

**SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE ON  
BEHALF OF EXPLORE LIVING PLC/X-  
LEISURE**

**BRIGHTON MARINA  
REGENERATION PROJECT**

**APPEAL REF.  
APP/Q1445/A/09/2102048/NWF**

**LPA REF. BH/2007/03454**

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## 1.0 WITNESS'S EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 My name is David William Bean. I am the Affordable Housing Manager for Explore Living Plc, a subsidiary of Laing O'Rourke, a post which I have held for the past three years. My role in the company is to liaise with Registered Social Landlords and local authorities to deliver the affordable housing element of developments being undertaken by the group to which the company belongs.
- 1.2 My role is to provide specialist advice and guidance in the respect of affordable housing incomes, section 106 obligations, financial impact and viabilities, affordable housing provision within developments, specification details, Homes and Communities Agency requirements and standards, building and land contract preparation and site supervision from inception through to practical completion.
- 1.3 I previously worked at a senior level within the Development Departments of the Places for People Group and Orbit Housing Association, both Registered Social Landlords, having started my housing career at 1066 Housing Association some fifteen years ago.

## 2.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 I have been involved with the Brighton Marina project since May 2006 when the appellant commenced preparation of the scheme design and embarked on the initial stage of consultation. I am familiar with the appeal site and provided the appellant with affordable housing advice in connection with the submitted planning application (LPA Ref: BH/2007/03454) for the redevelopment of Brighton Marina.
- 2.2 My evidence demonstrates that the proposed affordable housing provision complies with relevant policies in the statutory development plan, and in regional and local policy and guidance.
- 2.3 My evidence addresses the specific issues relating to the size of the affordable housing units proposed and the affordable tenure mix and disposition of the affordable units within the proposed development.
- 2.4 My evidence should be read in conjunction with that of the other witnesses appearing on behalf of the appellant, and, together with that evidence, serves to demonstrate that the proposed development provides an appropriate level of affordable housing in terms of unit mix, size and disposition of affordable units throughout the application site, thus creating a cohesive sustainable community.

## 3.0 THE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The planning application was formally submitted to Brighton & Hove City Council on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2007. It sought planning permission for a mixed-used development. A detailed description of the proposed development is provided in the Statement of Common Ground at section 4.0.

## 4.0 PLANNING BENEFITS

- 4.1 The appeal scheme will make an important contribution to the supply of affordable housing in Brighton with the delivery of 520 affordable dwellings available to key workers, first-time buyers and those in housing need. The need for affordable housing is large and pressing in the City of Brighton. If it is not effectively addressed through major development opportunities such as the present, the level of homelessness in the city will increase, causing greater hardship. Average income and possibly higher income earners will be unable to access suitable housing of their choice. More people will live in poverty to the detriment of their health and well-being and will suffer social exclusion. The retaining and recruiting of valued and experienced workers will be increasingly difficult. The proposed development will greatly assist the endeavour of meeting the challenge which those issues present.

## **5.0 PLANNING POLICY REVIEW**

- 5.1 Planning policy relevant to the consideration of the appeal scheme and my evidence is set out in section 4.0 of my proof and at section 5.0 of the Statement of Common Ground.

## 6.0 CONSIDERATION OF REASONS FOR REFUSAL 2 AND 3

- 6.1 I have addressed the specific issues relating to the size of the affordable housing units at reason for refusal 2 and the proposed affordable tenure mix and disposition of the affordable units at reason for refusal 3. In each case I have demonstrated that the appeal proposals are compliance with policy and guidance.
- 6.2 My conclusion on reason for refusal 2 relating to the size of the affordable is that the Council's preferred unit sizes are aspirations and not supported by policy contained in either the adopted Local Plan or the South East Plan. The concept of size referred to in policies HO3 and HO4 relate to the number of bed spaces and not floor space. Policies at national, strategic and local level encourage flexibility, rather than restraining residential development and the individual circumstances of the site. All of the proposed affordable homes including the shared ownership units achieve Lifetime Home standards and exceed the Home and Communities Agency space standards and requirements, thus providing homes of a high quality and design.
- 6.3 My conclusions on reason for refusal 3 relating to the affordable housing tenure mix and disposition of the affordable units within the proposed development are:
- (a) The proposed tenure mix of 35% social rent and 65% shared ownership will be sustainable and an important contribution towards to the city's affordable housing target and to the wider objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. The proposed split has been supported by the District Valuer and acknowledged as acceptable by the planning officer's. The proposed mix is very similar to other approved tenure mixes throughout the City. The proposed housing tenure mix is in line with policy HO3.
  - (b) The disposition of the affordable housing units is appropriate in this instance and this has rightly been accepted by the Council's planning officers, who confirmed that the scheme complied fully with Policy HO2. They also noted



that whilst it might be desirable to “pepper-pot” the affordable it is not a requirement of local policy. Having been instructed to do so by the Council the District Valuer tested the theory of distribution and concluded that this would affect the viability of the proposals. The Development Housing Manager also acknowledged that the affordable homes would be evenly distributed across the cliff site.

- (c) The proposed affordable housing is “tenure blind” in appearance with no individual block exclusively market sale. The grouping of affordable housing units will also minimize management issues, and reduce maintenance and whole life costs for the Registered Social Landlord. The proposed development will foster the creation of cohesive sustainable communities by creating a mixed and inclusive community. The development will assist in meeting the aim that all members of society to have the same opportunities and experiences and benefit from the provision of good transport and communications linking people to jobs, health and other services.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed development provides 520 new high quality affordable homes, in a mixture of unit sizes and tenures, in an accessible location. It will provide a mix of homes, including 55 high quality 3 bed family homes for social rent that would house 275 people in urgent need of housing.
- 7.2 All dwellings will achieve Level 4 Code for Sustainable Homes, which, given a well integrated mix of homes proposed, the accessibility of the development by public transport, jobs opportunities, shops, services and other facilities the development will make a significant contribution towards achieving a mixed and sustainable community in this part of the city.
- 7.3 The scheme will help to alleviate the increase in the level of homelessness in the city and will provide a material increase in the number of homes available to first time buyers and keyworkers.
- 7.4 All of the affordable housing in the proposed development will exceed the space standards and requirements set by the Homes and Communities Agency, thus providing homes of a high quality and design. All new dwellings will meet Lifetime Homes standards and 5% of the overall development (including 10% of the affordable units) will meet the Wheelchair Accessible standards in accordance with policy HO13.
- 7.5 It is my conclusion that the proposal for 1301 dwellings, of which 40% are to be affordable, accords fully with local, regional and national planning policy and should be welcomed as an extremely important boost to the provision of affordable housing in the City of Brighton.