

STATEMENT TO SUPPORT A PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A DETACHED SELF-BUILD DWELLING AT THE COACH HOUSE, RADWELL LANE, RADWELL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement accompanies a formal planning application for the above development. It follows the receipt of a response to a pre-application enquiry in March of this year which sought the Council's advice upon the development of land at The Coach House, as a matter of planning principle. The Council reference for that pre-app advice is 25/00368/PRE.

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The Coach House is an extended dwelling that stands along the southern side of Radwell Lane, close to the lane and in the south-western corner of a large residential curtilage. The well landscaped curtilage widens as it stretches eastwards, with a strong tree and hedgerow boundary along Radwell Lane.
- 2.2 Radwell Lane runs westwards from its junction with the A507 Great North Road, beneath the A1(M) and serving a mixture of development comprising dwellings on both sides, a large farm complex to the east of the curtilage of The Coach House and a Certified Camping and Caravan site at its western end.
- 2.3 The site lies within the Green Belt within the North Herts Local Plan 2011- 2031. It is also Grey Belt land as explained later.

3.0 THE PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

- 3.1 In a comprehensive written response to the request for the Council's likely reaction to developing the site at The Coach House the case officer stated that whilst there would be a potential conflict with Policy SP2 and CGB2a of the Local Plan, he considered that the principle of the development of 'grey belt' land would outweigh this conflict. In his view, greater weight should be given to the fact that the amended NPPF is newer than the Local Plan Policies and that the Council lacks a 5 Year Housing Land Supply. He therefore considered market housing would be acceptable in principle on this plot.

- 3.2 He did however go on to consider the 3 dwellings that were shown in the pre-app scheme and said that it would be his recommendation that 2 dwellings with garage outbuildings would be better, allowing for larger garden sizes and better spacing to the trees, responding more positively to the site's local context. This would also allow for a reduction in the amount of hardstanding and for plot 2 to come forward. In addition to this, he felt that the garage outbuilding / parking spaces should be sited in front of the dwelling as shown on plot 3.

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Taking full account of the helpful pre-application advice the owners of The Coach House have decided that this formal planning application should involve the erection of just one new dwelling, which will be a self-build for their own occupation, the siting of which is shown on drawing 3907.05.C. This drawing also shows the widening of the existing access into the site off Radwell Lane, the visibility splay, garaging, the turning facility and vegetation along the highway boundary and throughout the site generally.
- 4.2 Drawing 3907.06 C shows the ground floor plan, north and west elevations and the cross section through the dwelling. Drawing 3907.07 C shows the first and second floor plans and south and east elevations. Drawing 08 B shows two further cross sections.
- 4.3 It would be a predominantly two storey dwelling, with a single storey rear wing on its south-western side and 5 bedrooms, including the fifth within the main roof space. The schedule of external materials is detailed on drawing 06 C. It would be built in Red Multi facing bricks (Autrique by TBS) with reconstituted stone cills where indicated and Marley Acme Clay Plain roof tiles, Weathered Heritage pV Panels where indicated (subject to specialists design), lead sheet with wood rolls to dormer window roofs and cheeks, a single ply membrane to the flat crown roof and powder coated aluminium windows. The detached garage stands close to the dwelling, served off the widened access.
- 4.4 The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment with a tree protection plan and method statement provided by Harrison Arboriculture and an Ecological Assessment prepared by Coyne Environments Ltd, with a supplementary bat survey.

