

P/15/1261/FP

FAREHAM EAST

AMBITIO LTD

AGENT: WYG

CONSTRUCTION OF 33 DWELLINGS TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, CAR PARKING, CYCLE AND REFUSE STORAGE

LAND AT FURZE COURT WICKHAM ROAD FAREHAM PO16 7SH

Report By

Richard Wright - Direct dial 01329 824758

Introduction

Members will recall that this application was first presented to the Planning Committee at the meeting held on Wednesday 25th May 2016.

At the meeting Members of the Committee raised concerns over the number of parking spaces being made available to service the development and the adjacent apartments. Clarification was also sought with regards the current arrangement for employees of Hampshire County Council to park at the application site. Further information has been submitted by the applicant in relation to these matters and the issue of parking provision is discussed in the following report.

Site Description

This application relates to a site known as Furze Court located at the northern end of the A32 Wickham Road, Fareham and close to Junction 10 of the M27 motorway.

Planning permission was granted in 1987 for the two-storey office buildings standing on the site at present. In 2014 an application was submitted seeking confirmation as to whether the Council's prior approval was required to convert the offices to residential units under permitted development rights. The Council confirmed in November of that year that no such prior approval was required and the offices have subsequently undergone refurbishment to create 66 new apartments, some of which are already occupied.

The offices now turned to residential use lie in the centre of the site in a G-shaped layout. The buildings enclose an area of landscaped gardens whilst around the edge of the site are some 156 car parking spaces along with additional planting.

The site falls within the urban settlement area and also the existing Furzehall Farm Employment Area (as designated by virtue of Policy DSP17 of the Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2).

Description of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the provision of 33 apartments (9 x 1-bedroom and 24 x 2 bedroom) arranged over two new buildings.

The first of these new buildings, labeled Block D, would be located in the north-eastern section of the site and effectively extend the G-shaped layout of the existing buildings (Blocks A, B & C) to form a complete O-shape enclosure. It would comprise of 23 apartments arranged over three storeys with communal bicycle and bin storage incorporated within the ground floor of the building.

The second of the new buildings, Block E, would be sited to the north of and form a direct extension to the existing Block C building. It would provide 10 further apartments arranged over three storeys albeit with the top floor accommodation being provided within the roof space.

Additional refuse and visitor cycle storage is to be provided in external areas. It is intended that the landscaped space within the O-shaped arrangement of the existing and proposed buildings would provide external amenity space for the occupants of the apartments.

Policies

The following policies apply to this application:

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS2 - Housing Provision

CS6 - The Development Strategy

CS15 - Sustainable Development and Climate Change

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS18 - Provision of Affordable Housing

Approved SPG/SPD

RCCPS - Residential Car and Cycle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document,

Development Sites and Policies

DSP2 - Environmental Impact

DSP3 - Impact on living conditions

DSP15 - Recreational Disturbance on the Solent Special Protection Areas

DSP17 - Existing Employment Sites and Areas

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history is relevant:

FBC.7459/34

PERMISSION 17/07/1987

P/14/0952/PC

PRIOR APPROVAL FOR A CHANGE OF USE FROM CLASS B1A (OFFICE USE) TO CLASS C3 (RESIDENTIAL)

PRIOR APPR NOT 11/11/2014
REQRD

Representations

Five letters, including one from The Fareham Society, have been received raising the following comments:

- Not an ideal location for residential development particularly in terms of air quality and noise
- Increase in traffic congestion
- Increase in noise levels
- Impact on schools, doctors and other facilities
- Development being 'crammed in'

- Parking provision must be adequate
- No provision for children's play areas which will lead to children living in the apartments using the adjacent Furzehall Farm and landscaped areas to the detriment of office users and the listed buildings

Consultations

INTERNAL

Ecology - Recommended conditions relating to biodiversity enhancements and bat boxes/bat-accessible ridge tiles

Highways - As it is accepted that there would be a reduction in peak hour and daily vehicular activity [as a result of the conversion of the existing office buildings to residential use] and that adequate car and cycle parking and servicing would be accommodated, no highway objection is raised subject to conditions.

