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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	21/03491/FULLS
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
<b>REGISTERED</b>	10.12.2021
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr Tim Lincoln
<b>SITE</b>	The Abbey Hotel , 11 Church Street, Romsey, SO51 8BT, <b>ROMSEY TOWN</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of two detached dwellings
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	Amended Plans received 31.03.22 (Plans & Elevations) and 11.07.22 (Plans & Elevations).
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	Mr Paul Goodman

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Click here to view application](#)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is presented to Southern Area Planning Committee at the request of a Member for the reason “because it raises issues of more than local public interest.

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is situated to the rear of the former Abbey Hotel which itself is sited opposite the entrance to Romsey Abbey, within the primary shopping area and conservation area. The Abbey Hotel is a late C19 building, and has a Tudor style frontage. Whilst the Abbey Hotel is not listed the site is bordered to the north by King Johns House (which is Grade 1 listed) and to the south by the rear of a run of Grade 2 listed buildings that front the Market Place.

## 3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application proposes the erection of two detached dwellings.

## 4.0 HISTORY

- 4.1 20/03180/VARS - Vary condition 07 of 20/00701/FULLS (Demolition of toilet blocks to rear and conversion, alterations and extension to provide four dwellings comprising a two-storey two-bedroom house, a three-bedroom maisonette, a two-bedroom and a one bedroom flat; provision of external staircase) to replace drawings 7983/P31, 7983/P32A, 7983/P27, 7983/P26, 7983/P29, 7983/P28, 7983/P02A with drawings 7983/P31A, 7983/P32B, 7983/P27B, 7983/P26C, 7983/P29B, 7983/P28B, 7983/P02B. Permission 19.08.2021.
- 4.2 20/00701/FULLS - Demolition of toilet blocks to rear and conversion, alterations and extension to provide four dwellings comprising a two-storey two-bedroom house, a three-bedroom maisonette, a two-bedroom and a one bedroom flat; provision of external staircase. Permission 09.10.2020.

- 4.3 20/00385/FULLS - Lower height of ground floor window sills on west elevation. Permission 14.04.2020.
- 4.4 16/00124/ADVS Replacement of externally illuminated and non-illuminated fascia signs, hanging sign, board signs and shop letters. Consent 29.03.2016.
- 4.5 15/02235/FULLS Remove corrugated roof to rear toilet block and out house and replace with Welsh slate roof covering, remove external fire escape staircase and install balcony above existing toilet block, replace all windows with like for like double glazed timber windows, demolish timber outbuilding to rear, erection of two timber framed pergolas, and provision of replacement steps and retaining wall between lower and raised level in garden. Permission subject to conditions and notes 11.02.2016.
- 4.6 TVS.4420/1 First floor extension and fire escape - The Abbey Hotel, Church Street, Romsey. Permission subject to conditions – 07.07.1989.
- 4.7 TVS.04420 Rear ground floor extension and alterations to form toilet block - Abbey Hotel, Church Street, Romsey. Permission subject to conditions – 12.09.1984.

## 5.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 **Planning & Building (Conservation)** – No objection, following submission of amended plans.
- 5.2 **Planning & Building (Trees)** – Objection;
- Object to removal of mature B grade tree. The trees retention is desirable.
- 5.3 **Planning & Building (Ecology)** – Comment;
- Replacement bat boxes required.
  - Further external lighting details required.
- 5.4 **Housing & Environmental Health (Environmental Protection)** – No objection, subject to condition.
- 5.5 **HCC Archaeology** – No objection, subject to condition
- 5.6 **HCC Highways** – Comment;
- Given that the lawful use of the application site is the service yard for the former hotel, the Highway Authority may be potentially unable to defend a refusal reason for the existing/proposed access being used for a small amount of residential traffic utilising the access for the proposed houses.
  - The Highway Authority however raises significant concerns in respect of highway safety given the lack of both vehicular/vehicular and vehicular/pedestrian intervisibility for vehicles emerging from the access onto Church Lane.
  - It is considered that this would likely be at an acute detrimental impact upon highway/pedestrian safety.

- Whilst the submitted site plan would show the parking for two vehicles associated with the proposed dwellings, there would be no specific control on the number of vehicles wishing to access the site.
- The Highway Authority has previously raised no objections on a similar application that was being proposed as car free given the site's sustainable location/credentials.
- TVBC will need to determine in their capacity as local parking authority that the level of parking provision proposed falls in line with adopted standards.
- Some concern is also raised in regard to how refuse and servicing is proposed at the site.

5.7 **Historic England – No objection;**

- Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds. We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF.

5.8 **Natural England – No objection, subject to appropriate mitigation.**

5.9 **Hampshire Gardens Trust – Objection;**

- The Trust objects to this proposed development as being significantly harmful to the setting of both King John's House and its Garden.

