

Planning, Design and Access statement

The Old Water Tower, Mangrove Road, Mangrove Green, LU2 8QD

Proposed erection of two bungalows with parking, landscaping and associated works

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M. W. EASTON F.I.A.S. (Town Planning)
C.Build E FCABE
Corporate Town Planner - Surveyor
Chartered Building Engineer

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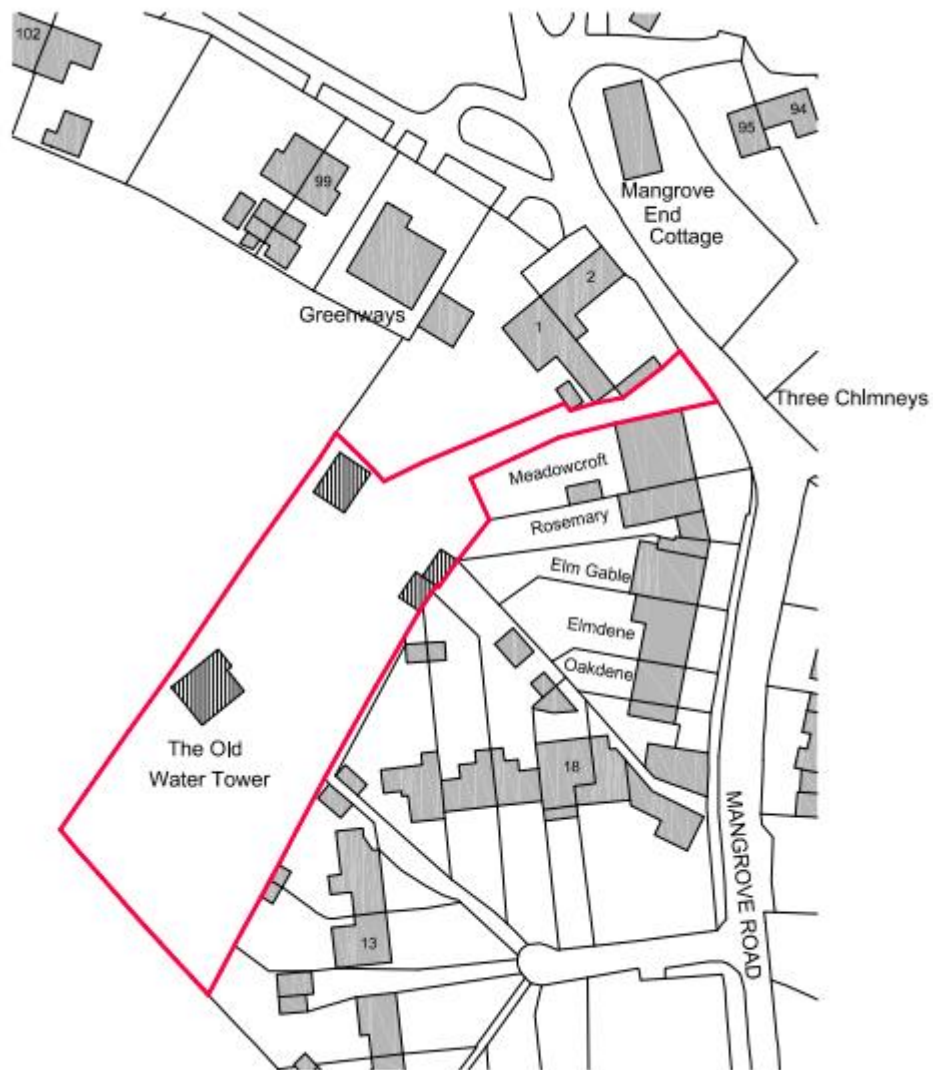
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a detailed planning application for the erection of two detached bungalows within the curtilage of the Old Water Tower at Mangrove Road, Mangrove Green, LU2 8QD
- 1.2 In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by the following
- Drawings of the site and proposed development
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
 - Energy report
- 1.3 This statement provides an assessment of the planning policies relevant to the proposed development and covers the design rationale as well as other material planning considerations.