Contaminated Land - This application could be approved without any conditions relating to land contamination.

Environmental Health - Further to the additional information submitted in respect of the proposed ventilation, the proposals where installed and maintained in accordance with manufacturers guidelines should be sufficient when combined with other noise mitigation methods outlined in the Clarke Saunders Acoustics report to provide sufficient ventilation and control of internal temperature to premises when it is not possible to open windows due to excess noise.

EXTERNAL

Lead Local Flood Authority (Hampshire County Council) - The proposals for surface water drainage meet the current standards/best practice in relation to surface water drainage.

Southern Water - Advice on connection to local network (suggested conditions and informative notes)

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

A) Principle of residential development

The site lies within the urban area where the redevelopment of previous developed land for housing purposes is supported by Policies CS2 & CS6 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy.

The site also lies within the Furzehall Farm Employment Area. Policy DSP17 of the adopted Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2 advises that:

"Changes of use or redevelopment within existing employment areas that would result in a loss of floorspace for economic development uses will not be permitted unless:

- i. all appropriate alternative forms of economic development have been considered;
- ii. it can be clearly demonstrated that the land or building is not fit for purpose and modernisation or redevelopment for employment uses would be financially unviable; and
- iii. the proposal is accompanied by details of marketing of the vacant site/building covering a period of not fewer than twelve months."

In this instance the development being proposed would not result in any loss of employment floor space, the proposal being for two new buildings but involving no demolition. Whilst it is arguable therefore that the three tests set out above are not directly relevant, the main thrust of this local policy remains to ensure that sites such as these are retained for employment purposes.

A key factor to take into account is the recent conversion of the existing office buildings on the site. Once the refurbishment works are complete no office space will remain, instead the buildings would provide sixty-six residential apartments. The site will no longer have the character of an office development. This makes it unlikely that further office development would be proposed in the future in such close proximity to these residential units and overall there is little prospect the site as a whole would be returned to an employment use in the future. The change of use of the existing buildings from offices to residential use has been carried out under permitted development rights granted by central government.

The starting point for decision making in relation to planning applications is the Development Plan. Other material considerations also need to be taken into account and in light of the current permitted development rights allowing the conversion of office floor space for housing (something that has already been exercised through the conversion of the existing buildings on the site), Officers consider that permission for the proposed scheme should not be withheld on the grounds that it conflicts with Policy DSP17.

B) Traffic noise

The site is in close proximity to the M27 motorway and A32 Wickham Road. The application is supported by an acoustic report examining the issue of road traffic noise and its effect on the living conditions of occupants of the proposed apartments. The report concludes that construction methods, for example high standard window glazing specification, can mitigate the effect of traffic noise to an acceptable level within the new apartment buildings. Ventilation details have been provided to demonstrate that the occupants of these units would have the means to provide fresh air and ventilate their properties without having to resort to opening windows and therefore suffering the effects of traffic noise.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the site is not in an ideal location to provide residential accommodation, the effects of road traffic noise can be satisfactorily mitigated in this instance.

C) Traffic movements

A transport statement has been submitted with the application which considers the impact on the local highway network of the proposed 33 apartments, as well as the 66 units currently being created in the existing buildings, compared to the previous use of the site as offices. It concludes that over a whole day there will typically be less vehicle trips to/from the residential development in comparison to the former office use including at peak times.

D) Parking provision

Following the concerns raised by Members at the Planning Committee meeting in May, the applicant has submitted a revised parking plan and by letter provided a written statement explaining how parking spaces will be provided on the site.

A total of 158 parking spaces are proposed on the site.

- 38 un-allocated spaces will be provided for residents of the proposed apartments (Blocks D & E).
- 70 allocated spaces have already been provided for residents of the existing apartments (Blocks A, B & C).
- 20 visitor car parking spaces will be provided for the use of visitors to all blocks
- 30 parking spaces will be retained for use by employees of Hampshire County Council

The parking provision for the proposed development meets the levels set out in the Council's adopted Residential Car & Cycle Parking Standards SPD. There are eight 1-bed apartments and twenty-five 2-bed apartments proposed in the new blocks (Blocks D & E). The applicable parking standards are 0.75 space per 1-bedroom dwelling and 1.25 spaces per 2-bedroom dwelling when spaces are offered on an un-allocated basis. The development is therefore required to provide 38 un-allocated spaces (37.25 spaces rounded up).

