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Planning, Design and Access Statement

Land off Burrrs Lane,
Barkway,
Herts

Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a single dwelling and associated works

April 2025

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a detailed planning application for the replacement of existing stables / equestrian buildings with a single dwelling on land off Burrs Lane, Barkway SG8 8EP
- 1.2 This statement provides an assessment of the planning policies relevant to the proposed development and covers the design rational as well as other material planning considerations.

2.0 Site context

- 2.1 The application site measures 1,355 sq metres and is located at the eastern end of Burrs Lane, Barkway at its junction with Highfield Grove. The site consists of an existing stable block with lean to and hardsurfaced yard and detached storage building with lean to. The combined floorspace of all buildings on site is approximately 120 sq metres. The site is relatively flat with a gentle slope up to the southern access boundary.
- 2.2 The main stable block building is irregular shaped and measures 90 sq metres and is approximately 3.0 metres in height. The detached storage lean to at the front of the site measures 30 sq metres and is approximately 2.2 metres in height.
- 2.3 The site features hedges and trees to the western and northern boundaries and post and rail fencing around the stable grounds. At the front of the site is the junction of two public footpaths – FP Barkway 013 which heads in an easterly direction and FP Barkway 012 which runs directly to the south. The site is accessed directly off Burrs Lane.
- 2.4 The site is located within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt although it is close to the eastern edge of the Category ‘A’ village of Barkway (within 15 metres). Highfield House opposite the site and all of the properties along Burrs Lane to the west are within the settlement boundary.
- 2.5 The site lies outside of the Barkway Conservation Area.
- 2.6 Burrs Lane comprises a tarmac carriageway of approximately 4 metres in width narrowing to the eastern end. It is an unclassified road maintained by Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority.
- 2.7 The properties along Burrs Lane comprise mostly of modern bungalows and chalet bungalows set back from the road by well landscaped front gardens.
- 2.8 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at the lowest probability of flooding.

3.0 Development Proposals

- 3.1 Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of one dwelling and associated works.
- 3.2 The proposed development includes a single detached two bedroom bungalow measuring 105 sq metres. No other structures are proposed. The proposed bungalow would be sited centrally within the site and would have a shallow pitched roof with a double gable elevation for the main entrance facing east. External materials would include a red brick plinth with stained timber boarding for the main elevations, timber windows and a slate roof. The dwelling would have a maximum height of 3.82 metres above ground level.
- 3.3 To the front of the dwelling would be a hard surfaced area for car parking accessed off the existing site access off Burrs Lane. Other than some limited paving around the dwelling the remainder of the site would be dedicated as garden land associated with the dwelling comprising lawned areas with some shrub and tree planting (details to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority).

4.0 Relevant Planning Policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 For the purposes of this application, the Development Plan comprises the North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031. The emerging Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan has passed the Examination stage and therefore is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.2 The following policies in the North Herts Local Plan (NHLP) are considered to be the most relevant policies against which to assess this application:
- 4.3 Policy SP2 Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- 4.4 This policy sets out the settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution for North Hertfordshire and confirms that provision will be made within the Plan period for 13,000 homes. The majority of housing will be directed to existing towns with the remainder provided within villages.
- 4.5 Policy SP5 Countryside and Green Belt
- 4.6 This policy relates to the countryside and Green Belt. The policy says that the Council will 'operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies'

4.7 Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability

4.8 This policy states that the Council will support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

4.9 Policy SP13 Historic Environment

4.10 This policy states that the Council will consider the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset and that great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting.

4.11 Policy CGB1 Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt

4.12 This policy seeks to control development within rural areas beyond the Green Belt. It says that in such areas 'planning permission will be granted provided that the development:

- a) Is infilling development which does not extend the built core of a Category B village;
- b) Meets a proven local need for community facilities, services or affordable housing in an appropriate location;
- c) Is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- d) Relates to an existing rural building;
- e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or,
- f) Would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area'

4.13 Policy CGB4 Existing buildings in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt

4.14 Policy CGB4 relates to existing buildings in the rural area beyond the Green Belt and states that planning permission for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that:

- Any existing building to be converted for re-use does not require major extension or reconstruction;
- The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and,
- Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them.

4.15 Policy D1 – Sustainable design

4.16 This policy requires development proposals to respond positively to a site's local context, have regard to the Design SPD and meet or exceed nationally described space standards.

4.17 Policy D3 – Protecting Living conditions

4.18 This policy says that unacceptable harm to living conditions should not be caused by development proposals. Where living conditions would be affected by a proposed development, mitigation measures will be required.

