

3/09/0425/RP - Residential development of 65 dwellings with parking and related workings including new site access from Cambridge Road, Sawbridgeworth for Hubert C Leach Homes Ltd

Date of Receipt: 06.04.09

Type: Reserved Matters

Parish: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Ward: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Reason for report: Major application

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:-

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T12)
2. Levels (2E05)
3. Materials of Construction (2E11)
4. Contaminated land survey and remediation (2E33)
4. Carried Out in Accordance (2E92)
5. Completion of Roads (3V13)
6. Hard Surfacing (3V21)
7. Wheel washing facilities (3V25)
8. Tree Retention and Protection (4P05)
9. Hedge Retention and Protection (4P06)
10. Tree/Natural feature protection: fencing (4P07)
11. Landscape design proposals (4P12)
Delete a), b), c), d), e), f), g), h)
12. Landscape Works Implementation (4P13)
13. Details of earthworks/mounding (4P16)
14. Retention of landscaping (4P21)

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15. Vehicular use of garage (5U10)
16. Construction hours of working – plant and machinery (6N07)
17. Prior to the first occupation of the development, double yellow lines between the tee junction and Cambridge Road on the south side of the access road as detailed on drawing no. SAWB/AAA.0010 Rev C shall be provided, and permanently retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent on street parking and obstruction of the access road in accordance with policy TR7 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

18. In accordance with a timetable to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the area of land at the eastern boundary of the site shown as open space on plan ref SAWB/AAA/0010 Rev. C shall be made available for use by the residents of the development, and shall be permanently maintained as open space.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the future occupants of the site in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

19. Prior to the commencement of the development, details of a lighting scheme for all communal areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and thereafter implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Reason: To ensure that all publicly accessible areas are appropriately lit to provide a safe and secure environment, in accordance with policy ENV3 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

Directives

1. Other Legislation (01OL)
2. Highway Works (05FC)
3. Outline permission relationship (07OP)
Insert '24 November 2008' '3/07/1569/OP'
4. Street Naming and Numbering (19SN)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular SD1, SD2, HSG2, HSG3, HSG4, HSG6, TR1, TR2, TR3, TR7, TR14, ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV11, ENV21, LRC3, SA1, SA2, SA4 and IMP1. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the grant of outline planning permission in November 2008 (ref. 3/07/1569/OP) is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract, and is located on the north-western edge of the settlement of Sawbridgeworth, to the south of Leventhorpe School. The site has an area of 1.67 hectares and is bounded to the south by a public footpath, and partly by the residential properties in Walnut Tree Avenue, and the pitches of Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club. To the west and north of the site are the playing fields and buildings of Leventhorpe School. The site is accessed from Cambridge Road.
- 1.2 This application seeks reserved matters approval for the erection of 65 dwellings on the site, of which 26 dwellings are proposed to be affordable. The application proposes 5 1-bed units, 15 2-bed units, 34 3-bed units, 4 4-bed units and 7 5-bed units, in a mix of apartments, terrace, semi-detached and detached dwellings. The dwellings are proposed to be two storey and two and a half storey (accommodation provided within the roof space) in height. At the eastern boundary of the site an area of open space is proposed of approximately 990 square metres in size. Access to the site is proposed to be provided via a new junction onto Cambridge Road (as agreed through the grant of outline permission in November 2008 ref. 3/07/1569/OP). This access will replace the existing access to the adjacent swimming pool from Cambridge Road, and access to the swimming pool and its car park are proposed to be provided through the application site.
- 1.3 The site's southern boundary is currently well landscaped with mature planting varying between approximately 5 and 10 metres in height. This landscaped area is proposed to be retained. Along the boundary of the site with Cambridge Road there are a number of existing trees. Apart from those which are required to be removed to allow for the

construction of the new access, it is proposed to retain these trees. The ground levels within the site do vary, and the site slopes down towards Cambridge Road from the west. It is proposed that some levelling of the site will occur, however development will take account of the current gradient of the site. At the eastern end of the site there are a number of mounds/undulations which were formed many years ago as a result of spoil produced during construction undertaken at the adjacent school. This area is currently grassed, however it is proposed that this area be partially re-contoured to provide for an area of open space.

- 1.4 The site is currently used in association with the Leventhorpe School. However, it is allocated in the Local Plan as a Housing Site Allocation (policy SA2), and outline planning permission was granted in November 2008 for residential development on the site (ref. 3/07/1569/OP).