The parking provision for the existing apartments (Blocks A, B & C) falls below the level set out in the parking standards SPD. With thirty-six 1-bed apartments and thirty 2-bed apartments the level of parking required to demonstrate accordance with the SPD would be 96 allocated or 65 un-allocated spaces. The applicant has confirmed that these apartments have been, or are being, sold/leased with 1 allocated parking space each and four of the apartments have a second allocated space equating to 70 allocated spaces in total. There is therefore a shortfall of 26 spaces between the level of parking provided and that ordinarily expected and as set out in the adopted parking standards SPD. However, in the letter accompanying the parking plan the applicant remarks that since these apartments were converted under permitted development rights the level of parking provision associated with this part of the application site is not a relevant planning consideration and the Council's parking standards are not applicable. They continue by pointing out that these apartments could have been converted under permitted development rights without any parking provision at all.

There are twenty visitor car parking spaces provided. The Council's parking standards SPD recommends that, in areas where over 50% of the spaces are allocated, an extra 0.2 spaces per dwelling should be provided. The amount of visitor parking spaces provided is therefore sufficient not only for the proposed development but also the existing apartments.

In addition the applicant has advised of the intention to retain the remaining 30 parking spaces for use by employees of Hampshire County Council (HCC). The letter from the applicant explains the current arrangement with HCC whereby it rents a total of 50 parking spaces on the application site for use by its members of staff at Parkway, 94-96 Wickham Road. The applicant's current arrangement with HCC is short-term and casual. There is no formal contract and the applicant is not required to give HCC any notice to terminate this agreement. However, the applicant does not wish to terminate the current arrangement and is willing to continue to provide some parking for HCC's use once the proposed development has taken place. In the meantime the existing arrangement of renting 50 spaces to HCC can continue with the applicant providing HCC with at least 12 months notice of the proposed change.

The applicant has also noted that the parking spaces rented by HCC (both now and in the future) are only used during normal working hours (ie. not at evenings or weekends) which will generally be opposite to the peak parking demand generated by the residential

apartments on the site. This means the HCC spaces will be available as additional spaces for use by the residents and their visitors at these peak times.

Whilst the continued provision of some spaces for employees of HCC is welcome it is not a material consideration to be taken into account when determining this application which relates to the new thirty-three residential units in Blocks D & E. In this regard Officers consider the proposed parking provision to be acceptable in that it makes adequate space available for residents of the new units and their visitors to park.

E) Affordable housing provision

The application has been submitted with a viability appraisal which has been independently assessed by the District Valuer Services office (DVS). The DVS report has concluded that it would be possible for a reduced level of affordable housing provision to be provided in the form of one affordable unit on the site. Officers have invited the applicant, and the applicant has agreed, to provide the equivalent sum towards off-site provision which would be secured through a legal agreement.

F) Layout and appearance

The design and appearance of the two buildings would complement in visual terms the existing buildings on the site at present without creating an unattractive or unpleasant residential environment. The submitted site layout drawings show sufficient space for landscaping and planting to be carried out around the edge of the new blocks.

The position of Block D has an added benefit in enclosing the amenity space in the centre of the site to create a private communal amenity space for all residents. Block D also acts as a buffer to reduce road traffic noise levels in the centre of the site helping to make it a quieter and better quality outdoor space for residents to enjoy.

Conclusion

The site is presently allocated as an employment area and is impacted by noise especially from the M27 motorway. It is not an ideal location for new residential development.

The redevelopment of land within this allocated employment area is arguably contrary to Policy DSP17 of the adopted local plan. This must however be weighed up against the fact that the remainder of the Furze Court site has, or is, in the process of being converted from offices to residential flats under national permitted development rights. The recent works to convert the existing offices at the site mean that there is little prospect of the site being brought back or redeveloped for employment related uses. Officers consider that this material consideration outweighs any conflict with policy DSP17.

