and eastern sides of the site, with a central access point and parking. The building along the northern side of the site does contain a number of north facing windows, although these are mainly obscure glazed.

2.4 To the north of the site is the Holmesdale School, which is accessed from Alma Road. The school building is set further west on that site than are the existing flats on the application site. The school building is set well away from the common boundary with the Acacia House.

2.5 To the east of the site is a residential development accessed from Alma Road. That development comprises a mix of single, two and three storey accommodation.

2.6 Other than the school to the north, the character of the area is primarily residential, with a mix of dwelling types, sizes,
Photograph 1

This image shows the view looking into the site from the road frontage. As may be seen the existing building is set up from the road and is not screened by front-age landscaping unlike many of the other buildings along the road to both the north and south of the site as shown in image 2 below.

Photograph 2

This photograph shows the view looking down Reigate Hill southwards into Reigate. As may be seen in this image, the existing site is well screened from views from this direction by landscaping to the A217 frontage of sites to the north of the application site including the school.
Photograph 3

This image shows the views across the front of the site from the south looking northeast. Buildings to the south of the site may be picked out in this image, although the oak trees and other screening largely screens the application site.

Photograph 4

This image shows the garages to the rear of the application site with part of the rear of the existing building to be seen in the background.
Photographs 5

This image shows the side of the easternmost building to the south of the application site. As may be seen it provides a harsh flat roofed elevation to the common boundary with the application site.

Photographs 6

This image shows the north-western building on the site to the south of the application site. The edge of the existing drive to the southern side of the application site may be seen in the foreground of the image.
Photographs 7 and 8

These two images show a recent development on the eastern side of the A217 to the south of the application site.

Photograph 9

This image shows a flatted development to the western side of the A217 to the south of the application site.
Photograph 10

This image shows two sites comprising flats on the western side of the A217 to the south of the application site and to the north of that shown in photograph 9 on the previous page.

Photograph 11

This image shows further flatted development to the western side of the A217. The site shown in this image is also to be seen in the background of image 10 above.
3.0 **DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

**ASSESSMENT - PHYSICAL**

3.1 The site is located within a primarily residential area, within which it is evident that redevelopment has been taking place over many years with a range of ages of buildings comprising flats on both sides of the A217.

3.2 The existing building comprises a 1960s style three storey block of flats which does little, in a positive manner, in respect of the wider character of the area, occupying the central part of the site with a large open frontage and garaging and a section of overgrown land at the rear (eastern end) of the site. It comprises an unattractive and inefficient use of the site on the main entrance road to Reigate from the M25 and the north.

3.3 The impact of the existing building is emphasised by the manner in which it is elevated above the road with an open aspect from the road. An opportunity arises to provide improve the design of the building and landscape the site frontage such that the site sits more comfortably within the streetscene.

3.4 The design and form of buildings in the wider area varies considerably as may be seen in the selection of pictures on pages 8 and 9 of this document. On this basis there was seen to be a wide range of options in terms of design. A traditional design approach was seen as most appropriate having regard to the general character of the area. Whilst some buildings such as that immediately to the south are lower in scale and take a different approach these are not seen as typical of the area and were not considered appropriate on this site.

3.5 The site was not considered to be subject to significant constraints as it is largely open, there are few windows to the northern side of the buildings to the south, trees do not heavily constrain the site and many of the buildings in the wider area are of three storeys with a pitched roof.

3.6 The redevelopment of the site was seen to be an opportunity to provide an improved design that better responds to the wider area in respect of form materials and design as well as making better use of this site close to the centre of Reigate.

**ASSESSMENT - SOCIAL, ECONOMIC**

3.7 The principle of the redevelopment of the site with 22 flats is seen to have little adverse impact on the social and economic wellbeing of the area. It will provide employment during construction as well as providing increased numbers of smaller units to the area.

**ACCESS AND PARKING**

3.8 No changes are required to the general position of the access to the site. The provision of parking between the buildings enables the front of the site to be landscaped softening the frontage, whilst providing turning for cars and larger vehicles including refuse lorries within the site away from the road frontage.

**POLICY — CENTRAL GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE**

3.9 The NPPF was published in March 2012, replacing previous guidance within the PPGs and PPSs. It must be read alongside the policies from the Development Plan which are detailed overleaf.

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

3.10 Surrey Design, the Local Distinctiveness Design Guide and Parking Standards for Development are relevant to the site and this development.
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SOUTH EAST PLAN
3.11 Relevant policies from the southeast plan include policy H5.

LOCAL PLAN
3.12 Local Plan policies Ho9, Ho13 and Ho16 from the local plan are relevant to this proposal.

3.13 Policy Ho 9 addresses Design and Layout. It seeks the best use of sites and their characteristics, including views into and out of the site. It seeks to reinforce local distinctiveness. It addresses the scale of development and the amenities of adjoining residents; the design including elevational treatments, roofscape and materials; landscaping, outlook, privacy and garden space. The policy goes on to refer to highway standards and energy conservation.

3.14 Policy Ho 13 addresses the maintenance of character and amenity, stating that these factors will normally be the prime consideration when residential development is contemplated.

3.15 Policy Ho 16 addresses frontage plots and extensions. It is a criterion based policy that states that the Council will give consideration to the type, design and size of dwelling proposed in relation to the size and shape of the plot and to its relationship with existing properties.

PLANNING HISTORY
3.16 The previous refusals of permission have been a key influence in progressing a revised scheme, the application having been recommended for approval by officers but refused planning permission by the planning committee.

3.17 A single reason for refusal was cited by the Council in respect of the previous application which related to the scale bulk and massing of the proposed frontage building and its relationship with the garden terrace to no 28 Conifer Close.