5.10 **Design Review Panel – Objection;**

- This amended scheme for House no. 1, follows on from a previous Panel meeting on 3 August 2021 and is the result of several attempts for this particular siting. Previous concerns about the scale of the proposed dwelling in this particular context and its close relationship to the historic King John's House and Garden on the north boundary appears to have been exacerbated by this latest re-design. It is relatively large, both in its length and bulk within this context and the Panel considered that its scale would be overbearing to the setting of the adjacent communal garden and neighbouring Grade 1 listed building.
- The Panel was also critical of many of the aspects of the architectural composition and the north elevation was particularly unsatisfactory. Any proposal for this site needs to be subservient to its surroundings and the built form adjacent to King John's House should either be single storey, or one and a half storey; the accommodation should probably contain fewer bedrooms. This would also make for less strain on the external approach space and vehicle requirements thus generated.
- Thus, the Panel considered that this was a less than satisfactory solution for House 1. By way of some guidance, the Panel suggested that the proposal should probably return to the one and a half storey form of the pre-application, albeit omitting the ungainly 'double-gable arrangement' on the north elevation - and as it has adopted a traditional style approach should continue with the same local design vocabulary in detailing. The Panel confirmed that it was willing to be involved in a design discussion with the Architects in order to assist in resolving a satisfactory outcome for this important context.

- The Panel also commented on the need for clear guidance and/or planning conditions to be applied for the treatment of the central courtyard between the two properties should approval be granted for the application. This is to avoid the future removal of any hard and soft landscaping to increase vehicle parking available within the courtyard.

## 6.0 **REPRESENTATIONS** Expired 22.07.2022

### 6.1 **Romsey Town Council – Objection;**

- The archaeological evaluation should have been done before the planning application is determined.
- House 1 has an impact on the historic setting of King Johns House.
- There is only 1 parking space per house which is inadequate. Although this is a town centre site the parking should be adequate to the size of the dwellings.
- There is a concern about the impact of the building with respect to shading on King Johns House Gardens.
- There needs to be an assessment of the fire escape as it appears to be onto private land.
- There is a concern about vehicular access as coming out of the development would be blind.

### 6.2 **The Trustees of King John’s House and Tudor Cottage Trust Ltd – Objection;**

- The proposed archaeological evaluation needs to be completed before the application is determined.
- Concerned that the positioning, height and mass of House 1 will impinge upon the setting of the Grade I listed building viewed from the public realm, bearing in mind that King John’s Garden being open to the public constitutes a part of the public realm.
- The positioning, height, and mass of House 1 may have a negative impact on the now historic King John’s Garden by overshadowing.
- The removal of the tree behind the marketplace would certainly change the wider setting of heritage assets and the Conservation Area.
- The precise choice of brickwork, if the Planning Authority are minded to grant consent for ‘House One’, should be very carefully considered, to match rather than contrast with historic brickwork on the King John’s House and Tudor Cottage site.
- It is unfortunate that slate has been the choice of roof cladding for ‘House One’. As is noted in the Borough Local Plan 2.39, slate only arrived in Romsey with the advent of the railway in the early-mid 19th century. The use of slate in Romsey in historic terms of the town’s long history is therefore a relatively recent material.
- The heritage statement indicates that it is proposed to provide gate piers and gates. It does not appear that there is any indication of where these are to be located, the materials to be used, or their design in the plans submitted.

### 6.3 **Romsey & District Society (Planning Committee):** Objection

#### Original Submission

- Pleased to see emerging plans using innovative designs for dwellings on this central semi derelict brownfield historic site of the old Abbey Hotel in town. However, we consider the placement of House 1 does not integrate well into this complex site. The design and layout of House 1 has a significant and adverse impact on King John's Garden.
- The asymmetric bulk of the double gable on the north elevation, fronting the King John's House garden that appears to be a most visually inappropriate feature.
- Concerned about the west elevation of House 1 when viewed from Church Street. Again, the double gable and architectural language adopted seems more akin to a housing estate than a sensitive infill to this historic site.
- The King John's House garden is a significant town asset. The current application has a rudimentary approach which fails to address the challenge of a more sensitive solution.

#### Revised Plans

- Not convinced that the latest revised iteration of this application for House 1 is quite right and are disappointed with the architectural approach.
- Whilst accepting the casting of shadows over King John's Garden has been addressed by creating a gap, and rightly setting the house further from the boundary, we are concerned by the banal appearance of the elongated north elevation to the dwelling.
- We do not object to the principle of a dwelling in this location but believe the desire for this to be a four bedroom house has dictated the reason for the uncomfortable and bland north elevation.
- Designed as a three bedroom house would give scope for the elevational treatment to be aesthetically improved by reducing its length of the boundary elevation to accommodate only the living room and moving the snug/study to the east end.
- The set back to the west elevation is welcomed although it is not understood why the original landscaped courtyard has been lost.