The applicant has proposed acceptable measures to mitigate the flats against the effects of road traffic noise whilst ensuring the new apartments are satisfactorily ventilated. The location of the new block at the north eastern corner of the site would have the further benefit of 'shielding' the existing amenity area and thereby reducing the level of noise currently experienced within it.

There would be no materially harmful effect on the wider highway network and sufficient levels of parking spaces are provided to meet the needs of future residents. The design and layout of the scheme is found to be acceptable and the proposal accords with Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy.

The proposed development would provide housing on previously developed land within the urban area in accordance with Policies CS2 & CS6 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy.

The applicant has agreed to enter into a planning obligation to secure financial contributions relating to affordable housing and in order to offset the "in combination" effects of residential development on recreational visits to the designated coastline of the Solent (addressing the requirements of Policies CS18 and DSP15 respectively).

Recommendation

Subject to the applicant / owner first entering into a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on terms drafted by the Solicitor to the Council to secure:

- a) A financial contribution towards the off-site provision of affordable housing;
- b) A financial contribution towards the Solent Recreational Mitigation Strategy (SRMS);

PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall begin before the expiry of a period of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To allow a reasonable time period for work to start, to comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and to enable the Council to review the position if a fresh application is made after that time.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved documents:

- a) Proposed location plan - drawing no. 15.2082.110 P1
- b) Proposed site plan - drawing no. 15.2082.101 P6
- c) Proposed floor plans Block D - drawing no. 15.2082.102 P6
- d) Proposed floor plans Block E - drawing no. 15.2082.103 P4
- e) Block D - Block E proposed context elevations - drawing no. 15.2082.104 P5
- f) Proposed elevations Block D - Proposed refuse stores - drawing no. 15.2082.105 P6
- g) Proposed context elevations Block E - drawing no. 15.2082.106 P5
- h) Proposed landscaping plan - drawing no. 15.2082.107 P5
- i) Blocks A, C, & D plan extracts - drawing no. 15.2082.108 P1
- j) Typical apartment ventilation detail - Apartment 13 Block D - drawing no. 15.2082.410 P2
- k) Typical apartment window detail - Apartment 13 Block D - drawing no. 15.2082.411 P2
- l) Typical apartment ventilation detail - Apartment 15 Block D - drawing no. 15.2082.412 P3
- m) Typical apartment detail - Apartment 15 Block D - drawing no. 15.2082.413 P2
- n) Typical apartment detail - Apartment 08 Block E - drawing no. 15.2082.414 P3
- o) Typical apartment window detail - Apartment 08 Block E - drawing no. 15.2082.415 P1
- p) Domestic Ventilation and the Building Regulations Part F and L - by VentAxia
- q) Ventilation system specification - details of Sentinel Kinetic MVHR Range
- r) Ventilation system - details of MVHR - Lo-Carbon Sentinel Kinetic
- s) Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment prepared by Ecosupport Ltd
- t) Surface Water Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment - by Opus International - 14th March 2016
- u) Noise Impact Assessment - revised 23rd March 2016 - by Clarke Saunders Acoustics
- v) Proposed parking plan - drawing no. 15.2082.112
- w) Letter from WYG dated 8th June 2016 regarding Parking Provision

3. No development shall take place until details of all external materials to be used in the construction of the development, including all hard surfaced areas, have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure a high quality design and appearance to the development.

4. No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The landscaping scheme shall include the following:

- a) Details of all existing trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained;
- b) Details of all new planting including species, planting sizes, planting distances, density and numbers;
- c) Details of a specific planting schedule of native species reflecting the recommendation given in section 5.4 of the approved Phase I Ecological Assessment;
- d) Details of hard landscaped areas within the external amenity space;
- e) Details of future maintenance of all landscaped areas on the site.

The approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented within the first planting season following the commencement of the development or as otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority and shall be maintained in accordance with the agreed schedule. Unless otherwise first agreed in writing, any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from first planting, are removed, die or, in the opinion of the local planning authority, become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced, within the next available planting season, with others of the same species, size and number as originally approved.

REASON: To ensure a high quality design and appearance to the development; to ensure a high quality outdoor amenity space is provided for the occupants of the new apartments.

5. No development shall take place until details of any external lighting to be installed on the buildings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interest of the appearance of the development and to protect the living conditions of future residents.

6. No development shall take place until details of future maintenance of the ventilation system to be installed in the buildings hereby approved have been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied the approved ventilation system shall be brought into full operation and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved maintenance schedule.

REASON: To ensure the satisfactory living conditions of occupants of the development.

7. No development shall take place until a Site Setup Plan has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall provide details of where provision will be made on the site during construction for contractors parking, storage of plant and materials, site welfare facilities and any other temporary buildings. The plan will also identify measures to prevent mud and spoil being deposited on the public highway by vehicles leaving the site. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety and to protect the living conditions of existing residents.

8. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied the parking spaces as set out in the approved parking plan (drawing no. 15.2082.112) and document entitled "Letter from WYG dated 8th June 2016 regarding Parking Provision" shall be laid out and made available for use on the site for their respective purposes. The parking spaces shall be retained at all times thereafter for their respective purposes as set out in those approved documents unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure an appropriate level of parking provision.

9. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied the refuse storage areas shown on the approved plans shall be provided and thereafter kept available for refuse storage at all times.

REASON: To ensure adequate bin storage facilities and to ensure a high quality design and appearance to the development.

10. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied the cycle storage areas shown on the approved plans shall be provided and thereafter kept available for cycle storage at all times.

REASON: To promote alternative modes of transport to the motorcar.

11. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied the sound attenuation measures identified on the approved plans and in the approved Noise Impact Assessment (Clarke Saunders Acoustics - revised 23rd March 2016) shall be fully installed. Any replacement windows or openings in the external elevations of the buildings hereby permitted shall be to the same glazing and acoustic specification as that identified in the approved plans and Noise Impact Assessment.

REASON: To ensure the satisfactory living conditions of occupants of the development.

12. Before any of the apartments hereby approved are first occupied, details of two batboxes to be erected at the site shall be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority in writing. The details shall include the size, design and siting of the batboxes. The approved batboxes shall be installed before any of the permitted apartments are first occupied and shall thereafter be retained at all times.

REASON: To conserve and enhance biodiversity.

13. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied three bat accessible ridge tiles shall be incorporated into the new pitched roof sections of the development hereby permitted.

REASON: To conserve and enhance biodiversity.

14. No work relating to the construction of any of the development hereby permitted shall take place before the hours of 0800 or after 1800 Monday to Friday, before the hours of 0800 or after 1300 Saturdays or at all on Sundays or recognised public holidays, unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

REASON: To protect the living conditions of existing residents.

15. Before any of the apartments hereby permitted are first occupied the external amenity area enclosed by the existing Blocks A, B & C and Block D hereby approved shall, with the exception of those private amenity spaces indicated as such on the approved site plan (drawing no. 15.2082.101 P6), be provided and retained for use by all residents living on the site.

REASON: To ensure a high quality outdoor amenity space is provided for the occupants of the new and existing apartments.

16. The ground and first floor windows proposed to be inserted into the southern elevation of Block E to serve the living/dining rooms for apartments 2 & 6 shall be glazed with obscure glass and be of a non opening design and construction to a height of 1.7 metres above internal finished floor and shall thereafter be retained in that condition at all times.

REASON: To protect the privacy of occupants of nearby existing apartments.

17. No development shall take place until details of the proposed means of foul water disposal and an associated implementation timetable have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

REASON: To ensure the satisfactory disposal of waste water.

Notes for Information

a. The proposals include works to an ordinary watercourse, under the Land drainage Act 1991, as amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and prior consent of the Lead Local Flood Authority is required for this work. This consent is required as a separate permission to planning.