2.0 **Site Context**

- 2.1 The application site measures 2964 sq metres and is located at the western end of the settlement of Mangrove Green, north of Cockernhoe and east of Luton. The settlement of Mangrove Green, in addition to Cockernhoe, is identified as part of a Category A village in the North Herts Local Plan excluded from the Green Belt. Included within the village boundary is a large area immediately to the west and south of the application site and further to the east of both villages is an area proposed for housing development in the Local Plan with a target for all these areas to accommodate 2100 dwellings plus primary and secondary education provision, a local centre and associated infrastructure. Sites EL1, EL2 & EL3 combine to form this strategic development site under Policy SP19 known as East of Luton.
- 2.2 The site consists of an existing detached dwelling in the form of the Old Water Tower and its residential curtilage including garden and outbuildings. The site has a vehicular access onto Mangrove Road. It is flanked to the south east by residential properties forming part of Mangrove Green and to the north west and south west by agricultural fields. The residential dwellings at Meadowcroft and Nos 1 and 2 Mangrove Green are located adjacent the access point onto Mangrove Road which serves the site. The site is relatively flat.
- 2.3 Adjacent to the south eastern boundary of the site with their gardens backing onto the site are several two storey residential properties all served off Green Lane, a cul-de-sac off Mangrove Road. There are no public footpaths crossing the site although local footpaths Offley 25 and Offley 26 are located nearby.
- 2.4 A site location plan outlining the application site in red is shown below:



Site location plan

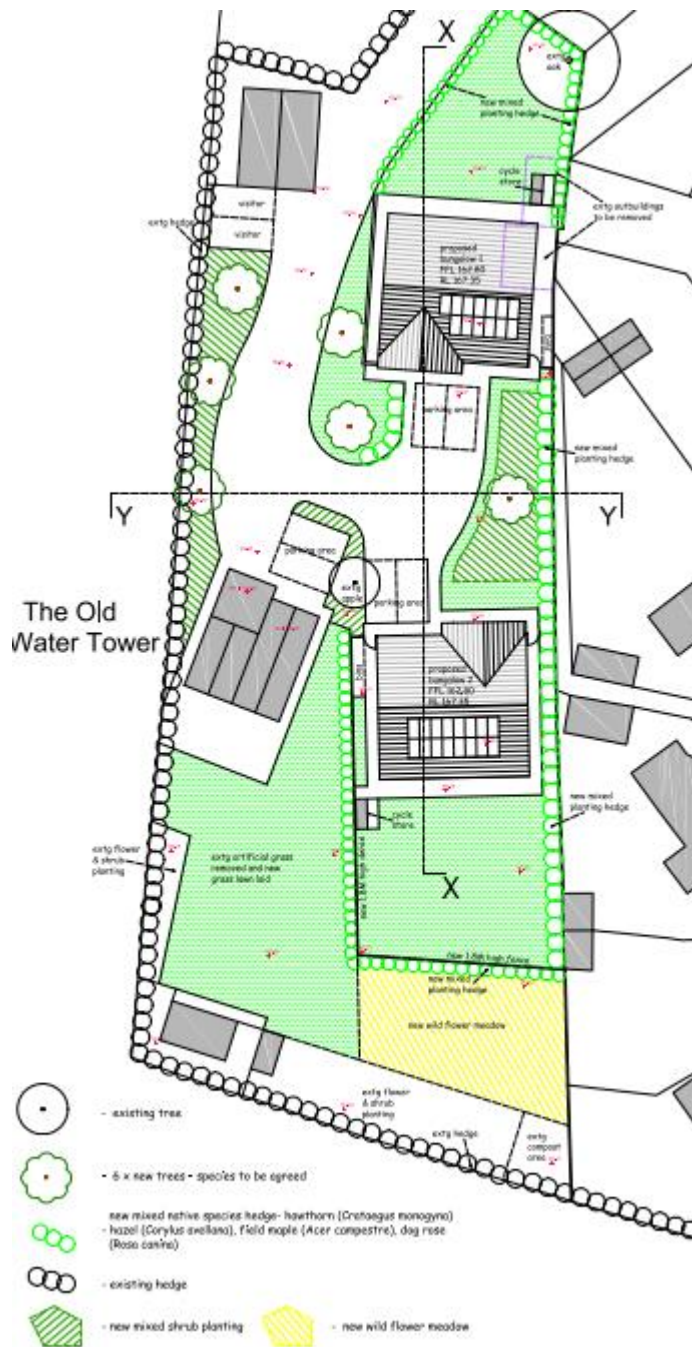
3.0 Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposal is to erect two bungalows within the existing garden land to the Old Water Tower. Bungalow 1 would be located in the northern part of the garden to the Old Water Tower whilst Bungalow 2 would be located immediately to the eastern flank of the Old Water Tower. Each new dwelling would contain 3 bedrooms, lounge and kitchen and each would have its own garden and two parking spaces each. The dwellings would share the existing vehicular access with the Old Water Tower off Mangrove Road and a turning area would be created to allow all three dwellings to enter and leave the site in forward gear.
- 3.2 In terms of design, the dwellings would have the character and appearance of traditional bungalows with a gable feature at the front to provide some variation to the roofscape and to define the front elevations. Both are of the same design except for one being a handed version of the other. The maximum height of the bungalows would be set at 4.6 m above ground level with the front gable at a lower height. The single storey scale of the dwellings reflects the backland location and the surrounding residential gardens with their outbuildings. There would be no accommodation within the roofspace.
- 3.3 External materials would include white painted render for the elevations, natural slates for the roofs with a light grey feature cladding on the front facing gable. A limited amount of hardsurfacing would be provided around each bungalow to facilitate footpath access and a rear patio. An electric vehicle charging point would be fitted to the front of each dwelling. Bin storage area would be provided at the side of each dwelling and a small detached cycle store provided within the rear gardens to each plot.



Proposed elevations and floor plan

- 3.4 The dwellings would be located approximately 1.8m from the eastern boundary of the site.
- 3.5 In terms of landscaping a new mixed species hedgerow is proposed for most of the eastern boundary continuing around the other sides of each garden. Where appropriate 1.8m high close boarded fencing is proposed to define each curtilage. A new wild flower meadow is proposed to the south of bungalow 2.



Proposed site plan

- 3.6 In terms of sustainable construction the proposal is to construct the dwellings to exceed current building regulations and include carbon reducing technology such as solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points. Water efficiency measures will be incorporated through the use of low flow taps and WC's, flow restrictors and rainwater harvesting systems.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1 05/01453/1 – One dwelling and detached garage (outline). Refused 5.07.2006
- 4.2 11/02241/1 – Conversion and extension of Water Tower to form 2 bedroom dwelling, incorporating single storey front extension and part single/part two storey rear extension. Granted 23.11.2011
- 4.3 14/02679/1 – Conversion and extension of Water Tower to form 3 bedroom dwelling incorporating two storey rear/side extension and single storey front extension. Granted 12.12.2014
- 4.4 20/02052/FPH – Erection of single storey detached outbuilding as an annex for the occupation of a family member following demolition of existing outbuildings. Granted 22.10.2020

5.0 **Relevant planning policy**

5.1 North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031

5.2 Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire

Supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire.

Advises that the Council will grant planning permission that:

- Deliver and appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards targets in the Plan
- Create high quality developments
- Protect the environment including biodiversity

5.3 Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Identifies Cockernhoe & Mangrove Green as a Category A village excluded from the Green Belt advising that general development will be allowed within the defined settlement boundaries.