5.0 THE POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 The application site lies within the Green Belt and, according to the pre-app response is subject to Policies SP2 and CGB2a of the Local Plan. SP2 sets out the Council's Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution. CGB2a deals with exception sites for affordable housing in the Green Belt. Policy SP5 deals with the Countryside and the Green Belt and states that the Council will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated.
- 5.2 The pre-app response accurately described the recent changes to the NPPF, which introduced the concept of Grey Belt land. Para. 155 of the NPPF states that **housing**, commercial and other development should not be regarded as inappropriate development where:
- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;*
 - b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
 - c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework(57); and*
 - d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156 – 157.*
- 5.3 The case officer for the pre-app agreed that the site could be considered as 'any other land' rather than previously developed land and that it complied with paragraph 155 a. as the site is Grey Belt and would not conflict with paragraph 143 a), b) and d) of the NPPF.
- 5.4 The proposal complies with b) of 155 as there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed, due to the LPA not being able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Part d. of 155 is not applicable to the proposed development as it's not major development.
- 5.5 Occupiers of the new dwelling would be largely reliant on the private car as the site is rural with limited public transport, shops or services nearby, and narrow rural roads with no footpaths/bike lanes will reduce the likelihood of such non-car movement. As the case officer

says, such situations are however common in rural areas, and are referenced in para. 110 of the NPPF. The site can be considered sufficiently sustainable as it's close to a public highway, is in an existing group of dwellings, traffic generation would be minimal, and safe access/design etc. should be able to be achieved. The development is not considered to conflict with paragraph 155 c).

- 5.6 The site would be set away from the nearest designated Heritage Asset (Radwell House) by approximately 60m. The case officer agreed that this would not provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development, as referred to under footnote 7 for the definition of Grey Belt.
- 5.7 Local Plan Policies SP1 and SP9 require that proposals must respect and improve their surrounding and that new development will be supported where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context. This is further reflected in Policy D1 which outlines the criteria for sustainable design. It states that planning permission will be granted, provided that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context, enhances the public realm, retains existing vegetation, proposes appropriate new planting and meets or exceeds nationally described space standards.

6.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 It has been agreed that the development of this site for housing would constitute appropriate development, and be acceptable in principle. Concerns were expressed at the pre-app stage about a scheme for 3 dwellings, with the suggestion that 2 would be more appropriate. However, the owners of The Coach House now wish to construct only one self-built dwelling for their occupation.
- 6.2 We consider that the design of the one that is now proposed responds positively to its local context, without harming the prevailing character and appearance of Radwell Lane. It would fit comfortably within its large and well landscaped setting, would meet the national described space standards and benefit from a large garden, which would provide ample private amenity space. The case officer for the pre-app considered that there would be a large amount of hardstanding to the front of the property. The decision to seek permission for a single dwelling has overcome that concern.

- 6.3 Similarly the reduction has also ensured that the dwelling would be set back sufficiently from the host or any neighbouring dwellings and would not occasion any harm to neighbouring amenity.
- 6.4 The proposal dwelling would utilise the existing access from Radwell Lane. This was considered acceptable in principle, subject to achieving the required visibility splays set out by the Highway Authority. These are shown on drawing 3907 05 C. Should the Highway Authority have any concerns then we would welcome the opportunity to respond to them.
- 6.5 The 'high amenity' trees along the northern boundary would be retained and, depending upon the Highway Authority's views of the use of the existing access, the existing hedgerow may need to be trimmed. The application is accompanied by a tree report from a qualified arboriculturist, including an impact assessment, protection plan and method statement.
- 6.6 Ecology is dealt with in the report prepared by Coyne Environmental Ltd, including the outcome of the bat survey.

7.0 SUMMARY

- 7.1 This formal planning application responds to the principally positive pre-application advice. The principle of developing the site is considered acceptable in the context of the grey belt nature of the land, in that the erection of this one dwelling is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 7.2 The development has been reduced from 3 to 1 dwelling, specifically to be self-built. This ensures that the new dwelling sits comfortably within its plot, responding positively to its local context. Its character and appearance in its landscaped setting would not harm Radwell Lane nor the amenities of any nearby residents.
- 7.3 Utilising the existing access onto the lane should not create any adverse highway conditions and landscaping and ecology are dealt with in supporting reports.
- 7.4 It is hoped therefore that the application, the accompanying Design and Access Statement and this supporting planning statement provide the Council with a robust and comprehensive submission, such that it would secure a favourable outcome.

- 7.5 However, in the event of the Council requiring any further information or clarification of any aspect of the application then we would welcome the opportunity to respond before a final decision is taken.

Pentangle Design
June 2025