More information can be obtained at www3.hants.gov.uk/flooding/hampshireflooding/watercourses.htm

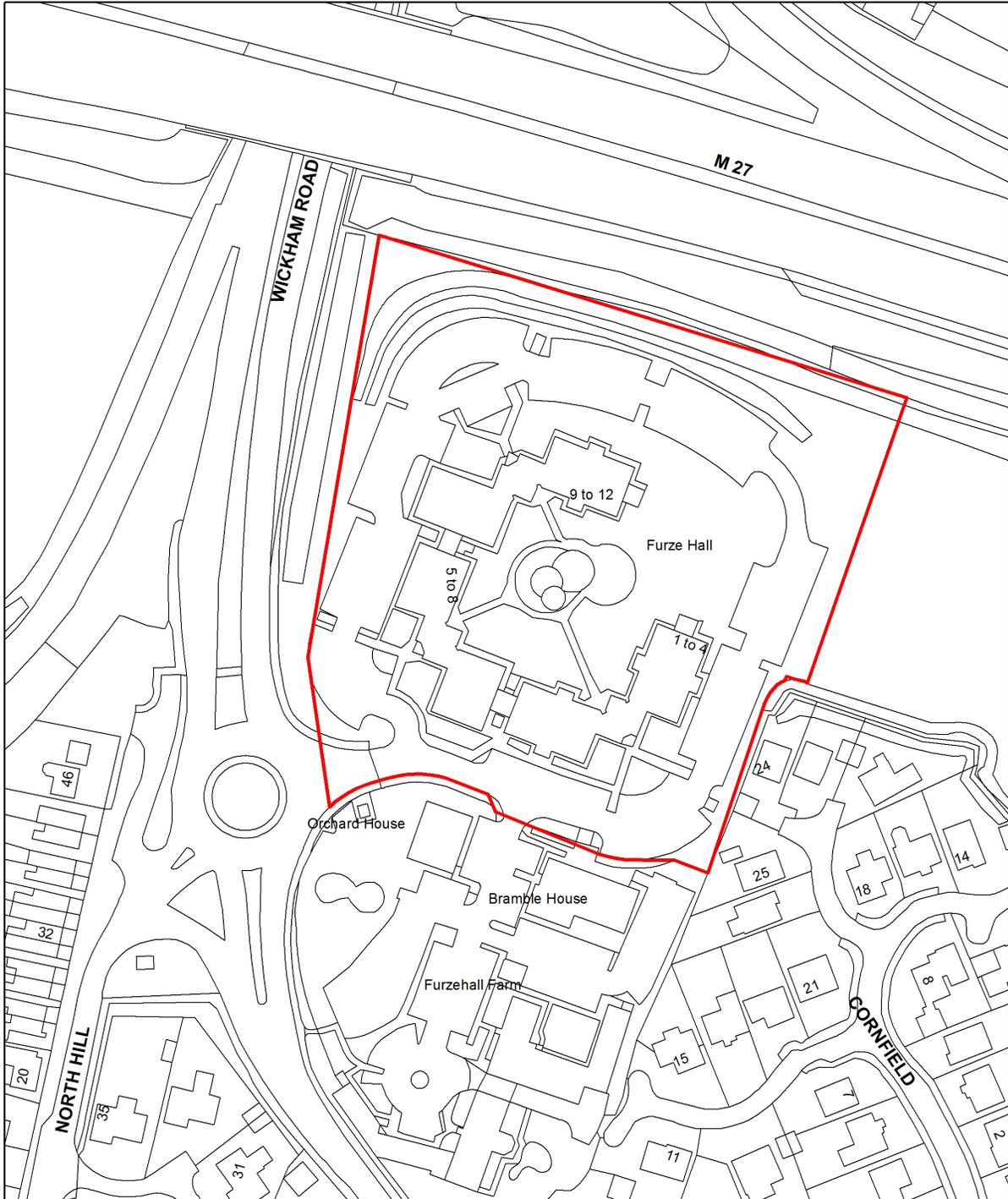
b. Birds nests, when occupied or being built, receive legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is highly advisable to undertake clearance of potential bird nesting habitat (such as hedges, scrub, trees, suitable outbuildings etc.) outside the bird nesting season, 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) standoff maintained, and clearance can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

Background Papers

FBC.7459/34; P/14/0952/PC; P/15/1261/FP

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Land at Furze Court
Scale 1:1250

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence 100019110. 2016