5.4 Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability

Confirms that good design is a key aspect to sustainable development and supports new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

5.5 Policy D1: Sustainable Design

Advises that planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals meet several criteria

5.6 Policy D3: Protecting living conditions

States that planning permission will be granted provided that proposals do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions

5.7 Policy NE4: Biodiversity

Requires all new development to deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity and geodiversity

5.8 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

5.9 States at paragraph 8 that there are three overarching objectives of the planning system to achieve sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 10 states that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.10 Paragraph 11 states that for decision making this means c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

5.11 Footnote 8 states that paragraph 11 d) applies where local planning authorities cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land. North Herts Council currently does not have a five year supply of housing land therefore paragraph 11 of the Framework applies.

5.12 Paragraph 61 states the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Paragraph 73 says that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. It also supports the development of windfall sites giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes.

5.13 Paragraph 83 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

- 5.14 Paragraph 110 states that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
- 5.15 Paragraph 116 regarding highway matters states development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.
- 5.16 Supplementary Planning Documents
- 5.17 The most relevant SPD's adopted by the Council are as follows:
- Vehicle Parking at New Development (2011)
 - Design SPD (2011)
 - Sustainability SPD (2024)
- 5.18 The above documents are considered in the design and layout of the proposed development.

6.0 **Planning assessment**

6.1 Principle of development

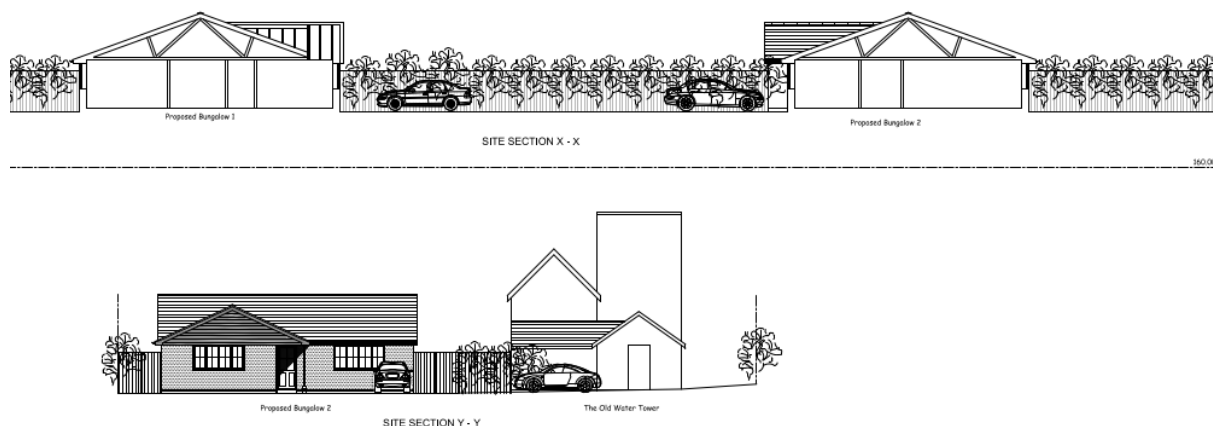
6.2 Cockernhoe, Mangrove Green and East of Luton collectively form a large settlement excluded from the Green Belt on the eastern edge of Luton. The existing villages include a village hall and primary school whereas the local plan sites EL1, EL2 & EL3 also within the settlement boundary, will deliver 2100 houses as well as other infrastructure. As a Category 'A' settlement it is a sustainable location within which general development will be allowed. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development, which would be within the settlement boundary, would be acceptable in principle.

6.3 The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area

6.4 The application site is already in residential use forming a large plot to the Old Water Tower. Residential gardens adjoin the site to the north and east. At almost 3000 sq metres in area the existing site is much larger than surrounding plots. The development proposal would result in an increased density of use however the three resultant dwellings on the plot (one existing and two proposed) would equate to a residential density of approximately 10 dwellings per hectare (DPH) which is relatively low and in keeping with this village location.

6.5 The proposed plots (including the reduced curtilage to the Old Water Tower) would be similar to several of the surrounding plots although the size of residential lots in the immediate area does vary.

6.6 The majority of houses in the locality are two storey but they invariably have a road frontage. The application site is located behind the built up frontage of Mangrove Road and Green Lane and located to the rear of and adjacent to back gardens. In this location it is appropriate to reduce the scale of development particularly where it is located close to back gardens and in close proximity to views from existing dwellings. Therefore, the proposed development is limited to single storey with low pitched roofs. This reduced scale together with boundary planting would be more in context with this backland environment where new development should not be dominant or overbearing and where existing landscaping should be maintained or enhanced. The extract image of the site sections below demonstrates the limited scale and height of the development.



- 6.7 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that permission will be granted for development proposals which respond positively to the site's local context and take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme to meet a range of criteria including reducing energy consumption, designing out opportunities crime and retain existing vegetation and propose new planting.
- 6.8 The proposed dwellings will be energy efficient incorporating low carbon technology and natural surveillance of the entrance into the site will be maintained. Significant new landscaping will be provided resulting in a net gain to biodiversity. The new built form does not extend into the southern open area of the site to maintain views across to the open fields to the west. There would be no change to the access point onto Mangrove Road and therefore the character of the street scene at the entrance to the site will be maintained. The external materials will be similar to those used in surrounding residential development and the pitched roof form would also reflect existing built form in the area. The new parking and turning area within the centre of the site would be largely hidden from public views by the new buildings and new landscaping.

- 6.9 Overall, it is considered that the proposed scheme comprises a limited increase in residential density that can be satisfactorily accommodated within the site and the wider settlement making the most efficient use of land whilst respecting and maintaining the character and appearance of the area. As such, the development would be generally compliant with Policies SP9 and D1 of the NHLP.
- 6.10 Residential amenity
- 6.11 Policy D1 of the NHLP requires that proposals for residential schemes meet or exceed the nationally described space standards (NDSS) whilst having regard to the Council's Design SPD.
- 6.12 The proposed bungalows would require 95sq metres GIA to meet the NDSS standard. Each bungalow would have a proposed GIA of 120 sq metres thereby comfortably meeting the space standards. The external garden areas would be in excess of 100 sq metres. The site is within a few hundred metres from large areas of open space in the centre of the Mangrove Green & Cockernhoe.
- 6.13 In view of the above factors the proposed development would provide a high standard of amenity for prospective occupiers.
- 6.14 There would be no direct overlooking of existing properties from the proposed dwellings due to their single storey scale. The orientation of the dwellings to the west of properties in Green Lane together with their limited height and proposed boundary treatment would mean that there would be an acceptable relationship with nearby properties.
- 6.15 Any noise or disturbance during construction would be short term and could be controlled by appropriate conditions e.g. a construction management plan.
- 6.16 Overall it is considered that the development could be integrated with existing residential development without causing unacceptable harm to living conditions of existing occupiers in accordance with Policy D3 of the NHLP.

6.17 Access and parking issues

- 6.18 The development will use the existing means of access to and from Mangrove Road. Mangrove Road is an unclassified local access road maintained by Hertfordshire County Council as highway authority. The road is a no through route terminating approximately 160 metres to the north. The road is subject to a maximum speed limit of 30 mph and traffic volumes and speeds are low.
- 6.19 The increase in vehicular trips to and from the site is expected to be low. The Trics database is the industry standard way of assessing how much traffic will be associated with a development site . For residential development traffic movements can vary depending on the location and type and tenure of housing involved however in this location, taking into account the bus service into the village and facilities within walking distance (e.g. school) , a maximum of around 5.5 vehicle trips per dwelling would be expected between 7.00am – 7.00pm.
- 6.20 A refuse storage and collection area is proposed on the northern side of the existing vehicular access within 10 metres pulling distance of Mangrove Road. Refuse collection vehicles (RCV's) would not be expected to enter the site thus continuing the existing refuse collection arrangement. Cars and small delivery vans will be able to enter and leave the site in forward gear.
- 6.21 In terms of parking each dwelling would be provided with two parking spaces and two visitor parking spaces will be provided within the site off the access road. This provision would be within the Council's Parking SPD standards. Each dwelling would be provided with a secure cycle storage shed.
- 6.22 Public footpath Offley 025 is located close to the site entrance and this provides an alternative safe pedestrian route towards the centre of the village.
- 6.23 The NPPF advises in paragraph 116 that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the cumulative impact would be severe.

