

6 February 2025
Our Ref: 21.1012/MO/CP

Melissa Tyler
Senior Planning Officer
North Hertfordshire District Council
Gernon Road
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Dear Melissa,

Re: 24/02214/FP Land to North West Side of Green Lane, Ashwell

I write on behalf of our client, Osprey Homes, to provide further information and clarification regarding the proposed development of 7 dwellings on land to the north west of Green Lane, Ashwell, following a review of consultation responses and in discussion with yourself.

This letter and supporting information seeks to address the comments received and demonstrate that the proposed development on the site is acceptable, capable of being implemented and delivered appropriately.

This submission provides the following updated documents and application drawings, alongside this covering letter:

- Application Drawings including:
 - Site Location Plan
 - Site Layout Plan GLA-P-01B
 - Plots 1 and 2 – Front and Left Hand Side Elevations GLA-P-08A
 - Plots 1 and 2 – Rear and Right Hand Side Elevations GLA-P-09A
 - Plot 3 – Front and Left Hand Side Elevations GLA-P-12A
 - Plot 3 – Rear and Right Hand Side Elevations GLA-P-13A
 - Site Street Scene GLA-P-05A
 - Sketch CGI View 1 GLA-P-02A
 - Sketch CGI View 2 GLA-P-03A
 - Sketch CGI View 3 GLA-P-04A
- Design and Access Statement
- Transport Statement
- Landscape Layout 1139.2-01D



National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

In the determination of this planning application, it is considered that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) constitutes a material consideration. Since the submission of the application the NPPF has been updated and was re-published in December 2024, and we set out the updated references and text pertinent to the consideration of this application below.

Within the NPPF there remains a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is central to the Government's approach to the planning system and the emphasis on the need to plan positively for appropriate new development.

Throughout the NPPF, the Government outlines that it is necessary to promote sustainable development with regard to three overarching objectives which are: economic, social, and environmental considerations. These three objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways to deliver sustainable development.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 states that "(6) if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise". This is repeated in sections 11 and 48 of the NPPF which advises that decision making should be in accordance with an up-to-date development plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning conditions and obligations are discussed in paragraphs 56-59 of the NPPF. Local authorities have the ability to consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. In instances where they are considered necessary, they should be kept to a minimum and only be imposed where they are necessary and considered relevant to planning and the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Chapter 5 of the NPPF refers to significantly boosting the supply of homes. Paragraph 73 d) states that local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through policies and decisions, giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.

Chapter 8 promotes healthy, inclusive and safe communities through achieving places that are safe and accessible, and which enables and support healthy lifestyles, as outlined in paragraph 96 c).

Chapter 9 promotes sustainable transport. Paragraph 115 requires that development applications should ensure sustainable transport modes are prioritised, safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, design of transport elements is in line with adopted standards, and that any significant impacts on the transport network can be mitigated.

Chapter 11 promotes an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes. Paragraph 125 d) states that decisions should support the development of under-utilised land.

Chapter 12 is about achieving well-designed places, and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to the

local character and history, establishes a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site, and create safe, inclusive and accessible places.

Amendments

The application drawings and documents have been amended to reflect the following changes as a result of consultation responses and discussion with Officers, and are considered in further detail below:

- Provision of additional pedestrian refuge area to the south;
- Amendment to the site boundary to include the additional refuge;
- Removal of gates from the site access to Green Lane;
- Simplification of the materials to be used for the homes.

Additional Pedestrian Refuge

Following discussion with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Highways Officers, as set out in the updated Transport Statement, a third pedestrian refuge on Green Lane to the south of the site has been added to the scheme. The addition of a further refuge halves the distance from the existing Green Lane shared surface area and the pedestrian entrance to the new homes. The Highways Officer has confirmed this would “*definitely help with pedestrian access/access for all along Green Lane.*”

The highway improvements offered by the scheme provide the following benefits:

- Three pedestrian refuges along Green Lane, where there are currently none;
- Provide for vehicle passing where there is no existing formal provision;
- The scheme will provide for refuse, delivery and fire vehicle turning where there is no existing formal provision.

The scheme is therefore considered acceptable in transport terms, with HCC recognising the proposals help movement by existing and new residents by all transport modes.

Site Boundary

The Site Location Plan has been amended to include the additional pedestrian refuge within the red line application boundary. The additional refuge is 5sqm in size, and therefore the site area set out within the application form and application documentation provided in hectares, does not need to be amended. The appropriate plans and reports have been updated to reflect the revised red line boundary where necessary.