### 6.4 **Romsey & District Society (Natural Environment Committee):** Objection

- The loss of a mature sycamore tree in the town centre is regrettable. Sycamores are important species for insects which in turn provide food for birds and bats within the town centre.
- The proposed location of house 1 immediately adjoins this period garden area. This is a peaceful and tranquil oasis within the town and provides a haven for small birds and other wildlife. The siting of a new building immediately outside the garden wall will be overbearing and intrusive.

6.5 **Romsey Local History Society (LTVAS) (Original Submission) – Objection;**

- Whenever planning consent is granted within this area the need for archaeological investigation should be considered. This particular site is not only in the centre of historic Romsey but immediately adjacent to, and probably part of the original curtilage of, King John's House.
- This area, between Church Street, the Market Place and the Fishlake/Holbrook and close to the 13th century King John's House and the site of the Saxon Abbey is likely to have been used from the earliest period of settlement and could give significant insights into the early development of the town.
- We consider this site to be of high archaeological and historical interest. We therefore urge the council not to give planning consent unless a programme of archaeological investigation, excavation and recording is undertaken prior to commencement of building.

6.6 **Romsey Local History Society (LTVAS) (Amended Plans) – Comment;**

- Some effort has been made to make the new buildings less inappropriate and obtrusive to King John's House and garden but there is no reference to or acknowledgement of the need for archaeological investigation of the site before and during building. As stated before - This site is in the centre of the Saxon and Medieval settlement of Romsey and investigation could provide significant information on the early development of the town. There is seldom opportunity to investigate this central area and this would provide one.

6.7 **28 representations of Objection received (original submission):**

6.8 Impact on King Johns House

- Impact on setting of King Johns House and gardens from House 1.
- Detrimental to the historic interest of King Johns House.
- Architectural quality is not sufficient.
- Out of character with historic buildings.
- Impact on amenity of visitors.
- Overdevelopment
- Overlooking to gardens
- Overshadowing to gardens
- Noise impact to gardens
- Impact of new tree planting on gardens

6.9 Tree works

- Unjustified loss of sycamore tree
- Impact on retained Oak tree
- Loss of green space
- Time for new trees to mature
- Management of new trees.

6.10 Highways

- Safety of access onto Church Street.
- Parking provision is inadequate

## 6.11 Archaeology

- Additional archaeological information is required.

## 7.0 **POLICY**

### 7.1 **National Planning Policy Framework 2021**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

7.2 **Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2016** - COM2 (Settlement Hierarchy), E1 (High Quality Development in the Borough), E2 (Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough), E5 (Biodiversity), E7 (Water Management), E8 (Pollution), E9 (Heritage), LHW1 (Public Open Space), LHW4 (Amenity), T1 (Managing Movement), T2 (Parking Standard).

### 7.3 **Romsey Town Design Statement – Look at Romsey**

## 8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main planning considerations are the principle of development, the character of the site and surrounding area and the setting of heritage assets, the amenities of neighbouring properties, protected species and highways issues.

### 8.1 **Principle of Development**

The site lies within the settlement area of Romsey and therefore the principle of development and re-development for housing is accepted in accordance with policy COM2, subject to adherence with the other policies of the TVBRLP.

### 8.2 Housing Land Supply

Section 5 of the NPPF relates to housing. Paragraphs 73 & 74 of the NPPF require the Council to demonstrate a minimum of 5 years housing land supply (HLS) with a 5% buffer. An assessment of the HLS position as at December 2021 has been undertaken. This uses the housing requirement established in policy COM1 and has regard to the conclusions of the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Local Plan. The HLS position for Southern Test Valley, as at 1 April 2021 is 7.18 years of supply. This is reported against a target of 5.00 years. The existence of a five year HLS enables the Council to give weight to the policies of the adopted plan. The demonstration of a five year HLS does not in itself cap development and any application must be assessed on its merits.

### 8.3 Community Services & Facilities

Policy COM14 States that development (including the change of use of existing premises) which involves the loss of local shops or public houses will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that: the use is no longer or cannot be made commercially viable; or the building can no longer provide suitable accommodation; or is no longer needed for the existing use. Development involving the loss of cultural and community facilities and places of worship will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that: there is no longer a need for that facility for its existing use or another community use; or the building can no longer provide suitable accommodation.