6.24 The proposal is for a small scheme of just two additional bungalows sharing an existing vehicular access. The proposal would generate only a small amount of additional vehicle movements in a location where there are other transport choices for residents to reach local facilities. As such the proposal is unlikely to lead to conditions detrimental to highway safety and would comply with Policies T1 and T2 of the Local Plan and policies in the Local Transport Plan LTP4.

6.25 Sustainability and climate change

6.26 The sustainability measures of the development are set out in the separate energy and sustainability report however, in brief, they will include solar panels, air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points together with a range of energy saving appliances and lighting. It is considered that these measures ensure that the development is future proofed against the challenge of climate change and consistent with the aims of the Council's Sustainability SPD.

6.27 Cockernhoe and Mangrove Green are considered to be reasonably well connected with a bus service to Luton. The villages have community facilities such as a primary school, public houses and a village hall and the new settlement boundary will expand the eastern edge of Luton where there are further facilities within a short drive but also within reasonable walking and cycling distance. By reason of its location within a category A settlement as defined in the NHLP and adjoining the eastern edge of Luton, the application site is considered to be in a sustainable rural location.

6.28 Biodiversity Net Gain

6.29 The development proposals are accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment by Hawthorn Ecology. The key findings are as follows:

- The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. There are no designated sites within 2km of the site. Habitats of Principal Importance are located within 2km of the site (the closest being woodpasture and parkland located approximately 0.3km away). Due to the small scale of the development, it is considered unlikely that these sites/habitats will

be affected.

- The current biodiversity value of the site was calculated as 0.58 habitat area units and 0.62 linear units.
- The biodiversity value of the proposed development was calculated as 0.65 habitat area units and 0.86 linear units.
- Overall, across the planned development there is a gain of 0.06 habitat area units and 0.24 linear units, resulting in a net percentage change of +11.01% for habitat area units and +38.91% for linear units

6.30 In view of the demonstrated biodiversity net gain the proposed development would comply with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan and the Environment Act 2021.

6.31 Flood Risk

6.32 The site is in Flood Risk Zone 1, where there is the lowest probability of fluvial flooding. Furthermore, the site is also in an area of very low risk of surface water flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment is not required given the site area is under 1 hectare, is outside Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is not subject to any critical drainage problems.

7.0 **Conclusion**

- 7.1 The proposed development will result in various planning benefits. From a social perspective the proposal will deliver two dwellings making a modest contribution towards local housing stock at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land. The provision of bungalow accommodation in particular would make an attractive addition to the local housing market which is usually dominated by two storey housing and flats.
- 7.2 The development would bring about economic benefits from the employment created in the construction, fitting out and servicing of the units. The future occupiers would also benefit the local economy through expenditure in local shops and pubs and on other services.
- 7.3 There would be environmental benefit from the development in the form of bio-diversity net gain as demonstrated by the submitted BNG report. The dwellings would also be adaptable to climate change with low carbon and energy saving features.
- 7.4 The proposed dwellings would integrate well with the established residential environment and there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.5 It is particularly relevant that the development would form part of a Category A village within the boundaries of which general development is supported in the North Herts Local Plan and as part of the Council's overall settlement strategy in order to achieve the housing growth and other infrastructure that the District needs in the Plan period.
- 7.6 As outlined above, the development would meet the social , economic and environmental objectives necessary to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the Framework. In the absence of any significant identified harms the benefits of the proposed development weigh substantially in favour of the proposal and the Local Planning Authority is requested to support the development and grant planning permission.