4.19 Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (BNNP)

4.20 The Plan has passed the Examination stage and a Referendum is due to be held on 1st May 2025. As the Plan is at an advanced stage the Council should regard it as a material consideration although full weight cannot be attributed to it until the Plan is Made.

4.21 Neighbourhood Plan Policies that may be relevant include:

Policy BN H2: Design & Layout

Policy BN H3: Sustainable Construction

Policy BN T5: Vehicle Parking in Residential Development

4.22 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

4.23 The following chapters of the NPPF are of particular relevance to this proposal:

- Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.24 In respect of applications for housing, given the current lack of a five year land supply in North Hertfordshire the tilted balance under Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF is engaged. This means granting planning 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.’

5.0 Planning Assessment

5.1 Principle of Development

5.2 The site is located within a rural area beyond the Green Belt. Policy SP5 states that the Council will ‘operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies’

5.3 The proposal relates to the redevelopment of an existing rural building which is proposed to be demolished and cleared to facilitate the development of 1 no. dwelling. This form of development is therefore supported in principle, by Policy CGB1(d).

5.4 Policy CGB4 also applies to this development. The Policy states:

a) Planning permission for the re use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt will be granted provided that:

b) Any existing building to be converted for re use does not require major extension or reconstruction;

c) The resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s); and

d) Any outbuilding(s) are sited as close as possible to the main building(s) and visually subordinate to them

5.5 The proposed development relates to criteria c). To comply with this criteria it is necessary to compare the existing development with that proposed in terms of height and floorspace.

- 5.6 The existing buildings on site range between 2.2m and 3.0 metres in height and have a total footprint of approximately 120 sq. metres. The footprint of the proposed dwelling would be approximately 105 sq. metres and the dwelling would be 3.82 metres in height. As such there would be a limited increase in height of just over 800mm but a significant decrease in footprint of buildings on site. There would also be less spread of buildings across the site. It is therefore concluded that the proposed resultant building would not have any materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original buildings.
- 5.7 In conclusion the proposal complies with the relevant detailed LP policies for assessing development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt i.e. Policies CGB1 d) and CGB4 c).
- 5.8 Design and Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- 5.9 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that respond positively to the sites local context and create or enhance the public realm. Policy SP9 of the Local Plan further considers that new development will be supported where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.
- 5.10 The proposal would result in the removal of an unattractive and poorly maintained storage barn and stable block and the removal of associated outdoor storage of equipment. There would be an immediate benefit to the appearance of the site through the removal of the existing development particularly as the existing buildings are visible from Burrs Lane and the adjacent public footpaths.
- 5.11 The bungalow would be generally consistent with the pattern and scale of development in Burrs Lane to the west. The low ridge height ensures that the dwelling sits comfortably within the landscape and the gabled roof with projecting gables would be in common with the design of several of the Burrs Lane dwellings.
- 5.12 The proposed dwelling has been sensitively designed with external materials that are in keeping with this edge of settlement rural location (such as timber weatherboard and slate roof tiles).
- 5.13 In terms of landscaping existing trees within and around the site boundaries will be retained. If deemed necessary conditions could be attached to control new landscaping around the site and the type of boundary fencing to ensure that the development integrates with the rural character .
- 5.14 The development will therefore enhance the setting of the site and maintain the rural character of this eastern end of the lane. The proposed development is therefore considered to respond positively to local context, in accordance with Policies SP9 and D1 of the Local Plan.

5.15 Heritage impact

- 5.16 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires that where proposals have the potential to affect a heritage asset, the significance of that asset should be described including any contribution made by their setting, with the level of detail proportionate to the asset's importance. The Barkway Conservation Area is designated asset potentially affected with this proposal.
- 5.17 The site is not located within the Barkway Conservation Area although it is within 60 metres or so of the nearest part of the CA to the north west. This eastern side of the High Street is dominated by linear development along the main road comprising of residential buildings with gardens and paddock land behind. The proposed site would retain the menage / paddock to the north consistent with this pattern.
- 5.18 The nearest listed buildings are located along the High Street – The Limes, 77 High Street and The Retreat – all Grade II listed. These assets are all approximately 100 metres or more away from the application site with their curtilages limited by surrounding development and there is modern development in the form of bungalows along Burrs Lane between the application site and these historic buildings.
- 5.19 It is considered that the proposed development will not result in any change to the character or significance of the Barkway Conservation Area or the above mentioned listed buildings. The development site is partly within the context of low density, low rise, modern housing along Burrs Lane where it adjoins open countryside and there is limited, if any relationship with the identified heritage assets. The development would have no material impact on these assets therefore the development will comply with Chapter 16 of the NPPF and Policies SP13 and HE1 of the Local Plan.

5.20 Residential amenity

- 5.21 Policy D1 of the LP requires that proposals for residential development meet or exceed the nationally described space standards whilst having regard to the Council's Design SPD.
- 5.22 The proposed dwelling would provide 90 sqm (measured internally) of accommodation that would exceed the minimum required for a two bedroomed four person property (70 sqm). The dwelling would have ample private amenity space and traffic noise from Burrs Lane is limited given the relatively few properties that are served off it.
- 5.23 The site is separated from the nearest residential properties by Burrs Lane and highway verge and paddock land. The residential use of the site would be compatible with the nearby residential properties. Any environmental issues arising from construction activities could be controlled by conditions. It is considered that the proposals are unlikely to have any adverse impact on neighbouring properties in accordance with Policies D1 and D3 of the Local Plan.

5.24 Contamination

- 5.25 The site has an historical equestrian use and therefore is unlikely to contain any contaminants that would present a particular barrier to redevelopment. If necessary a condition may be attached to require the submission of an investigative risk assessment should any contamination be found during construction.

5.26 Access and parking

- 5.27 The development will utilise the existing vehicular access off Burrs Lane and no significant changes to the access point are envisaged. The proposed hardstanding will be of a sufficient size to allow vehicles to turn around within the site and leave in forward gear. Parking for least two cars can easily be accommodated within the site. This level of parking provision would accord with the Council's Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD and Policy BN T5 of the Barkway and Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan. Refuse and waste recycling containers can be discreetly stored within the site and brought to the roadside on collection days.
- 5.28 Burrs Lane is an adopted highway and provides access to several properties along it as well as serving properties off Highfield Grove to the south. Traffic generated by the new dwelling is likely to be very low and offset by the removal of the equestrian buildings and any traffic associated with that existing use. The sustainable location of the development close to village facilities is likely to encourage alternative forms of movement such as cycling and walking.

5.29 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 5.30 The applicant has commissioned a report by Hawthorn Ecology to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment in connection with the proposed development. The findings of the report are as follows:
- The site comprises two stable buildings with hardstanding and grassland
 - The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations
 - The current biodiversity value of the site was calculated as 0.14 habitat area units
 - The value of the proposed landscaping proposals is predicted to be 0.19 habitat area units
 - Overall, across the planned development there is a net gain of 0.05 habitat area units resulting in a net percentage change of +38.66% for habitat units

- 5.31 It has therefore been demonstrated that the development will result in at least a 10% biodiversity net gain arising from the development. The BNG report sets out a number of site management recommendations. It is considered the development could be the subject of a planning condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in the BNG report.
- 5.32 Sustainability
- 5.33 A separate Sustainability Statement is submitted setting out the energy and carbon reducing features of the proposal in accordance with the Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 5.34 The application site is just a few minutes walk from the centre of the village. There are number of facilities that can be reached on foot from the site. These facilities include Barkway First and pre-school, the Tally Ho pub, Barkway Service station, Walsh's garage, the village hall and recreation ground. The nearest surgery is in Barley which can be reached by bus service or a short drive.
- 5.35 The NPPF sets out three objectives necessary to achieve sustainable development. In terms of the economic objective there would be economic benefit through the construction of the proposed dwelling and the contribution to the local economy through the likely expenditure by new residents in the village and local area. The social objective would be achieved by the provision of an additional dwelling assisting in local housing supply and to help maintain local services e.g. the school. The environmental objective would be achieved through the delivery of a low carbon and energy efficient dwelling in addition to Bio-diversity net gain.

6.0 Summary and conclusions

6.1 This statement considers the proposal against the Development Plan and other material considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.2 The proposals is in accordance in particular with Local Plan policies for development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt (Policies CGB1 and CGB4). In addition the development will :

- Not impact on the wider setting of the nearby Conservation Area or listed buildings
- Deliver an additional dwelling to help in meeting local housing need
- Through appropriate design will have no adverse impact on the rural character of the area
- Provide and maintain acceptable living standards for prospective residents
- Not have any unacceptable detrimental impact on the residential amenity of surrounding residents
- Will have no material impact on the adjacent highway or public footpaths.

6.3 It has been demonstrated that the proposal would comply with both national and local planning policy and that overall the development will meet the economic, social and environmental objectives necessary to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

Mike Easton

April 2025