

***PROOF OF EVIDENCE BY
CHRISTOPHER R BUTT***

SITE AT:

**LAND AT 35 OAKFIELD,
SALE,
CHESHIRE,
M33 6NB.**

THE PLANNING BUREAU LTD

APPEAL BY

McCARTHY & STONE RETIREMENT LIFESTYLES LIMITED

APPEAL BY McCARTHY & STONE RETIREMENT LIFESTYLES LIMITED AGAINST THE REFUSAL BY TRAFFORD COUNCIL FOR THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF A PART 3 STOREY PART 4 STOREY BUILDING COMPRISING 25 NO. RETIREMENT FLATS, CLOSURE OF BOTH EXISTING VEHICULAR ACCESSES AND FORMATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS ONTO OAKFIELD WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING.

SITE AT:

**LAND AT 35 OAKFIELD,
SALE,
CHESHIRE,
M33 6NB.**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REFERENCE: 109745/FUL/22
PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE: APP/Q4245/W/23/3325034**

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CHRISTOPHER R BUTT BA (HONS), BPI, MRTPI

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APPENDICES

1. **Housing Markets and Independence in Old Age: Expanding The Opportunities report by Professor Michael Ball, University of Reading**
2. **Key findings from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on National Population Projections – 2020-based projections**
3. **Executive Summary of A Better Fit? Creating Housing Choices for an Ageing Population - Shelter**
4. **Too Little, Too Late? Housing for an Ageing Population - the Cass Business School, the Association of Retirement Community Operators and the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation**
5. **The Mayhew Review: Future-proofing retirement living (Executive Summary)**
6. **Consultation response from Trafford MBC Housing Strategy and Growth Manager**
7. **Extracts from "Sheltered Housing for Sale" (2nd Edition - 1988)**
8. **Affordable Housing Statement by The Planning Bureau Ltd**
9. **Statement on Amenity Space Provision in respect of McCarthy & Stone Retirement Living Housing Developments by The Planning Bureau Ltd**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT – LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEEDS

1. This Statement and its supporting appendices make the following points in support of the grant of planning permission:
 - (i) **There is a very significant need for specialist accommodation for older people nationally.**¹ This need has been characterised as “*critical*” in the NPPG² based on the 2020-based ONS national population projections, which graphically illustrate the “demographic timebomb”, especially amongst those aged 85 and older;³
 - (ii) This critical national need has a local expression. The independent analysis from Three Dragons⁴ demonstrates that **there is a very significant shortage of specialist housing for sale for older people both in Sale and across Trafford as a whole.**⁵
 - (iii) Given this “*critical need*”, **it is the role and function of the planning system to ensure it is actually delivered** (see NPPF 15, 17, 20(a), 60 and 62);
 - (iv) Indeed, Core Strategy **Strategic Objective SO1 ‘meet housing needs’** is to “*promote sufficient high quality housing in sustainable locations, of a size, density and tenure to meet the borough’s needs and to contribute towards those of the city region*”. Core Strategy policies L1 and L2 together with emerging sub-regional Policy JP-H3 support the provision of a variety of housing in order to meet the identified needs of older people;
 - (v) **Very significant weight** should therefore attach to: (i) the need for this form of development to be constructed; and (ii) the benefits of delivering such a specialist form of accommodation;
 - (vi) **McCarthy & Stone Retirement Lifestyles Ltd (“the Applicant”)** is widely recognised as the market leader in the provision of specialist accommodation for people and continue to win awards for their developments and customer satisfaction⁶, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic in which older occupiers

¹ See 4.1 – 4.10

² See 4.6

³ See 4.1 and App 2 (ONS National Population Projections), App 3 (Shelter Report) and App 4 (Cass Business School – *Too Little Too Late*)

⁴ See 4.12 and CD - A3

⁵ See 4.12 to 4.20

⁶ See 2.1 – 2.4

of retirement living developments fared much better than the general older population;⁷

- (vii) The Appeal proposal comprises bespoke retirement apartments, which are specifically designed to accommodate the needs of older residents.⁸ **The development forms part of the spectrum of specialist accommodation for older people for which there is the critical need.**⁹ This proposition is not disputed and has been accepted on countless appeal schemes;
- (viii) Such specialist accommodation delivers **a number of social benefits¹⁰, to which significant weight should attach** in the planning balance *inter alia*:
 - (a) Safety, security and companionship reduce anxieties and maintain health and general well-being amongst older people;¹¹
 - (b) Retirement housing brings considerable benefits to the occupants and to Health and Social Services, resulting in a significant saving to the public purse;¹²
 - (c) There will be a significant release of under-occupied housing back into the market, in order to meet the needs of families.¹³
- (ix) The development will deliver a number of **economic benefits, to which significant weight should attach** in the planning balance (applying NPPF 81).¹⁴ In particular, older people have a very positive economic impact on their local High Street.¹⁵ This is a particular benefit when the growth of internet shopping, coupled with the lockdown, have had a dramatic effect on retail and leisure spending on the High Street.