INvolvement
3.18 Following the refusal of permission, a meeting was held with the local residents association and with a representative of the residents of Conifer Close (Rosemary Absalom and Helen Young).

3.19 Following that meeting amended plans were prepared and distributed to both parties that were represented at the meeting; those amended plans sought to address the issues that had been of concern. Feedback received in respect of the amended plans suggests that the plans as now submitted overcome the issues that had previously been raised.
Site location plan showing the existing building and the general building line to the south of the site in blue.
Elevation and photograph showing the existing building on the site.

The photograph was taken from the road frontage and illustrates the manner in which the existing site is open to views from the A217.
Initially refused scheme

Revised and refused scheme showing the frontage block moved back in the site to reduce the impact on no 28 Conifer Close

Comparison of the position of the proposed frontage unit with those previously sought.
Previously amended and refused scheme

Current proposal showing greater separation to 28 Conifer Close and increased parking to address issues raised by the neighbouring residents and matters raised in the Council’s reason for refusal.
The image above shows the proposed streetscene whilst that below shows an extract from the streetscene for the previously refused scheme, whilst the image below shows the reduced scale of the revised scheme. The image overleaf provides an extract from the currently proposed streetscene from which the evolution of the building through the previous two applications may be seen.
The image below shows the front elevation of the frontage building as now proposed.

The previously refused schemes are denoted by the dotted blue and green lines with the existing building denoted by the red dotted line. As may be seen the current proposal has evolved from that shown by the blue dotted outline with a significant reduction in scale to that shown by the green dotted outline and subsequently the building has been
The image below shows how the roof of the rear block has been amended to reduce its bulk to address comments made by the residents of Conifer Close, albeit that this was not a concern raised by the Council in refusing the previous scheme.
4.0 **DESIGN AND ACCESS SOLUTION**

4.1 Following the refusal of permission for the previous scheme the design and layout was revisited following discussions with representatives of the Alma Road Residents Association and a representative of the residents of Conifer Close. Amended plans were then prepared and discussed with those parties to seek to address their concerns and those of the planning committee by reducing the impact of the frontage block on the amenities of the occupants of 28 Conifer Close.

4.2 In order to address the reason for refusal and the concerns of local residents, the frontage building has been moved sideways in the site away from the boundary with Conifer Close, in addition the roof of the rear block has been amended to provide a cat slide roof and two additional parking spaces have been provided. It is believed, from feedback received that the combination of these factors addresses concerns of the adjoining residents and those of the residents association as well as seeking to address the Council’s reason for refusing the previous proposal.

4.3 A traditional design approach has been maintained picking up on a number of the other apartment buildings to be found to the south. Both of the buildings remain well articulated through the use bays in order to avoid the more block like appearance of the existing building and that to the south.

**Parking**

4.4 Parking is provided for 28 cars at a ratio of just over one space per unit. Such a level of parking is considered appropriate on this site given its close proximity to the Town Centre, bus and rail networks. It represents an increase in provision compared to the previous scheme as well as a reduction in unit numbers.

**Refuse and Recycling**

4.5 Covered bin storage, as referenced on the application forms has been provided within the site.

**Cycle Storage**

4.6 Secure storage for 24 bicycles is provided on the site within two buildings to be located between the two residential buildings on the northern side of the site. In this location they are out of site from public vantage points and are overlooked by the proposed apartments. They are easily accessible to all occupants of the site.

**Renewable Energy**

4.7 The scheme will secure a minimum reduction of 10% carbon dioxide emissions below current building regulations requirements. It is requested that this aspect be addressed by way of a condition so that the most up to date technologies may be considered.

**Neighbour Amenity**

4.8 Care has been taken through the production of the revised proposal to ensure that neighbours are not adversely affected by the proposal in respect of loss of light, outlook, privacy or by overbearance. The proposed buildings are well separated from adjacent residential properties to the rear and whilst those to the south are closer, those properties turn their back to the application site as shown in the photographs on page 7 of this document.

4.9 Particular care has been taken to address the concerns previously raised by neighbours and by the Council in respect on 28 Conifer Close and in that respect the frontage block has been moved back in the site and has been reduced significantly in scale. The combination of these factors helps to ensure that
no unacceptable loss of amenity will arise to residents of that unit.

4.10 Having regard to the school to the north of the application site, the proposal continues the existing residential use of this site. The movement of the building in the site and the alterations compared to the previous scheme will have no adverse impact on the school.
5.0 **CONCLUSION**

5.1 The proposal has been informed by an assessment of the wider context of the site and the role that this site plays within the streetscene and wider area on the main access into Reigate from the north including from the M25 as well as the Council’s reasons for refusing the previous scheme.

5.2 The position and design of the proposed buildings have been given careful attention to avoid adversely affecting the streetscene or the wider character of the area, having regard to the previous refusal.

5.3 The proposal will be well screened from views from the north along the A217 by existing vegetation and new planting to the road frontage.

5.4 The proposal provides a building of improved design, form and materials, when compared to the existing one. The new screening to the frontage will further improve the character of the area and the manner in which the development assimilates with its surroundings.

5.5 The buildings have been designed to respond to and respect their surroundings. Their revised design and positioning have been influenced by the pre-application discussions that took place with the Alma Road Residents Association and with representatives of Conifer Close.

5.6 The proposal as now designed and laid out will have no adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining residents in respect of light, privacy, overbearance, noise or disturbance.

5.7 The proposal therefore accords with policies Pc4, Ho9, Ho13 and Ho16 of the local plan.