- 8.4 The site was formally the garden of the Abbey Hotel. However the hotel and its associated facilities have been closed for some time and subject to recent permissions for conversion to retail at ground floor with residential use above. As a result the site is not considered to represent a community facility as identified by Policy COM14. The proposal does not therefore conflict with Policy COM14.
- 8.5 Conclusion on the Principle of Development  
The development complies with Policy COM2 and is acceptable in principle. Furthermore, there is no identified conflict with Policy COM14.
- 8.6 **Character and Appearance**  
The former hotel site is not listed but is situated within the Romsey Conservation Area and in close proximity to other town centre listed buildings most notably King Johns House to the north.
- 8.7 Impact on the Setting of Heritage Assets  
Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest which it possesses. In addition, Policy E9 of the TVBRLP requires that development preserves or enhances the historic significance and special interest of designated heritage assets. Furthermore Para 197 of the NPPF requires the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset to be taken into consideration. The application site is considered to be one such asset.
- 8.8 The Conservation Officer has advised that the former hotel was built c. 1890, as part of the redevelopment of the east side of Church Street instigated by a road-widening scheme. Along with Nos 1-9 (odd) it can be seen as part of a late C19 programme of metropolitan improvements. It replaced an older inn here, the Market Inn, which stood further out into the road.
- 8.9 Nearby heritage assets include the Romsey conservation area and a number of neighbouring listed buildings (e.g. Tudor Cottage and King John's House (Grade I) to the north, 2-8 Church Street (even), and the rear elevations of 13-19 Market Place). A number of other buildings which are unlisted, but should be considered buildings of local interest in the conservation area (undesignated heritage assets) are potentially affected, including Nos. 3-9 (odd) Church Street, and 13 Church Street, to the north of the site.
- 8.10 The Conservation Officer raised concern with regard to the original submission. Specifically that the proposal had the character of buildings that would be more suited to a spacious suburban or rural plot rather than the closely-knit historic development of this highly significant urban site. The concerns were predominantly related to House 1 which is situated nearest to King Johns House. The originally submitted scheme was considered overly domestic in style and did not reflect the character of historic development of this urban site. The bulk of the domestic accommodation, was to be contained in a broad section of building at the west which would extend across most of the width of the plot



at this point and presented conventional domestic elevations in the principal views. The original design would also have blocked views through the site from each direction, as part of the creation of the proposed courtyard. The original design was also considered to have an adverse impact on the character of King Johns House gardens and by extension the setting of listed building.

- 8.11 The site for house 1 is significantly different being formed in a disused area to the rear of the buildings on the corner of two medieval streets and lends itself to the proposed inward-looking courtyard plan. In heritage terms it is a more neutral site with many of the buildings on its periphery being rear elevations of properties fronting the Market Place and subject to late-C20 extensions of no historic or architectural merit. The Conservation Officer advised that the proposed inward facing courtyard house is a sensible response to the constraints of the site. As a result the plans for House 2 have remained mostly unchanged in the revised submission other than the alteration to the 'courtyard' area to the front of the dwellings discussed in more detail below.
- 8.12 The design of House 1 has been subject to extensive revisions following further discussions with the Conservation Officer. In summary the revised designs sought to address the previous concerns with House 1 being reduced in width and a further reduction in domestic detailing. The general emphasis being the linear form of development which is more characteristic of a former medieval burgage plot. The adoption of a simple, almost industrial aesthetic was supported, with alterations to fenestration and chimney details to further reduce the domestic character. In addition the relationship of both houses with the existing former stable building (a non-designated heritage asset) at the White Horse Inn has been improved by the retention of a section of remaining garden wall attached to the former stables.
- 8.13 Representations have also commented on the removal of the more formal courtyard area in the revised scheme. However the Conservation Officer's advice is that the site is a former medieval burgage plot and such plots are typically long and narrow. Such sites are not characterised by courtyard arrangements but rather by linear development, something which is demonstrated by the buildings of King John's House next door. The outbuildings that were recently demolished at the rear of the former Abbey Hotel were similarly arranged to one side of the plot. The Conservation Officer advice is that the characteristic of such sites are the views as one progresses through them and a 'meaningful stop' is not required. Nothing about the site suggest that a courtyard approach as originally proposed was likely to be the best one to allow its significance to be sustained.
- 8.14 Following the revised proposals the Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the development.
- 8.15 Historic England has also raised no objection on heritage grounds and consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF. The response considered that;

“This is a carefully thought through scheme which has sought to respect the setting of King John’s house and the historic character of the area. While, as we suggested at pre-application stage, a less-domestic architectural approach may provide more opportunities to actively reinforce the character of the area we do not consider that they will have a negative impact. We therefore raise no objection to the application.”

8.16 However the revised proposal have received a negative response from the Design Review Panel. The comments are reproduced in full at para 5.10 but in summary the Panel did not consider that the changes had improved the scheme and advocated a different architectural approach. These sentiments are echoed in some representations which have characterised the amended plans as bland and advocated for a bolder architectural style.

