

MEMORANDUM

To: Melissa Tyler
Senior Planning Officer

From: Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer
Ext: 4526

Your Ref: 23/00407/FP

Date: 25 September 2024

Full Planning Permission: Conversion of Node Court to 8no. dwellings. Conversion of Midden building to residential and the erection of 6no. terraced dwelling-houses as development to facilitate the restoration of Node Court together with associated car parking, landscaping, boundary treatment and ancillary works (Amended Plans received 30 August 2024) Node Court, Drivers End, Codicote, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8TR Ref No: 23/00407/FP

Dear Melissa,

Thank you for your memo of 2 September 2024 following amendments to the above application for full planning permission.

Codicote is one of five villages in the Local Plan where a greater amount of development has been allocated. Codicote has four allocated housing sites which are expected to deliver an estimated total of 315 new homes. The development boundary is shown on the Policies Map to indicate the area within which further development will be allowed.

The application site is not allocated and lies beyond the development boundary in the Green Belt. Policy SP5 Countryside and Green Belt applies. Development proposals in the Green Belt will only be permitted where they would not result in inappropriate development and be judged against the policies of the NPPF to determine whether they are acceptable in principle. Detailed policies of the Local Plan will be used to determine whether permission should be granted.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF says that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals, in accordance with the NPPF.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF says “Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes”.

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF says “Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
- b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.”

The application proposes a change of use to residential for the two existing buildings (Node Court and Midden building) and the erection of a further six dwellings to provide 15 dwellings in total. This is a reduction of two dwellings from the original application.

The affordable housing requirement for sites of between 15 and 24 dwellings is 35%. Within the overall affordable housing requirement, a 65%/35% rented/other intermediate affordable housing tenure split is required, in accordance with the Local Plan and the council’s Developer Contributions SPD, supported by the 2016 Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update.

A rural housing needs survey was last undertaken in Codicote in 2007 and so is considered very out of date. 118 households identified themselves as needing accommodation, but only 35 households provided sufficient information to assess if they meet requirements to access affordable housing.

The survey report recommended a need for 18 affordable homes: 6 x 1 bed flats, 1 x 1 bed bungalow, 1 x 2 bed flat, 4 x 2 bed houses and 1 x 3 bed house for rent and 2 x 1 bed flat, 1 x 2 bed flat, 1 x 2 bed house and 1 x 3 bed house for sale on a shared ownership basis. There has been no affordable housing provision in Codicote since the survey was undertaken to meet any of this identified housing need.

The 2016 SHMA Update recommends a greater proportion (59%) of one and two bedroom homes for rent, and a smaller proportion (41%) of three and four bedroom homes for rent. For other intermediate affordable homes, the figures

are reversed with 36% one and two bedroom homes and 64% three and four bedroom homes.

There is a great need for two bedroom family homes across the district and a growing need for three and four bed wheelchair accessible bungalows/ houses for families with an adult or child with disabilities and/ or limited mobility.

The revised scheme mix includes the provision of 9 x 2 bedroom; 5 x 3 bedroom and 1 x 4 bedroom homes for sale and does not include any affordable housing.

If the development proposals in the Green Belt are not deemed inappropriate and the applicant's proposals are acceptable the affordable housing should comprise: **5 x two bedroom terraced houses; three for rent and two other affordable housing tenure homes** to meet housing needs.

Where a need for affordable housing is identified the definition in Annex 2 of the Framework should be applied to the type of affordable housing required.

The definition for affordable housing includes housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).

The affordable homes should be owned and managed by a registered provider and be physically indistinguishable from the market housing.

The council will accept social rent and affordable rent for the rented tenure dwellings, but it should be noted that the affordable rent for one or two bedroom dwellings should be no more than 80% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

For three bedroom dwellings the affordable rent should be no more than 70% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable) and for a four bedroom dwelling the rent should be no more than the equivalent rent (excluding service charges, where applicable) to a four bedroom social rented home in the locality, to ensure affordability.

All rents must be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, in accordance with the council's Tenancy Strategy and Developer Contributions SPD.

To ensure the homes remain affordable in perpetuity, protected area status applies and staircasing is restricted to 80% on any shared ownership homes, in accordance with:

The Housing (Shared Ownership Leases) (Exclusion from Leasehold Reform Act 1967) (England) Regulations 2009 which came into force on 07 September 2009.

In June 2021, the Government introduced a policy requiring 25% of affordable housing provided to be First Homes. First Homes can be considered on merit where the overall proportion of affordable housing that can be achieved on site will not be adversely affected and the Local Plan requirement for 65% of

affordable homes for rent is met. One of the other intermediate affordable housing units could be delivered as First Homes to meet this requirement.

The nationally described technical housing standards provide the nationally recognised standards for bedrooms, storage and internal areas in new dwellings across all tenures. All the affordable units are required to meet these standards. The six terraced homes as proposed do not currently meet these standards.

Parking courts are not desirable as there is often limited or no natural surveillance and residents prefer to park outside or near to their homes. To minimise on street parking, parking spaces should be provided in front of or adjacent properties with good natural surveillance.

Grant funding for the provision of affordable housing is not available on S106 sites and any affordable homes should be delivered through planning gain alone.

The applicant will need to provide documentary evidence of any viability issues using a recognised financial toolkit, which the council will have independently assessed at full expense to the applicant.

I hope this information assists you. Please contact me if you require any further information.

Regards

Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer