T.P. OFFICE COPY
BOROUGH OF WORTHING
DEPOSITED 31/3/08
T.P.O. No.
WB/ 08 / 0335/CAC

SITE AT NEW STREET/AUGUSTA PLACE WORTHING WEST SUSSEX

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT BY PROMUTUAL GROUP LLP

REPORT AS TO THE CONDITION, CONSTRUCTION AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS DESIGNATED AS OF LOCAL INTEREST AND THEIR SUITABILITY FOR DEMOLITION AND REDEDEVELOPMENT.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

Richard J Maile BSc FRICS
72 Portland Road
WORTHING
West Sussex BN11 1QG
Tel No: 01903 231438
Fax No: 01903 214949

1.0 QUALIFICATIONS

Richard James Maile will say:

1.1 I am a Bachelor of Science in Estate Management of the University of London and a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. I am in private practice as a Chartered Surveyor and Town Planning Consultant at No 72 Portland Road, Worthing, West Sussex.

1.2 I have been in private practice in West Sussex for over 45 years and have always specialised in town planning matters. I have been involved in a number of redevelopment schemes in the town centre of Worthing. I am a qualified Chartered Surveyor and am familiar with old buildings, including many close to the subject site.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 The adopted Worthing Local Plan includes Appendix 8, which contains a detailed list of buildings designated as of Local Interest. The list is to be reviewed from time to time and further buildings may be added. In deciding whether to add a building to its list the Council will apply a number of criteria detailed in Appendix 7. Under the heading *"Architectural Interest"* the list includes all buildings which are of importance locally for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship; locally important examples of particular building types and techniques and significant plan forms, and buildings displaying interesting use of materials or technical innovation. Under the heading *"Age"* buildings are included which incorporate or consist of a significant amount of pre-1840 fabric.

2.2 Appendix 8, which includes the identified and approved list, confirms that the list has been compiled by reference to the contribution the building makes towards the architectural quality or the historic interest of the building or simply because of its group/townscape value, its character/identity or its siting/location. The buildings I have been asked to comment upon are those to the rear of 14-22 New Street and the buildings fronting Augusta Place.

2.3 The adopted Local Plan includes a chapter entitled *"Built Environment"*. In formulating my recommendation that the buildings are of little merit and could therefore be demolished to allow for a quality redevelopment I have taken account of the criteria set out in Policies BE1, BE2 and BE3. In particular, I have noted that Policy BE3 allows for the redevelopment of derelict, degraded or disused land or buildings subject to two criteria. The first of these is that the development should achieve significant environmental improvement and beneficial use of the land and/or buildings. Clearly the scheme of redevelopment will achieve those objectives.

2.4 I have also taken account of Policies BE21 and BE22, which relate to development within Conservation Areas, and the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Policy BE28 is of particular relevance in that, whilst resisting the loss of buildings designated as of local interest, it nevertheless states that redevelopment involving the loss or partial loss of such buildings will be permitted where the proposal would bring about an improvement in the quality of the built environment

and where the proposed replacement is at least as good as the building it seeks to replace. In my judgement the designs set out in Drawing No's 1137/P01-P05 achieve an improvement in the quality of the built environment, as evidenced by the photographs I reproduce and my detailed description of the buildings that are to be demolished to make way for the scheme.

2.5 I am familiar with PPG 15 *(Planning and the Historic Environment)*. Under the section dealing with Conservation Areas the overall objective is to protect such areas and to ensure that any development that does take place enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole. However, Paragraphs 4.16 and 4.17 acknowledge that in many Conservation Areas which include the commercial centres of towns their designation as a Conservation Area cannot realistically take the form of preventing all new development. The emphasis will generally need to be on controlled and positive management of change. The paragraph also suggests that any new development should accord with the area's special architectural and historic interest. Again, these are matters that have been taken into account when formulating my conclusions based upon my detailed inspection of the buildings and the plans that have been put before me.

2.6 Paragraph 4.27 of the guidance states that the general presumption should be in favour of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The subject buildings have been included in the Council's list of local interest buildings and are thereby considered to be positive indicators in the area. However, that list was compiled some years ago and it is necessary to consider the changes that have taken place within the locality, the condition and potential use of these buildings and whether they contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

2.7 The general presumption to retain locally listed buildings can be overridden in cases where the buildings in question meet the criteria for the demolition of listed buildings contained in Paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19. Those paragraphs set out the Government's objectives and require that in any consideration to demolish buildings there should be convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses. I have carefully considered the form, location, access, layout and condition of these buildings and find that they are unlikely to have any viable use.

Indeed, they have been disused and empty for many years and have continued to deteriorate during that time.

3.0 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF BUILDINGS TO THE REAR OF 14-22 NEW STREET AND FRONTING AUGUSTA PLACE

3.1 Appendix 1 contains a number of plan extracts obtained from Worthing Library, as follows:

- A1: *1848 Map*. This is of little use since it is not sufficiently detailed to be able to pick out the application site (Appendix 1).

- A2: *Board of Health Map of 1852*. Shows the New Street property, together with buildings within the yard but only along the north and south sides of the yard. The east side is shown as possibly a wall with a small entrance off the footpath running to the rear of properties in New Street. Interestingly, Augusta Place is a cul-de-sac off the seafront running north/south. The buildings are annotated as S (southeast corner), CH (southwest and northeast corners) and ST (northwest corner). I presume these indicate that they were stables and possibly cart houses, though this is not quite clear.

- A3: *1875 large scale Ordnance Survey map*. This shows similar buildings, although the wall to the rear is shown as continuous.

- A4: *1898 Ordnance Survey sheet extract*. Shows the addition of the building in the northeast corner abutting the east boundary.

- A5: *1912 Ordnance Survey sheet extract*.

- A6: *1932 Ordnance Survey sheet extract*. Shows the same configuration as A5.

3.2 At some time during the 1960's the buildings to the south of 14 New Street were demolished and Augusta Place was extended to run north/south and east/west to connect up with West Buildings. That is the current configuration. At the same time development took place of 105-109 Montague Street, which runs to the rear of the buildings just abutting the other side of the public footpath, whilst to the south are modern buildings that were previously a tyre depot and warehouse shown as 5-7 New Street. The warehouse has now been converted to a restaurant.

3.3 The realignment of Augusta Place and the redevelopment that has taken place adjacent to the site has, to my mind, completely altered its historic context.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS

4.1 Access is by means of a pair of old wooden gates from New Street, which are in poor condition and an unattractive feature in the street scene. The access is to a central concrete yard. This has been patched, is unattractive and liable to puddle. Within the yard is a small, old w.c. building which is rendered with a corrugated asbestos roof.

4.2 The site survey (ref: 1137/P01) indicates the 'L' shaped block to the north and east of the yard. The northern section is a single storey former stables constructed of part concrete block and part flint walls under a slated roof shown in the photographs attached hereto and numbered 1 and 2. The building is in poor condition, the flint walls having been repaired with non-matching materials including the frontage to the public footpath. The walls within the courtyard itself lean out of true and there are numerous slipped and nail-sick slates to the roof. There is a pair of poor quality wooden doors to the southwest corner of the building facing into the courtyard. There are no gutters or downpipes and the building is unsuitable for purposes other than rough storage.

4.3 Adjacent to the stables and running north/south and facing west into the yard is a one and a half storey building which is of part brick and part pebble walls with non-matching patio doors of aluminium material. The pitched and slated roof is in poor condition and, again, numerous slates are slipped, tagged or obviously nail-sick (Photograph 1).

4.4 To the south of the one and a half storey building described above is a lean-to double garage of brick with a corrugated asbestos roof. The doors have been painted with graffiti and the whole is most unattractive and unfit for any purpose without substantial renovation (Photograph 4).

4.5 I now turn to the corner section (southeast corner). It is two storeys in height, is rendered and stuccoed and has a slated roof. There are numerous slipped and broken slates; the roof sags and there are a number of cracked areas of rendering which are also off-key in places. The external wooden staircase to the upper floor is totally rotted and unusable. The windows and doors are rotted and in poor condition. The building creates a poor impression as viewed from Augusta Place. It is exceedingly damp internally and is unsuitable for any use other than rough storage. It has not been modernised since its original use as stabling.

4.6 Adjoining this building is a single storey structure with concrete blocks and poor joinery comprising four windows, a doorway and another opening, together with a corrugated asbestos roof. The roof is heavily overgrown, leaks and is in poor condition. The building, although not locally listed, is unattractive, in poor condition and is in need of demolition. There are areas of patched and unattractive stucco rendering facing onto Augusta Place which further detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.0 OPINION

5.1 The buildings to the rear of 14 New Street are very dominant features in the street scene. They immediately abut the back edge of pavement, are unattractive in terms of their materials (rendered and stuccoed), have been patched, are fractured and detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.2 The locally listed buildings include an outside w.c. This has no architectural interest, neither are there materials that would warrant its retention. Similar comments apply to the single storey workshop. The only buildings retaining any original materials are those forming the 'L' shape along the north and part of the east boundary of the courtyard and that in the southeast corner. The original flint walls may well post-date 1840. They have been patched using non-matching materials in a most arbitrary fashion. Window and door openings have been formed in non-matching materials, including concrete blocks and rendered surrounds to the patio doors. The roof coverings are in poor condition and potentially dangerous to persons using the adjacent public footpaths. In my view the whole gives the appearance of run-down and derelict buildings that detract from the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area.

5.3 The site provides an opportunity for meaningful redevelopment as indicated on Drawing No's 1137/P03, P04 and P05 in accordance with the objectives of Policies BE3 and BE28 of the adopted Local Plan and national guidance in PPG 15 (Paragraph 4.16). For these reasons I support the proposals to demolish these unattractive buildings, which have no historic or architectural merit other than the fact that some were originally constructed in local materials. However, they have degraded to such an extent as to be unusable and have been substantially and inappropriately repaired using non-matching materials that detract from their original character. This patching is clearly indicated in Photographs 1 and 6 attached to this report.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The buildings to the rear of 14-22 New Street are locally listed and date back to the mid Victorian era. However, they have not been occupied for many years and I cannot see that they can be put to any meaningful or viable new uses given their exceedingly poor condition, layout and construction. I therefore consider, for the reasons set out above, that the proposed redevelopment accords with the requirements of Paragraph 4.27 of PPG 15 in that the buildings make no positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Richard J Maile BSc FRICS
04 March 2008