

PLANNING BRIEF

Draft December 2010 adopted 7 January 2011

SITE: 16 SPAREACRE LANE, EYNSHAM



The Site

This Site comprises approximately .32 hectares and is bounded by Spareacre Lane to the south between residential properties 14 and 18 Spareacre Lane, on the east by the gardens of residential properties on Pelican Place, and in the north-west and north by residential properties in Marlborough Close and lock-up garages serving the houses in Marlborough Close. It is not in a conservation or flood risk area.

History

The Site contained a gas works in the late 19th and early 20th century. A survey in 2004 detected remains of the original gasometer below ground level as well as localised heavy metal, hydrocarbon and semi-volatile organic contamination. It is anticipated that remediation would be required if development were to take place.

Nissen huts on the Site were later used for the manufacture of parts for the motor industry and for storage. New buildings were erected in the 1950s. The Site was then used by a carpet manufacturer, a manufacturer of playground equipment and an engineering firm.

The Site currently consists of a disused and partly demolished factory last used for the manufacture of timber products and furniture to the north and a vehicle repair garage and a vehicle hire company to the south, both with access directly from Spareacre Lane.

The current Use Class of the factory site is B2 (general industrial). The vehicle repair garage and the vehicle hire company (in a former bungalow) are believed to be sui generis use.

The Site has been the subject of various planning consents over the years relating to the above use. In 1972 an outline planning application for a block of flats, garages and access was refused. In 1973 an application to demolish the existing buildings and erect a factory unit for light industrial use was refused. In the same year outline planning permission was granted for an office block.

The Site is owned by Jewson Holdings Ltd, which has relocated its timber business. It applied for outline planning permission in 2010 to demolish the existing industrial buildings and erect 10 houses, a convenience store retail unit with three flats above and associated parking.

Eynsham Parish Council said: 'No objection for a change of use to residential with a preference for some housing for the elderly, but object to any building over two storeys high as it is out of character. No need for further retail development in the area. Object to any retail unit due to the poor vehicular access on a narrow road.'

This application was withdrawn after being refused by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Spareacre Lane

Spareacre Lane itself is one of only two streets in the village (the other being Acre End Street) running east and west and directly connecting Witney Road and Mill Street / Hanborough Road. Consequently it is a well used route for through traffic, particularly as there is no right turn access on to the A40 from Witney Road. It is a two lane street, narrow in parts, with on street parking and numerous traffic calming speed humps. It is also on the route of the 11 bus with several stops along its length.

The area around the Site, including Spareacre Lane, Pelican Place, Marlborough Place and Marlborough Close, is in the heart of the residential area of Eynsham consisting mainly of semi-detached and terraced two storey houses and bungalows including many ex-local authority and housing association dwellings constructed from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Approximately 80 metres west on Spareacre Lane is a retail complex including a Spar supermarket, a fish and chip shop and a hairdressers. The Spar, and the Co-op in the historic centre of the village, are the main retail grocery outlets in the village.

West Oxfordshire District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

The draft SHLAA (January 2010), which is part of the District Council's proposed Local Development Framework, identifies the Site for further assessment:

'**Spareacre Lane Works** (0.32ha) (Site 206). The site includes a variety of industrial and workshop units, of lower quality and within a largely residential area. Although the site is in active use, it has been put forward for redevelopment by the landowners. Housing would be an appropriate use, providing the issue of possible contamination of this former gas works can be adequately addressed. Eynsham Parish Council supports such redevelopment.'

Policy Considerations

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

While the Local Plan 2011 remains in force, the Eynsham Parish Council feels the following Policies are relevant to any development of the Site: BE2 (General Development Standards), BE3 (Provision for Movement and Parking), BE18 (Pollution), T2 (Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities), T3 (Public Transport Infrastructure), H2 (General Residential Development Standards), H3 (Range and Type of Residential Accommodation), H7 (Service Centres), E6 (Change of Use of Existing Employment Sites), SH1 (New Retail Development), SH4 (Shopping Facilities for the Local Community).

West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2006)

WODC LDF Core Strategy (Draft, February 2010)

SUMMARY AND PROPOSALS

1. While the present use of the Site is general industrial, the residential development which has grown up around the Site makes it now unsuitable for continued industrial use (E6). The Oakfield Industrial Estate and other sites on the periphery of the village have sufficient facilities and vacancies to accommodate any new or continuing industrial businesses. After Witney, Eynsham has the highest employment floorspace in West Oxfordshire (West Oxfordshire Economic Study).
2. The Site is also unsuitable for development for offices. Several thousand square metres of office space are currently available in peripheral sites such as Oasis Park and Elm Place and in smaller units in the village centre (West Oxfordshire Commercial Property Register).
3. Development for retail use could risk the viability of existing retail units on Spareacre Lane and the vitality of the historic village centre (SH4).
4. Given the narrowness of Spareacre Lane in the vicinity of the Site, any development that would generate increased levels of motor vehicle traffic and on street parking in the area would have an adverse impact on the safe movement of traffic, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport (BE3).
5. The Parish Council has previously recommended the Site be used for housing. It is located in an existing residential area in the middle of the village, within walking and cycling distance of all village shops, amenities and services. The 11 bus runs to Witney and Oxford and residents in the area also use it to

access the S1 service from Eynsham Church or simply to get to the centre of the village itself (Eynsham Parish 2010 Transport Needs Survey).

6. Because of its central location and the size of the site, it is suitable to provide a mix of dwelling sizes and types including accommodation for the elderly and disabled (H3). However, the strong preference of the Council would be for an emphasis on extra care housing units to provide for Eynsham's future needs (draft Core Strategy 4.27). This would also allow for smaller units and a reduced requirement for off street parking, thereby allowing for an increase in density. Under the draft Core Strategy: "Generally new schemes of 10 or more units will be within the range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare, with densities at the higher end of this range or beyond in locations where services and facilities are within walking distance of the new homes."
7. Any new housing development should be in compliance with BE2 and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide with regard to respecting the existing scale, pattern and character of the surrounding area.
8. The Council would also request any development take into consideration a through link to Marlborough Close to provide better access for vehicular services such as waste and recycling, and to avoid the creation of another cul-de-sac in the village.