8.17 In this case there are broadly two schools of thought on the design approach. It is accepted that there are likely numerous suitable designs that could be accommodated on the site. However it is considered that the simpler forms advocated by the Conservation Officer and Historic England and reflected in the revised proposals, are appropriate and would broadly enhance the character of this neglected part of the Conservation Area and make a positive contribution to sustaining and possibly enhancing the significance of the surrounding heritage assets. The revised designs have taken account of the character, appearance and setting of heritage assets and those assets have informed the design of the proposals. As a result the development is considered to comply with Policies E1 and E9 of the TVBRLP.

8.18 Arboriculture

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Assessment (Barrell Tree Consultancy). The report is considered to be a fair reflection of the arboricultural constraints but does propose the loss of a large Sycamore tree in the southern part of the site adjacent to the proposed House 2. The submitted report seeks to justify the removal of the tree as follows;

“This mature moderate quality tree is located well within the site and due to this positioning is it reasonable to set out that it is largely screened from outside public vantages. Given its secluded nature the tree makes little contribution to the visual amenity of the locality or the overall landscape character. The proposed removal of this tree to enable the redevelopment scheme is not seen as posing a risk of significant detrimental impact to character or context. Importantly the scheme sets out provision for the establishment of eleven new trees which will bring a direct enhancement to the site and its contribution to the wider context.”

8.19 The Arboricultural Officer disagrees with this assessment and has advised that the justification is not substantive enough to justify the removal of a tree free from significant defects, of this size and maturity from within the Conservation Area. In addition the Arboricultural Officer has advised that the initially proposed replacement planting does not provide opportunity for any new tree to attain proportions of the tree to be felled.

- 8.20 The existing tree is certainly a large specimen but it is considered fair to say that its prominence is somewhat limited by its location to the rear of the building fronting Market Place. Those buildings are of a height to prevent views from the south. Views from the west are similarly restricted by the existing buildings facing Church Street. The tree would be prominent from the Lortemore Place car park to the west were it not for the existing mature trees to the east which effectively limit views. The best views of the tree are likely from the King Johns House gardens and even then limited to the upper parts.
- 8.21 It is however fair to say that the proposals would not allow for a replacement of the tree with one of a similar size. However the revised proposals do provide for a new feature tree in the 'courtyard' area. This would sit adjacent the two mature trees within King Johns House creating a small group. Whilst this tree would not mature to the size of the existing it would be more visible from public views from the west along the driveway.
- 8.22 Whilst the expectation is that a tree in the conservation area would be retained it has not been considered suitable for a Preservation Order and there are benefits associated with the replacement tree in the driveway and the other new trees within the garden areas. As a result the proposals are considered to have no significant adverse impact on the character of the area and comply with Policy E2.
- 8.23 **Amenities of neighbouring properties**  
Policy LHW4 of the RLP sets a number of criteria against which development proposals will be assessed in order to safeguard the amenity of existing and future residents, particularly in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy and any adverse impact in terms of loss of daylight/sunlight.
- 8.24 Many of the representations received in response to the original submission raised concern regarding the overshadowing and overlooking impact to King Johns house from House 1. Whilst the original designs would have resulted in additional shadow the revised proposals, which are drawn back from the boundary, would not result in any increase in shadow beyond that cast by the existing boundary wall.
- 8.25 Side opening first floor openings have been reduced to two secondary rooflights serving a bedroom and en-suite, and a principal opening serving Bedroom 4. The opening serving Bedroom 4 is however set back further from the boundary than the rooflights. Whilst the garden area of King Johns House is undoubtedly an appreciated space in central Romsey it is not as sensitive to overlooking, particularly in the early morning/evening times when the bedroom is more likely to be in use.
- 8.26 Noise  
Given the proximity of the proposed residential dwellings to neighbouring commercial uses the Environmental Protection Officer has requested the submission of a noise impact assessment by way of condition. Subject to the required condition the proposed development is considered to adequately provide for the amenity of future occupiers in relation to noise and complies with

Policy E8. Representations have also raised concern with regard to the noise impact of the proposed dwellings on patrons of the King Johns House garden. However normal domestic use of the proposed development is not considered likely to generate significant noise, particularly in comparison to the former use as a pub garden. It is however considered appropriate to restrict construction hours in the interest of amenity.

8.27 Subject to the required conditions the proposed development is considered to have no significant adverse impact on amenity and complies with TVBRLP Policies LHW4 and E8.

8.28 **Highways**

The proposed development includes parking provision for three spaces for the new dwellings. Policy T2 states that Development (including change of use and conversions) will be required to provide parking in accordance with the standards set out in Annex G. Parking provisions should be well designed and appropriately located so as to be convenient to users.

Residential parking provisions below the standards will be considered:

- a) where there is likely to be low demand for parking;
- b) where there are significant heritage or urban design issues;
- c) where any parking off site is appropriately controlled.

It will be necessary for applications to be accompanied by evidence justifying variations from the standards.

8.29 The previous application for the conversion of the Abbey Hotel did not provide any parking and this was the subject of considerable debate at SAPC. The proposed provision of three spaces is below the prescribed standard (3 spaces per 4 bedroom dwelling) but does seek to provide some on-site parking following the previous concerns.

8.30 The Highways Officer has advised that the existing application is unsuitable given the lack of both vehicular/vehicular and vehicular/pedestrian inter-visibility for vehicles emerging from the access onto Church Lane. However in acknowledging the former hotel use the Highways Officer has also advised that Highway Authority may be unable to defend a refusal reason for the existing/proposed access being used for a small amount of residential traffic utilising the access for the proposed houses.

8.31 In this case the compromise position of a reduced parking provision is considered reasonable. Whilst the existing access does not meet current modern standards it is typical in a town centre setting and its use is likely reduced compared to the former hotel. In this instance The Highways Officer has raised no objection to a car free development in this location which is considered to comply with Policy T2.

## 8.32 **Ecology & Biodiversity**

### 8.33 Protected Species

Policy E5 of the RLP relates to biodiversity and states that development that will conserve and, where possible restore and/or enhance biodiversity, will be permitted and sets a number of criteria against which development proposals will be assessed. Following initial concern the application has been supported by survey work that did not reveal the presence of any protected species. The Ecology Officer has commented that the proposed measures, whilst suitable do not incorporate the replacement of two bat boxes attached to the tree to be removed. In addition details of any external lighting are required. Subject to a condition to secure these two details the proposals are considered to be in accordance with Policy E5 of the RLP and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) in respect of protected species.

### 8.34 Solent and Southampton Water SPA – Solent Neutrality

There is existing evidence of high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the water environment across the Solent, with evidence of eutrophication at some designated sites. An Integrated Water Management Study for South Hampshire was commissioned by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Authorities to examine the delivery of development growth in relation to legislative and government policy requirements for designated sites and wider biodiversity. This work has identified that there is uncertainty regarding whether any new housing development does not contribute to net increases in nutrients entering these designated sites.

8.35 As such, the advice from Natural England is that the applicants for development proposals resulting in a net increase in dwellings are required to submit the nitrogen budget for the development to demonstrate no likely significant effect on the European designated sites due to the increase in waste water from the new housing.

8.36 To address this issue, Test Valley Borough Council has implemented a strategic nitrate offsetting mitigation scheme whereby a scale of developer contributions has been agreed that would fund its ongoing delivery of a nitrate offsetting scheme. This strategic scheme comprises the offsetting of agricultural land previously utilised for the purposes of pig farming, located at Roke, Awbridge.

8.37 Following the implementation of this strategic offsetting scheme at Roke, a substantial net reduction in nitrate loading within the Solent catchment area has been achieved. This overall net reduction is utilised as nitrate 'credits', whereby a tariff of financial contributions is calculated based on the cost of implementing and maintaining the strategic offsetting scheme per kg/TN/yr saved.

8.38 The required financial contribution has been secured by a completed s106 agreement prior to permission being granted and the development will therefore not result in adverse effects on the Solent designated sites through water quality impacts arising from nitrate generation.

8.39 New Forest SPA – Recreational Pressure

The project being assessed will result in a net increase of dwellings within 13.6km of the New Forest SPA site. As established in the HRA of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD, a permanent significant effect on the New Forest SPA site due to increase in recreational disturbance as a result of the new development, is likely. As such, in order to lawfully be permitted, the proposed development will need to include a package of avoidance and mitigation measures.

8.40 The required financial contribution has been secured as part of the completed s106 agreement and as a result the development is not considered to result in adverse pressure on the New Forest SPA.

8.41 **Water management**

The 2016 Local Plan includes a requirement in policy E7 to achieve a water consumption standard of no more than 110 litres per person today. This reflects the requirements of part G2 of the 2015 Building Regulations. In the event that planning permission was to be recommended a condition would be applied in order to address this. Subject to such a condition the proposal would comply with policy E7.

8.42 **Archaeology**

The Archaeology Officer has identified that the location of the development site is within the historic core of Romsey at the rear of Church Street and Market Place. The Archaeological Officer has further advised that;

“Romsey has been an important settlement since at least the Saxon period, with evidence suggestive of even earlier occupation from the late prehistoric and through the Roman period. The proposed development site is within the very heart of that settlement, although it is land behind the street frontages. In this area would have been the gardens, yards, outhouses and workshops of the town from the Saxon period onwards. The archaeological evidence likely to be encountered will relate to the origins and development of the town, the trades and industries practiced, the lives and lifestyles of the inhabitants, their wealth and degrees of economic activity and status. The pits and privies will contain archaeological information about their health and diet. Any development in this area has a very high potential to encounter, and damage or destroy, archaeological remains that will shed light on story of Romsey and how it has become the community of today.”