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The application site forms part of the larger Cambridge Road/Crofters site which was allocated in the Local Plan Review adopted in April 2007, as a Housing Site Allocation (policy SA2). The policy states that the site is identified for residential purposes, together with leisure, recreation and community facilities (although the preamble to the policy states that some of these latter facilities may be able to be accommodated within the remainder of the Leventhorpe School site); that the development should make provision for up to 40% affordable housing and that the development of the site should not proceed until appropriate replacement sports pitch provision has been made.
- 2.2 An application for outline planning permission for a new school sports hall, classroom building, all weather pitch, replacement tennis courts, extended hard play area, car parking and access works, plus residential development and related works including a new/amended site access from Cambridge Road was received in July 2007 (ref. 3/07/1569/OP). This application did not include the Crofters site which forms part of the overall policy SA2 housing site allocation, as there were various landowner issues which precluded this part of the site being brought forward for development at this time. In determining this 2007 application it was considered that the policy did not require both parts of the site to be brought forward for development at the same time. The Development Control Committee resolved to grant planning permission for the residential development of this land at a meeting on 17 October 2007, and planning permission was granted following the completion of a S106 agreement in November 2008. This outline application considered only the detailed matter of the proposed access to the site. Therefore, in

approving the outline application the vehicular access to the site from Cambridge Road has been agreed.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 Thames Water comment that the details submitted with the application demonstrate that the foul and surface water sewage from the site can be controlled and managed in a way that is acceptable to Thames Water, and therefore have no further comments to add.
- 3.2 Sport England comment that their concerns about the impact of the housing development on the school's playing field have been addressed through the outline planning permission and because the current application relates only to the reserved matters for the residential development they have no further comments to make on this application.
- 3.3 The County Architectural Liaison Officer has raised some concerns with the application. They comment that it is noted with regret that the issues of crime and disorder are not considered in the Design and Access Statement; they are concerned with the layout of some of the car parking within the site, some of which lack natural surveillance; they are concerned with the proposed under-croft features which can become areas of conflict and anti-social behaviour; they are concerned that some elevations which have windowless gable ends which limits natural surveillance; they are concerned at the proximity of the development to the school due to issues of privacy and arson and they comment that the footpath that bounds the southern edge of the site will require careful management to ensure that it is not to become a crime driver.
- 3.4 Planning Obligations, HCC have commented a S106 agreement was completed for an outline application on this site and as the County Council's contributions were based on per dwelling figures they have no further comments to make.
- 3.5 The County Development Unit, HCC comment that regard should be had to the policies of the Waste Local Plan 1999 in determining the application.
- 3.6 The Historic Environment Unit, HCC comment that there is a reasonable likelihood that significant archaeological remains are present on the site and they recommend that a suitably worded condition is attached to any grant of permission which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prior to the commencement of any development on the site.

- 3.7 The Environment Agency comment that they object to the grant of planning permission and recommend refusal as the FRA submitted with the application does not comply with the requirements as set out in PPS25. In particular they comment that the submitted FRA fails to demonstrate that the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems has been maximised across the site. They also comment that they object to the proposed development as submitted because the information submitted with the application does not demonstrate that the risk of pollution to controlled waters is acceptable.
- 3.8 Environmental Health comment that any grant of permission shall include conditions relating to the submission of a noise assessment; construction hours of working; dust, bonfires, soil decontamination and refuse disposal facilities.
- 3.9 The Council's Landscape Officer has commented that they recommend refusal of the application. They comment that the basic concept for the proposal is okay, but the layout shows indicators of overdevelopment. They state that the size of the gardens (in particular the front gardens) are de minimus; there is visual dominance by road and parking provision especially in the south western end of the site; there is a deficiency in useable amenity space provision and tree planting; the space provided between the development and the school buildings is pokey; and that the proposals could be much improved by a reduction in plot numbers, and hence the number of parking provision required, which would enable better landscape/amenity space provision.
- 3.10 The Council's Housing Development Manager has commented that the proposal meets the requirements stated in the S106 agreement relating to the outline planning permission, however they are disappointed that they have chosen to place all the affordable housing in one place which is contrary to the Council's policy of scattering the accommodation throughout the project.
- 3.11 County Highways comment that they do not wish to restrict the grant of permission. They state that in a highways context this submission is in line with the considerable pre-application discussions and consultations that led to the outline approval. The form of the junction is appropriate to the number of dwellings now being pursued and the additional traffic generation will not be significant in terms of impact upon the existing traffic generation in and through Sawbridgeworth. Car parking provision is proposed at a ratio of just over 2 spaces per dwelling which they comment is an appropriate level to ensure that car parking will be contained within the site and not extend onto Cambridge Road.

4.0 Town/Parish Council Representations

4.1 Sawbridgeworth Town Council have no objections to the style of house proposed but draw the Council's attention to the following concerns:

- It is felt as many trees as possible need to be retained around the proposed ingress/egress;
- That to help with the very heavy peak time traffic control a wider banding of traffic management is required by the introduction of traffic lights.

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 Four letters of representation have been received from residents of Walnut Tree Avenue and Cambridge Road which can be summarised as follows:-

- Overdevelopment of the site;
- This application proposes an increase in the number of dwellings proposed by 30% more than the outline;
- Looking at the proposed development in comparison with surrounding houses, it is obvious that as many houses as possible have been squeezed into as small a space as possible, with minute gardens. This is out of keeping with the rest of the area;
- All utilities in the area are overworked;
- The proposed development does not appear to have account for the current problems with insufficient drainage causing flooding outside the existing entrance and also water flooding off the fields down the footpath;
- How will the local schools and doctors cope with the increase in residents from the development?;
- The development would result in 130 cars trying to get onto Cambridge Road and would result in an increase in traffic along Cambridge Road;
- Cars will be trying to get out of the site at the same time as the school run is trying to drop children off at the school;
- The additional fumes generated by the queues of stationary cars will be an increased health hazard and will directly affect pupils at the school;

- The noise of the additional traffic would impact heavily on an already noisy area;
- The construction traffic associated with the development would be a danger to children;
- Parking along Cambridge Road is already difficult and is likely to become worse if people on the proposed development do not have adequate parking provision;
- Residents of Walnut Tree Avenue would be forced to live near and listen to a densely populated area with the proposed road running along the back of their gardens;
- The development would mean that the residents of Walnut Tree Avenue would no longer have clear views of fields, and would be overlooked by the development and lose the seclusions that originally attracted people to those properties;
- Building work would be noisy and would impact upon local residents, and the hours of construction working should be restricted;
- Loss of the open area for the school;
- Impact upon local wildlife

5.3 Councillor N Clark has expressed concern that the proposed development will generate significant traffic joining Cambridge Road at peak times without any controls and that the location of the bus stop is likely to cause more congestion.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant Local Plan policies in this application include the following:-

SD1	Making Development More Sustainable
SD2	Settlement Hierarchy
HSG2	Phased Release of Housing Land
HSG3	Affordable Housing
HSG4	Affordable Housing Criteria
HSG6	Lifetime Homes
TR1	Traffic Reduction in New Development
TR2	Access to New Developments
TR3	Transport Assessments
TR7	Car Parking – Standards
TR14	Cycling – Facilities Provision (Residential)
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV3	Planning Out Crime – New Development
ENV11	Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees

LRC3	Recreational Requirements in New Residential Developments
SA1	Housing Allocations – Sawbridgeworth
SA2	Cambridge Road/Crofters Site
SA4	Sports Pitch Provision
IMP1	Planning Conditions and Obligations

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The principle of residential development on this site has been established by the allocation of the site as a Housing Site Allocation in the Local Plan, and the grant of outline permission in November 2008. In considering this application therefore, it is necessary only to consider the detailed aspects of the proposed development including the following:

- Density of development and site layout;
- Design;
- Landscaping;
- Impact on amenities of local residents;
- Provision of affordable housing;
- Access/Traffic/Parking.

Amount of development and layout

7.2 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of 65 dwellings on the site, which would be at a density of 38.9 dwellings per hectare. PPS3 states that using land efficiently is a key consideration in planning for housing, and Members will be aware that PPS3 comments that 30 dwellings per hectare should be used as a national indicative minimum to guide decision-making. The Housing Capacity Assessment October 2007 has indicated that a density of 40 dwellings per hectare can be achieved on housing developments across the District. Officers are therefore satisfied that the density of the development proposed is appropriate to the general policy considerations regarding making efficient use of land.

7.3 Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan states that all development proposals will be expected to be of a high standard of design and layout and to reflect local distinctiveness. The existing residential development to the east and south of the site is of varying densities, designs and layouts, although there is no predominant character, pattern or layout that the proposed development should respect. Whilst the density of surrounding developments is much lower than is proposed by this development, this

is very much as a result of the age of surrounding developments, and the more recent consideration of using land more efficiently. Therefore, whilst the density of the proposed development is higher than surrounding developments, Officers do not consider that such a density would be harmful to the character of the surrounding area.

- 7.4 The proposed layout of the development has been designed to maximize the developable area of the site having regard to the constraints imposed by the shape of the site, the proximity to Leventhorpe School and the need to provide vehicular access through to the remainder of the SA2 Housing Site Allocation (to the south of the application site). The layout proposes an area of open space to the front of the site, extending approximately 25 metres into the site from its boundary with Cambridge Road. This area of open space will allow the existing open and landscaped character of the site, when viewed from Cambridge Road, to be retained.
- 7.5 The site layout proposes that the majority of the dwellings will front onto the access road, providing active frontages and a strong presence on the street. This is also advantageous in terms of crime prevention, providing natural surveillance over the street. The layout has also been designed to site dwellings such that they provide a focal point at junctions and to turn corners following the access road. All dwellings are proposed to have an area of private space to the front of the property. The size of this area does vary throughout the site, but in Officer's opinion does provide sufficient space for landscaping which would contribute to the character and appearance of the development, and soften the streetscene. The concerns of the Landscape Officer are noted in respect of the size of the front gardens, however larger front gardens would make less efficient use of land, and in the future may result in pressure for them to be hardsurfaced to reduce maintenance and provide additional parking space. Officers do not consider that the size of the front gardens proposed prejudice the layout of the site or the character and appearance of the proposed development. It is considered that sufficient space has been proposed between the dwellings such that the layout of the site would not appear cramped or congested.
- 7.6 The dwellings are sited such that there are appropriate distances between properties to reduce overlooking, loss of light and unacceptable impacts on the amenities of the future occupiers of them. Whilst the rear amenity space to a very small proportion of the proposed dwellings is limited, in the main the proposed dwellings benefit from reasonable sized rear gardens (approximately 10 metres long). The Council does not have any amenity space standards to control the size of private amenity

space, however Officers are satisfied that the space provided by this development is acceptable, and is comparable to other modern developments elsewhere in the District.

7.7 In general it is considered that the proposed layout of the development is acceptable, would complement the existing grain of development, and would provide an acceptable environment for future occupiers. The development would not appear cramped and sufficient space has been provided for landscaping and an area of open space for the benefit of the future residents of the site. However, concern has been expressed by the Landscape Officer regarding the layout of the development in the south western corner of the site. It is acknowledged that the development in this part of the site is more dense than in other areas, and the proposed layout will result in large areas of hardsurfacing to provide for the access to these properties and the car parking provision. Following receipt of the Landscape Officer's comments the applicant, in attempt to address these concerns, has amended the layout in this part of the site to reduce the amount of hardsurfacing proposed, and increase the extent of soft landscaping. It is considered that the provision of a good quality landscaping scheme in this area and the use of quality hardsurfacing materials would help to improve the appearance of this part of the site. Whilst Officers do share some of the concerns of the Landscape Officer, it is not considered that the layout and appearance of this part of the site would result in significant detriment to the character of the development or the amenities of future occupiers of the properties to warrant refusal of the application.

7.8 The Landscape Officer has also raised concern in relation to the size of the spacing between the school and the development. The distance between the application site and the school buildings is proposed to be approximately 5 metres, and this distance is at the request of the school as part of the contractual arrangements regarding the sale of the land. Officers are satisfied that the proposed distance is sufficient to allow a landscaping strip to be provided by the school if they wished, and to provide an appropriate visual separation between the school and the application site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not appear cramped in relation to the school buildings.

Design

7.9 The dwellings have been designed in their scale and appearance to sit comfortably with the surrounding area, and the two and two and a half storey height is representative of the scale of surrounding developments.

Whilst standard house types have been proposed, in Officer's opinion the design of the proposed dwellings are appropriate to the character of the area, and the proposed palette of materials (brick, weatherboarding, render, tiled roofs) would be representative of those found surrounding the application site, and of the local vernacular style. It is considered therefore that the proposed development would relate well to the massing and height of adjacent residential buildings and the surrounding townscape, and would reflect local distinctiveness. The proposal would therefore accord with policy ENV1 of the Local Plan.

Landscaping

- 7.10 Apart from the eastern and southern boundaries, the application site is devoid of much planting or landscape features. The application does propose to retain the existing trees at the frontage of the site with Cambridge Road, and retain and enhance the existing landscaped southern boundary. Officers are therefore satisfied that in accordance with policy ENV11 of the Local Plan, all existing landscaping features will be retained where appropriate.
- 7.11 Within the application site, it is evident from the proposed layout that an area of open space is proposed at the eastern end of the site, and within the site areas are also proposed for landscaping. It is considered that a good quality hard and soft landscaping scheme would be appropriate on this site, and would ensure that the development would be an attractive and desirable place to live.

Impact on amenities of local residents

- 7.12 The objections received from the residents of Walnut Tree Avenue have raised concern in relation to the impact of the proposed development on their amenities. Clearly the proposed development of the site would result in an impact on the outlook the occupiers of these properties currently benefit from. However, the principle of the development of this site has been established by the allocation of the site in the Local Plan and the grant of outline permission. It is therefore necessary to consider whether the detail of the proposed development would be detrimental to the amenities of nearby properties.
- 7.13 The properties in Walnut Tree Avenue are sited such that their rear gardens are adjacent to the southern boundary of the application site. The properties benefit from generous rear gardens (approximately 20-25 metres long) and the boundary of the application site is defined by substantial landscaping of between approximately 5 and 8 metres high. The front elevations of the south facing dwellings on the application site

are proposed to be between approximately 15-20 metres from the rear boundaries of the properties in Walnut Tree Avenue, with the proposed dwellings being approximately 9 metres height. Taking into account that the distance between the elevations of these properties would be around 35-45 metres, Officers are satisfied that the proposed layout of the development would not result in any unacceptable impact to the amenities of the occupiers of Walnut Tree Avenue.

7.14 Furthermore, Officers understand the concern that has been expressed by the occupiers of these properties in relation to the siting of the access road within the site and the possible noise and disturbance from this road. However, Officers are not satisfied that the level of use of this access road, and the noise and disturbance from its use would result in significant harm to the amenities of the occupiers of the properties in Walnut Tree Avenue. In fact, the siting of the access road and its relationship to other residential properties is not a situation that is uncommon in built-up areas.

7.15 Turning to the relationship of the proposed development to the school, it is acknowledged that any development on this site would result in overlooking of the school buildings. However, it is considered that the proposed layout, and in particular the siting and orientation of the dwellings close to the northern boundary of the site is such that any overlooking of the school buildings would be kept to a minimum. It should be noted that no objection to the development has been received from the school.

Provision of affordable housing

7.16 The application proposes that a total of 26 affordable housing units are provided within the site, which would be 40% of the total development as required by policy HSG3 of the Local Plan. The proposal for affordable housing meets the mix and all other details as set out in the S106 agreement attached to the outline permission.

7.17 The Council's Housing Development Manager has however expressed disappointment that all the affordable housing is proposed to be provided in one place on the site (the south-western corner). The Council's SPD on Affordable Housing and Lifetime Homes does state that to achieve mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities, affordable housing should on all sites be distributed across the site rather than provided in one single parcel. Although it would be beneficial for the affordable housing provision to be spread throughout the site, in many cases this is not desirable for the developer, in terms of deliverability of the affordable

units, particularly in this economic climate, or in some cases the relevant housing association in terms of management issues. Therefore whilst in this instance it would have been beneficial, due to the number of affordable units involved and the relative size of the development, Officers consider that the location of all affordable units in one location on this site would not significantly harm the creation of a mixed and inclusive community such that would warrant refusal of the application. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are examples elsewhere in the District where this integration has also not been achieved.

Access/Traffic/Parking

- 7.18 The proposed access to the site from Cambridge Road was agreed by the approval of outline permission for development on this site. Therefore the issue of the proposed access, its siting and form does not need to be considered in relation to this application.
- 7.19 Local residents have raised concern however in relation to the additional traffic generated by the development and its impact on the already congested Cambridge Road. The Transport Assessment that was submitted with the outline application concluded that the proposed developments (the residential site and the sports hall, etc. at Leventhorpe School) would not generate a requirement for improvements to any off-site links or junctions on the local road network. The Assessment demonstrated that the improved and existing junctions and local infrastructure could readily accommodate both developments, and also the additional development on the remainder of the SA2 site (Crofters) if this were to come forward in the future. County Highways have commented that the number of dwellings being sought through this application and the additional traffic generation would not be significant in terms of impact upon the existing traffic generation in and through Sawbridgeworth. It should also be noted that in considering the allocation of this site for residential development in the Local Plan the Inspector commented that planning has a key role in reducing car use through allocations of development land in locations that encourage reduction in car use. They stated that this site is within walking and cycling distance of the town centre, and there is access to the public transport system. They concluded that this site would be a good option for development in those respects, when compared to other sites. Having considered the issue of traffic and access to the site, the Inspector therefore felt that it was appropriate in this case for the site to be allocated for residential purposes.