Design

Officers advised the inclusion of decorative gates at the entrance to the site was unnecessary and they have therefore been removed.

Officers also suggested a simplified design palette of materials for the site would be more appropriate. The scheme has therefore been simplified and the suggested materials for each plot are set out below:

- Plot 1/2 – Yellow stock and slate roof
- Plot 3 – red stock, tile hanging and red roof
- Plot 4 – Yellow stock and slate roof
- Plot 5/6/7 - red stock, tile hanging and red roof

It is considered that these small changes enhance the scheme resulting in an attractive development which reflects the character of Ashwell.

Images of the houses have been updated on drawings to reflect the altered materials.

Swept Path Analysis for waste collection vehicle

Comments by the waste team requested a swept path analysis showing waste collection vehicles entering and exiting the site in a forward motion. The proposal does not accommodate the refuse vehicle turning within the site. Instead it can turn in the access road and Green Lane. This is appropriate because:

- it minimises the amount of hard standing required (i.e. it makes the best use of the site entrance which will be lightly trafficked, serving just 7 homes);
- The northern end of Green Lane serves just one dwelling and there is no harm in the refuse vehicle using this section of Green Lane for manoeuvring;
- The refuse vehicle currently needs to reverse the full length of Green Lane. The turning provision provided by the site access is a material net benefit of the development proposal;
- There is clear visibility along Green Lane of a refuse vehicle manoeuvring in this way;
- The refuse vehicle equates to one vehicle movement per week. In line with Manual for Streets guidance overproviding for such occasional vehicle movements results in over-designed streets that favour vehicles and encourage faster vehicle speeds; and
- The drag distances to the refuse vehicle comply with the Building Regulations guidance.

Clarification

It is noted the Parish Council have raised a number of concerns in an updated consultation response and we seek to address them here:

- *Road safety concerns, particularly in regard to the narrow access pinch point of 3.7m* - The proposed Green Lane improvement scheme will introduce intervisible passing bays on Green Lane, which do not currently exist. Narrower widths between these passing areas are acceptable and beneficial because narrower widths encourage slower vehicle speeds. The minimum 3.7m width complies with HCC's design guidance for the acceptable design of shared surfaces.
- *Feb 2018 Appeal identified unsafe access as a key issue* – The site subject to the February 2018 appeal relates to a site to the east of Green Lane, for a larger scale of development and with a very different approach to the highway improvements suggested and were proposed to be achieved via a Grampian condition. The site subject of this application lies to the north of Green Lane, and is for a smaller number of homes. The proposed highway

improvements within this application are fully deliverable and are within the applicant's ownership.

- *Comparison to Chalk Bank Close where a 6m-wide road was required* – Each application should be considered on its merits and its own requirements, what is needed at one location may not be the right approach somewhere else. A 6m width will encourage faster vehicle speeds to the detriment of highway safety – it is the width recommended by the Manual for Streets for a two-way bus route, which is very different to a lightly trafficked cul-de-sac serving a handful of homes.
- *Legal complications around the widening of the road remain unsolved* - All works are deliverable by the applicant using land within their control. A legal response will be provided in due course.
- *The application uses a location plan instead of ordnance survey map; HCC had previously noted inaccuracies in OS maps.* The Site Location Plan provided meets the requirements of a valid planning application.
- *The access road is privately owned with unresolved questions over ownership, maintenance, access rights and liability* - All works are deliverable by the applicant using land that they own/control.
- *Ashwell NP identifies sufficient sites and the eastern area of the village is designated as countryside and protected from ribbon development (Policy ASH3(A))* – The site is included within the settlement boundary for Ashwell and therefore the principle of development is this location is accepted.

Summary

The site is in a sustainable location, and within the settlement boundary for Ashwell. It also benefits from access to a range of services and sustainable modes of transportation.

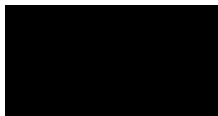
The scheme has been carefully considered and provides an appropriate response to the site's context and constraints. A substantial number of key benefits would be provided through this development, such as delivering much needed housing, high quality design and character of the development, achieved alongside wider socio-economic benefits.

The proposal also provides a small but valuable contribution to North Herts' Housing land supply.

Overall, the proposed development comprises a suitable and sustainable development. It has been demonstrated through the application plans and reports that support the application submission that there are no adverse impacts of the proposals.

I trust this information is acceptable, should you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Catherine Pollard
Associate Director