8.43 The Archaeological Officer was not satisfied with the scope of the originally submitted archaeology information and this sentiment was echoed by many of the representations.

8.44 The application is now supported by a full archaeological assessment which has been endorsed by the Archaeology Officer. The archaeological assessment sets out an understanding of the nature of the archaeology of the centre of Romsey, an understanding of the location of the proposed development in relation to past archaeological discoveries and the historic layout of the town and its evolution from the Saxon period; offers some insight into the model of archaeological

deposits which might be encountered, and the potential significance of the archaeology likely to be present. The new assessment proposes full archaeological excavation of the footprint of the development to record archaeological remains present and mitigate their loss through the development. The proposed archaeological is of a significant scale but is considered proportionate to the level of potential interest at the site. Subject to a condition requiring compliance with the submitted details the proposal is in accordance with policy E9 (b) of the TVBRLP.

**8.45 Economic Benefits**

Whilst the proposals would result in the loss of the land associated with the former hotel business the site has been unoccupied for some time and as assessed above the remainder of the hotel site is in new uses. There are economic benefits associated with the development works and the future occupiers of the dwellings. Furthermore, the development is located in close proximity to the Town centre and the NPPF recognises that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres. These are matters that should be afforded weight in the planning balance.

**8.46 Social Benefits**

Whilst the loss of former hotel was regrettable it is considered that investment in the site, which is situated in a prominent town centre location, to bring it back into use represents a public benefit.

**8.47 Planning Balance**

The proposal would provide homes within a settlement. The housing would be a public benefit.

**8.48** In economic terms the proposal would provide construction jobs during its build out. These jobs would be transitory and only moderate weight can be afforded to this point. Furthermore, the new properties would result in people living in the town centre and the associated spending by these people in the local economy is also a benefit of the scheme. The site is also vacant and with the site being vacant for some time its development and occupation is considered to be a planning benefit and one that would result in some improvement to the character of this part of the Conservation Area. This matter should be afforded weight in the balance.

**8.49** Notwithstanding the differing opinions on design the revised scheme is considered to enhance the immediate site and ensure its long term use. The development is considered to preserve the setting of the Conservation area and adjoining listed buildings. The proposal would, therefore, accord with both Local and national planning policies.

9.0 **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The development is acceptable in principle and complies with Policies COM2. The proposals would preserve the setting of the Conservation Area. It is further considered that the proposed development would not result in conflict with local and national planning policies relating to public highway network, protected species or amenities of neighbouring properties. The development therefore accords with the Development Plan as a whole and should be approved without delay.

10.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

10.1 **PERMISSION subject to:**

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**
2. **No development shall take place above DPC level of the development hereby permitted until samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of all external surfaces hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In addition a brick sample panel comprised of the approved materials shall be constructed on site and subject to inspection and approval by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works above DPC level. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
Reason: To ensure the development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interest of visual amenities in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E1.**
3. **Notwithstanding the Ecology report letter (Ecosupport, January 2022) development shall not commence until details of replacement bat boxes, for those currently attached to the tree to be removed, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Replacement bat boxes shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained. All other mitigation measure specified in the Ecology report letter (Ecosupport, January 2022) shall be installed prior to first occupation and retained in perpetuity.  
Reason: To ensure the protection of protected/notable species in accordance with Policy E5 of the Test Valley Revised Local Plan 2016.**
4. **Details of any external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to first installing any such lighting before the building(s) is/are occupied. Lighting shall follow best practice guidelines outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals (Guidance note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK). Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**



**Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area and to prevent disturbance to protected species in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policies E8 and E5.**

- 5. The rooflights hereby permitted shall be of a 'conservation' style fitted flush to the roof slope.**

**Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the building and conservation area in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E9.**

- 6. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in full accordance with the provisions set out within the Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement Ref 21023-AA-PB (barrell, 8th March 2021) and Tree Protection Plan ref 21023-01.**

**Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan policy E2.**

- 7. Tree protective measures installed (in accordance with the tree protection condition) shall be maintained and retained for the full duration of works or until such time as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No activities, nor material storage, nor placement of site huts or other equipment what-so-ever shall take place within the barrier.**

**Reason: To ensure the avoidance of damage to existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan policy E2.**

- 8. All service routes, drain runs, soakaways or excavations in connection with the development hereby permitted shall remain wholly outside the tree protective barrier.**