2. On the basis of the evidence, such points cannot reasonably be disputed. **It follows that this is a form of specialist accommodation for older people which must be developed now.** However, the LPA have failed to consider (adequately or at all) the functional requirements of such developments, if they are to be delivered in the real world:
 - (i) Specialist accommodation for older people has very specific locational criteria;¹⁶
 - (ii) The NHBF/NHTPC Advisory Note recognises (correctly) that sites for sheltered housing are difficult to find;¹⁷

⁷ See 3.6

⁸ This is explained in detail at Section 3, especially 3.2

⁹ As would lifetime market homes and bungalows, applying the NPPG

¹⁰ See 10.15 to 10.23

¹¹ See 3.5 and Prof Michael Ball *Housing Markets and Independence in Old Age* (App 1)

¹² See 10.4-10.6 and CD - A10

¹³ See 10.10 – 10.12, App 1 and CD – A6

¹⁴ See 10.7

¹⁵ See 10.8 and CD – A18

¹⁶ See 5.2

¹⁷ See 5.3

- (iii) The identified need must be met in a single building, with a single level footprint, with rooms either side of a central hallway, providing the requisite communal areas. Such buildings will inevitably have larger roofscapes. There is a need for a small outdoor amenity area (no more);
- (iv) The development must be highly accessible to local shops and services, ideally with level access. The development must, therefore, lie in an existing residential area near to a retail core;
- (v) This is not a form of development which can be met on large greenfield sites which form extensions to the urban areas, remote from centres.

FUNCTIONAL AND LOCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

3. **It follows that if such developments are to be built to meet the critical need, they will require single large footprint buildings in residential areas, which will have to sit adjacent to existing domestic development** (whether houses, flats etc).
4. **Further, the development plan (adopted Core Strategy Polciy L1) specifically direct that efficient use is made of land in urban areas (this must include flatted development) such as Sale.**
5. Not only is this part of Sale appropriate to meet the identified need for older person's accommodation, **this site is ideally suited for this proposal**. Indeed, the SoCG confirms that:
 - The Appeal Site lies within a sustainable location given its proximity to shops, services and public transport opportunities. It is agreed that the proposals are locationally appropriate for the use proposed;
 - The Council cannot demonstrate a five year land supply of deliverable housing sites;
 - The Council can only demonstrate a range between 3.47 and 3.75 years supply of housing;
 - The Council's relevant policies for dealing with the supply of housing are out-of-date;
 - It is agreed that none of the appeal site buildings are listed nor is the site within a Conservation Area;
 - There are no adverse highway issues arising from the proposal; and
 - The site lies within Flood Zone 1.

6. **It follows that this is one of those rare sites which can meet the functional and locational requirements of older persons' accommodation.** NPPF 119 requires the Appellant to make as "*much use as possible*" of this sustainable site. This is a valuable site on which development must be "*optimised*" (see NPPF 124-125).

ALLEGED HARM

7. The Council's allegations of harm give rise to the following issues¹⁸. The conclusions from the Appellant's evidence is set out below each issue:

(i) The heritage value of 35 Oakfield and the effect of its demolition

- the Council has failed to demonstrate that the building is a non designated heritage asset. In addition, the building does not have sufficient heritage significance to be added to a Local List of such assets. Accordingly there is no heritage case for the appellant to answer; and
- In particular, the building fails to meet any reasonable test of heritage significance. Firstly it does not exhibit enough design quality or originality in the external use of proportions, range of workmanship or materials, or of the internal fittings that survive. Secondly the Council has failed to exert any reasonable degree of proportionality in its assessment of significance by failing to take account of the extremely poor external appearance and highly degraded state of three of the four main elevations, ie excluding the frontage to Oakfield.

(ii) The character and appearance of the area, including the scale and design of the proposed building and its effect on trees and landscaping

- the scheme as proposed provides a visually coherent appearance, form, siting, height and layout, would introduce a visually appropriate development which is wholly consistent with the policy objective of delivering well-designed places and successfully responds to the local context and historic character of the site and surrounding area.

¹⁸ As set out in the CMC Summary Note

(iii) The living conditions of future occupants with regard to external amenity space

- this form of specialised housing provides proven health and well being benefits for the future occupiers. The level of amenity space will be comfortably in excess of the Council's minimum standard and the scheme will provide high quality living conditions for future residents.

(iv) The living conditions of neighbouring occupants at 41 Ashlands with regard to privacy and visual dominance

- the proposed building would not have a visually intrusive and unduly overbearing impact to the detriment of the residential amenity that the adjoining occupants could reasonably expect to enjoy; and
- there is no detrimental overshadowing of the rear garden of 41 Ashlands and there is no undue overlooking of the garden.

(v) The viability of providing affordable housing

- The scheme can stand a financial contribution of £208,186 towards off-site affordable housing and remain viable.

CONCLUSION

8. The appeal scheme complies with the Development Plan and more particularly those policies which remain up-to-date and consistent with the NPPF. It should therefore be consented "*without delay*" (NPPF 11). Further, it is accepted that the 'tilted balance' is engaged and material considerations (such as the NPPF) further support the grant of consent. If (which is not accepted) there is some degree of harm to planning interests, any such harm does not significantly outweigh the very substantial need for this proposal and the benefits it delivers (set out in detail above). Even accepting a degree of harm (which the Appellant does not accept), on balance, consent should still be granted.
9. The Appellant therefore submits that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions.