Mr and Mrs T Barnard
57 Victoria Road
Southwick
West Sussex
BN42 4dj

Adur & Worthing Councils
Planning Services
Portland House,
Richmond Road
Worthing
West Sussex, BN11 1LF

ADUR & WORTHING
27 AUG 2015
PLANNING SERVICES

24 August 2015

Dear Sir

Planning Application Reference AW/DM/1132/15
Demolition of existing detached bungalow and erection of pair of semi-detached 4-bedroom houses and one detached two-storey 4-bedroom house with basement accommodation.

We write to support the proposed development at 55 Victoria Road and the adjoining land. Whilst we realise that our support for the application is unlikely to be seen as being free from bias (being the applicants), we wish to draw attention to the merits of the application and the benefits that it will have on the site and the surrounding area.

Primarily, we support the application on the basis that the proposals will have a positive impact on the site and the surrounding area. Residents (and the council) have complained for many years about the appearance of 55 Victoria Road which has now stood derelict for a significant period of time. The site is overgrown, unsightly and beyond economic redevelopment. The Council also acknowledges that 55 Victoria Road, as it is, represents a serious health hazard. These concerns culminated in the council serving a Demolition Order in June 2014, citing the foregoing and, additionally, the need for newly developed accommodation in the area (with the council noting that the site has sufficient space for "*at least two properties*"). The proposals therefore respond to a local desire to see the site redeveloped, removing an eye-sore and potential health hazard and replacing it with three sustainable family homes. The positive impact of the proposals should not be overlooked.

We also support the application on grounds that that the proposal: (1) does not overlook, detract from the privacy or light of our existing property (57 Victoria Road); (2) accords with applicable planning policies and is not overbearing; (3) is in keeping with previous decisions; (4) improves highway safety and parking facilities; and (5) is designed sympathetically and in keeping with the appearance and character of the area. Taking each in turn:

1) The impact on 57 Victoria Road.

We do not think the proposals detract from the privacy or light currently enjoyed at 57 Victoria Road (or 59 Victoria Road). The proposed rear elevations of Units A and B extend to the same depth as 59 Victoria Road (and roughly in line with the ground floor development at 57 Victoria Road).

As such, Units A and B will not overlook 57 Victoria Road any more than 59 Victoria Road does at present. We have never had an issue with a lack of privacy from the greater depth of 59 Victoria Road as compared to number 57 and, therefore, do not expect to suffer a loss of privacy from the proposed Units A and B.

Neither do we expect Units A and B to result in a loss of light to 57 Victoria Road since those dwellings are proposed to be built to the eastern elevation of the existing dwelling; 57 Victoria Road has only one small (landing) window on its facing elevation and will not suffer from a loss of light and / or privacy as a result. Units A and B are not expected to result in a loss of light to the amenity area at 57 Victoria either; to the contrary, the removal of the overgrown hedging at 55 Victoria Road will increase the light available to the front of the properties in the surrounding street (notably 57 and 53 Victoria Road).

Unit C is not expected to overlook 57 Victoria Road. Any trees removed from the site to construct Unit C will be replaced with sufficient planting of a suitable type (trees, dense hedging) to ensure that the overall ecological impact is minimal (and most likely improved over the existing condition) and that there are no direct lines of sight from Unit C to 57 Victoria Road (or 61, 59, 53 and 51 Victoria Road either).

We intend to live in the proposed Unit C and are therefore as keen as the inhabitants of 63 to 53 Victoria Road that the dwelling is not overlooked, and does not overlook, the existing dwellings.

Whilst disruption in the construction phase is not a ground on which an objection can be sustained, we acknowledge that it will be a concern to neighbouring residents. We intend to live in 57 Victoria Road (with two young children) whilst construction work takes place and can therefore offer an assurance that we will be as keen as all other residents to ensure that any disruption is minimal, with work being carried out sympathetically and at appropriate times.

2) <u>Adherence to applicable Planning Policy and the scale of the proposed development.</u>

We support the application on grounds the proposals will create a pleasant place in which to live in an area where there is a recognised need for family housing (as noted in the Demolition Order and Adur Local Plans 2014 and 1996). In particular, the development accords with applicable planning policies and in particular the Council's guidance set out in "*Space Around Dwellings and Flats*" and "*Internal Space Standards for New Homes*". By reference to that Guidance, it is difficult to see how the proposals could be considered as "overdevelopment". Specifically:

a) The Council suggests that new 4 bedroom dwellings have a total minimum floor area of 106 sqm. Units A and B both have proposed floor areas of 137 sqm. Unit C has a proposed floor area of 235 sqm. Each unit meets all other requirements, such as in respect of minimum bedroom size and storage area facilities, for example.

b) The Council requires the minimum distance between the rear of one or two storey dwellings to be a minimum of 22m. At all points the rear of Unit C is 22.5m from all existing properties (including 61, 59, 57 and 53 Victoria Road and the proposed Units A and B). At most points the distance between Unit C and exiting dwellings is substantially more.

c) The same guidance suggests that Units A and B should have an amenity area of not less than 85sqm: the proposals include amenity areas of 140 sqm and 98 sqm for Units A and B respectively. Unit C has a proposed amenity area of 580 sqm against a recommended minimum of 100sqm.

Against this backdrop, we do not think that the proposed density and layout should be considered as "overdevelopment"; it is plain that the site is sufficiently large to accommodate the proposals.

3) The proposal is in keeping with previous decisions.

Although Unit C should not properly be considered as a "back garden development", there is in any event precedent on Victoria Road (and in the locality) for infilling and redevelopment in garden areas:

a) 27 Park Lane (with access between 47 and 45 Victoria Road). The buildings at 27 Park Lane - which adjoin the rear gardens at 53, 51, 49, 47, 45, 43, 37 and 35 Victoria Road - represent substantial infill development and the development in each case appears to be substantially closer to the pre-existing dwellings than as proposed for Unit C. Unit C can be seen as a continuation of that development, albeit on a far more modest scale.

b) Rear of 24 Victoria Road. The access to this site is approximately 1m wide and suitable for access on foot only. The property to the rear is substantial, and appears to be closer to the pre-existing dwellings and larger in scale than that envisaged for Unit C.

c) Rear of 16 and 18 Victoria Road. The access to this site is approximately 2.5 to 3m wide and the development itself appears to be considerably higher and closer to the pre-existing dwellings than is proposed for Unit C.

d) Rear of 26 and 28 Victoria Road. This site is used a Volvo vehicle repair garage (it is noted that this site also creates considerable parking issues for residents).

4) Improves highway safety and parking facilities.

The proposals create at least 4 additional off-street parking spaces (a net gain of at least 2 spaces). The proposals also include provision for cycle storage and we therefore consider them to alleviate an existing parking issue in Victoria Road caused by the industrial units on the adjoining Brighton Road. As residents of 57 Victoria Road, we would greatly welcome any measures that alleviate the parking issue (including the creation of off street parking).

5) The proposals are sympathetic and in keeping with the existing character of the area.

We support the application on the basis that it represents a significant improvement to the existing streetscape.

The proposed ridge height of Units A and B is lower than the existing ridge height at 59/57 Victoria Road and is not materially higher (approximately 37cm) than the existing ridge height at 53/51 Victoria Road (the existing pairs of semi-detached dwellings to either side).

The design of Units A and B is also in keeping with the existing streetscape, bridging the gap between the Edwardian style semi-detached houses at 53/51 Victoria Road and the more recently built pair at 57/59 Victoria Road. The finished development will be far more attractive that the current property at 55 Victoria Road in its current state of repair.

Unit C is also in keeping with the surrounding area. The area features a mix of substantial detached dwellings (61 Victoria Road and 27 Park Lane), moderate detached houses (44 Victoria Road) and dwellings of different designs, material finishes and appearance (63, 61, 44 and 42-38 Victoria Road for example).

For the above reasons we believe the proposals will significantly improve the locality and surrounding area. We invite the Planning Officer to visit the site to discuss the benefits of the proposals and look forward to hearing from you to arrange a convenient time for such an inspection.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Tom and Naomi Barnard