7.20 Turning now to the issue of parking, the application proposes a total number of 134 parking spaces, provided by a variety of off-street spaces, garages and visitor spaces throughout the site. Having regard to the number and size of dwellings proposed and the Council's adopted car parking standards, the maximum number of spaces required in accordance with the adopted standards would be approximately 138 spaces. The proposed number of parking spaces is therefore only four short of the maximum standards, and having regard to the sustainable location of this site, close to public transport, pedestrian links and local services it is considered that the level of parking proposed is acceptable. Officers are therefore satisfied, in accordance also with the comments of County Highways, that the proposed parking is of an appropriate level to ensure that car parking will be contained within the site and not extend onto Cambridge Road.

Archaeology

7.21 The Historic Environment Unit, HCC have recommended that a condition be attached to any grant of permission requiring a scheme of archaeological works to be undertaken prior to the commencement of the development. Such a condition was attached to the grant of the outline permission, and the impact of the development of this site on possible archaeological remains was considered. It is therefore not necessary to add a further condition to any approval of reserved matters.

County Architectural Liaison Officer

7.22 The comments of the County Architectural Liaison Officer have been noted, and following the receipt of their comments the applicant met with the Liaison Officer. In response to the Liaison Officer's concerns the applicant has commented that whilst the Liaison Officer's preference would be for frontage parking in the south-western corner of the site, the parking has been located to the rear to improve the streetscene and reduce the amount of hardstanding. Whilst Officers understand the concerns of the Police, the issue of crime prevention has to be balanced with the visual appearance of the proposed development. In Officers opinion, if all parking areas were to be provided to the front of the proposed dwellings, the visual appearance of the site would be compromised, and in some cases the outlook of the future occupants of the site would be significantly harmed. Taking the above considerations into account and that these areas do benefit from some natural surveillance; the applicant has indicated that they will put in place good quality lighting; collapsible bollards for allocated spaces; the inclusion of parking spaces within gardens where possible and a 1.8 m high security

type fence along the south western boundaries of the site, Officers are satisfied that the proposed layout of the development in this area of the site would not result in levels of anti-social behaviour that would warrant refusal of the application.

- 7.23 Turning to the issue of the proposed undercrofts, the applicant has commented that there are three undercrofts on the site which are road width wide. This will limit the potential space for youths to congregate under them which was a concern expressed by the Liaison Officer. The applicant has also advised that they will look into the use of anti-graffiti wall finishes to reduce the risk of vandalism.
- 7.24 Finally looking at the southern boundary of the site, the applicant has agreed to make this boundary adjoining the public footpath as secure as possible and intend to permanently fill any existing gaps as well as increase the height of the existing hedge which is under their jurisdiction.
- 7.25 Having regard to the above considerations, and the attempts of the applicant to overcome the concerns of the Liaison Officer, Officers are satisfied that the design and layout of the proposed development has attempted to reduce the opportunity for crime. Whilst there is some concern at the layout and design of some parts of the site, the opportunity for crime in these areas is not of a level of concern that would warrant refusal of the application. Accordingly it is considered that the application would accord with policy ENV3 of the Local Plan.

Environment Agency

- 7.26 As Members will read in section 3 of this report, the Environment Agency have objected to the proposed development. However, their objection is based on technical matters and not the principle of development of the site. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Environment Agency raised no objection to the outline permission which was granted. The applicant and their technical advisors are however currently discussing the outstanding issues with the Environment Agency, and hope to have some resolution on the matters by the Committee meeting. Any update on this matter will be reported verbally to the meeting. However, having regard to the technical nature of the objection, Officers are satisfied that this should not form a reason for refusal of this application, and that the outstanding matters in respect of the drainage of the site would in any event be dealt with under condition 6 of the outline permission which requires a drainage strategy detailing on/off site drainage works to be submitted to and approved in writing prior to the commencement of the development on the site.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having regard to the above considerations, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, and would provide an appropriate residential development which has regard to the character and appearance of the local area, and would not result in any significant detrimental impacts on the amenities of local residents or highway safety. Accordingly it is recommended that approval is given to the reserved matters.