**Reason: To ensure the avoidance of damage to existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan policy E2.**

- 9. No development shall take place above DPC level until full details of hard and soft landscape works have been submitted and approved. Details shall include-where appropriate: proposed finished levels or contours; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas; hard surfacing materials; minor artefacts and structures. Soft landscape works shall include: planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities. The soft landscape proposals shall include details of soft boundary treatments to the outside edges of the site. The details shall also include the provision of a legacy tree to the south of Block B of a species to be agreed with the LPA and suitable tree pits for new tree planting. The landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the implementation programme and in accordance with the management plan.**

**Reason: To improve the appearance of the site and enhance the character of the development in the interest of visual amenity and contribute to the character of the local area in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E1 and E2.**

- 10. The development shall not be occupied until space has been laid out and provided for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles to enable them to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in accordance with the approved plan and this space shall thereafter be reserved for such purposes at all times.**

**Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy T1.**

- 11. Any gates shall be set back at least 4.5 metres from the edge of the carriageway of the adjoining highway.**

**Reason: In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy T1.**

- 12. Prior to the commencement of development full details of the layout for the parking and manoeuvring onsite of contractor's and delivery vehicles during the construction period shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the commencement of development and retained for the duration of the construction period.**

**Reason: In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2016 policy T1.**

- 13. The development hereby approved shall be designed and built to meet Regulation 36 2 (b) requirement of 110 litres/person/day water efficiency set out in part G2 of Building Regulations 2015.**

**Reason: In the interests of improving water usage efficiency in accordance with policy E7 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2016.**

- 14. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation in accordance with Section 13.1 of the Archaeological Impact Assessment Report No. 53557/1/1 (terrain archaeology, June 2022) that has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. The investigation should take the form of a full archaeological excavation of the footprint of the development (and watching brief for the remainder of the site). Following the completion of all archaeological fieldwork, a report shall be produced in accordance with an approved programme including, where appropriate, a post-excavation assessment consisting of specialist analysis and reports together with a programme of publication and public engagement.**

**Reason: In the interest of the heritage of the site in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan policy E9.**

- 15. No development shall take place unless or until an Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The Environmental Management Plan shall cover the control of noise, dust and spoil during the demolition, site preparation and construction phases of**

development. The Environmental Management Plan shall include the provision of wheel washing, and any other suitable facility, to avoid the deposit of spoil onto the highway network. Work shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved Environmental Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Test Valley Borough Local Plan policies E8 and LWH4.

16. There shall be no construction or demolition works, no machinery shall be operated, no processes carried out and no deliveries received or dispatched outside the following times: 07:30 to 18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturday. In addition, no such activities shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Test Valley Borough Local Plan policies E8 and LWH4.

17. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order), no building, structure, walls or fences of any kind shall be erected without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority can exercise control in the locality in the interest of the setting of heritage assets and local amenities in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policies E1 and E9.

18. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows/dormer windows in the [other than those expressly authorised by this permission] shall be constructed.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority can exercise control in the locality in the interest of the local amenities in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy.

19. In the event that contamination (that was not previously identified) is found at any time during construction works, the presence of such contamination shall be reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority without delay and development shall be suspended on the affected part of the site until a remediation scheme for dealing with that contamination has been approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved remediation scheme shall be implemented and, if requested, a verification report, for the purpose of certifying adherence to the approved remediation scheme, shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the site being brought in to use.

Reason: To ensure a safe living/working environment in accordance with Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2006 policy HAZ04.

20. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers:

8020 OS

8020 P01 B

8020/P02 A

8020/P03 A

8020/P04 A

8020/P05 A

8020 P06 B

8020 P07 B

8020 P08 B

8020 P10

8020 P11

8020 P12

8020 P13

8020 P14

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

21. All rainwater goods shall be of cast iron and painted unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of heritage assets in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E9.

22. Prior to the commencement of development a Noise Impact Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be undertaken and mitigation installed in accordance. The dwellings shall not be occupied until any required mitigation has been installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the future occupiers in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E8.

**Notes to applicant:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed strictly in accordance with the submitted plans, specifications and written particulars for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.
2. In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.

- 3. Bats and their roosts receive strict legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). All work must stop immediately if bats, or evidence of bat presence (e.g. droppings, bat carcasses or insect remains), are encountered at any point during this development. Should this occur, further advice should be sought from Natural England and/or a professional ecologist.**
  - 4. Birds' nests, when occupied or being built, receive legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is highly advisable to undertake clearance of potential bird nesting habitat (such as hedges, scrub, trees, suitable outbuildings etc.) outside the bird nesting season, which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions. If there is absolutely no alternative to doing the work in during this period then a thorough, careful and quiet examination of the affected area must be carried out before clearance starts. If occupied nests are present then work must stop in that area, a suitable (approximately 5m) stand-off maintained, and clearance can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.**
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