

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT – 9 Nov 2016

Application Number	3/16/1918/REM
Proposal	Application for approval of reserved matters for 3/14/1627/OP for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of 24 houses and provision of public open space, landscaping, parking and associated works
Location	Land east of Cambridge Road, Puckeridge
Applicant	Mears New Homes
Parish	Standon
Ward	Puckeridge

Date of Registration of Application	25 August 2016
Target Determination Date	24 November 2016
Reason for Committee Report	Major planning application
Case Officer	Martin Plummer

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the Reserved Matters, subject to the conditions set out at the end of this report.

1.0 Summary

1.1 The grant of outline planning permission at appeal has established the principle of residential development and vehicular access onto this site. The application seeks permission for all other reserved matters including layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. The design proposals in relation to these matters are acceptable and the development is considered to be appropriate in terms of its impact on the immediate and wider setting.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract and forms a parcel of land around 1.9ha in size which is located to the west/south-west of the village of Puckeridge. The site is located to the east of Cambridge Road and forms a long narrow strip with Cambridge Road forming the western boundary of the site and the Puckeridge Tributary forming the eastern boundary. To the south of the application site is a small cluster of dwellings and flats known as Shenley and, beyond that, the A120. To the north of the site is the main settlement of Puckeridge.

- 2.2 There is a hedge/landscaped boundary to the western boundary and, internally the site is generally open and forms agricultural land, although it is not currently used for agriculture or any other purpose.

3.0 Background to Proposal

- 3.1 Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for access, was granted at appeal under LPA reference 3/14/1627/OP. A unilateral undertaking made under s.106 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended) was agreed by the Planning Inspector as part of that approved planning application. The unilateral undertaking included requirements for the developer to provide 40% affordable housing, financial contributions relating to a range of infrastructure including education, outdoor sports play, healthcare and a local area for play within the development site.
- 3.2 The current application seeks planning permission for the remaining reserved matters, those being: layout; scale; appearance and; landscaping. Various plans and supporting information have been submitted in respect of those reserved matters.
- 3.3 The development, as proposed, incorporates the erection of 24 dwellings with a layout and access arrangements that are broadly similar to the indicative plans submitted with the outline planning application. The proposed layout includes a single central vehicle access onto Cambridge road with two pedestrian accesses to the north and south of the plot also onto Cambridge Road. The access leads to a cul-de-sac type arrangement of dwellings of 2 and 2 ½ storey dwellings including detached and semi-detached dwellings fronting the access road. Similar to the indicative layout plans submitted with the outline application, an area of open space with a pedestrian route through it is shown to the south west and north of the proposed dwellings with a local area for play shown to the north of the site.
- 3.4 In terms of housing mix, the development includes the provision of 5no 2 bed dwellings; 9no 3 bed dwellings; 4no 4 bed dwellings and 6no 5 bed dwellings. 10 dwellings (comprising of 5no 2 bed dwellings and 5no 3 bed dwellings) are shown to be affordable units (thus providing 41.7% affordable dwellings) and are provided within the southern and south western part of the site.
- 3.5 In terms of landscape design proposals, a detailed landscape plan is provided showing retention of the existing hedge / landscape feature along Cambridge Road (outside the individual house gardens), and the

provision of new landscape features, including trees and hedgerow within the open space to the east of the proposed dwellings.

4.0 Key Policy Issues

4.1 These relate to the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the adopted East Herts Local Plan 2007 and the emerging District Plan:

Key Issue	NPPF	Local Plan policy	Pre-submission District Plan policy
Whether the mix and density of development is appropriate to the context of the site	Section 7		HOU1, HOU2
Whether the development provides an appropriate layout, scale and appearance	Section 7	ENV1, ENV3	DES3, DES4
Whether landscape design proposals are acceptable	Section 7	ENV2, ENV11	DES1, DES2
Parking provision		TR7	TRA3

Other relevant issues are referred to in the 'Consideration of Relevant Issues' section below.

5.0 Emerging District Plan

5.1 The Council resolved to proceed to the publication of its pre-submission version of the District Plan at the meeting of Council of 22 Sept 2016. By the date of this meeting the Plan will have been published for consultation. The view of the Council is that the Plan has been positively prepared, seeking to ensure significantly increased housing development during the plan period. The weight that can be assigned to the policies in the emerging plan can now be increased, given it has reached a further stage in preparation. There does remain a need to qualify that weight somewhat, given that consultation on the Plan is now taking place and the outcome of that is currently unknown.

6.0 Summary of Consultee Responses

6.1 HCC Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission subject to a planning condition relating to a construction management plan. It comments that the principle of access arrangements have previously been established through the grant of

outline planning permission which included permission for the access arrangements. The internal road layout is considered to be acceptable.

- 6.2 Lead Local Flood Authority has no comments to make in respect of this application. It comments that details of surface water drainage (required as a planning condition as part of the outline permission) should be approved to ensure delivery of an efficient drainage strategy.
- 6.3 Environment Agency comments that the details provided do not materially impact on previous advice offered in respect of the outline planning permission.
- 6.4 EHDC Landscape Advisor recommends that planning permission be granted. The development is non-contentious in landscape terms.
- 6.5 EHDC Environmental Health Advisor recommends a planning condition, relating to the provision of a contaminated land survey and remediation, be attached with the grant of permission.
- 6.6 EHDC Environmental Services request that appropriate space be provided for 3 x 240 litre wheel bins for each unit. Appropriate space for movement and placement of bins for collection should be provided.
- 6.7 Affinity Water comment that the site is located within groundwater protection zone of Standon Pumping Station and the proposed development should be undertaken in accordance with the relevant British Standard to reduce the risk to groundwater pollution.
- 6.8 Natural England has no comment to make on the application.

7.0 Parish Council Representations

- 7.1 Standon Parish Council object to the development for the following reasons:-
- The development does not maximise opportunities for landscaping along the Puckeridge tributary to the east of the site;
 - The development will result in loss and harm to the landscape features and hedge to the western boundary with Cambridge Road;
 - A detailed surface water drainage strategy should be required prior to any further work;
 - Financial contributions should be secured to improve the access arrangements between Cambridge Road and the A120.

8.0 Summary of Other Representations

- 8.1 One representation in objection has been received, raising concern in respect of the loss of landscaping to create the access; inadequate levels of parking provision and an inappropriate mix of housing which does not reflect local need.

9.0 Planning History

- 9.1 The following planning history is of relevance to this proposal:-

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
3/14/1627/OP	Outline application including details of access for up to 24 residential dwellings and provision of public open space, landscaping, parking and associated works.	Refused / allowed at appeal	21.09.2015

10.0 Consideration of Relevant Issues

Mix and density

- 10.1 As noted in section 3 above, the development provides a mixture of housing types and sizes, including mainly 2/3 bed dwellings and slightly less 4/5 bed dwellings. The development has a density of 23 dwelling per hectare.
- 10.2 A third party representation raises concern with the mixture of dwellings and comments that smaller starter dwellings are required and that too many larger dwellings are provided which is at odds with the survey information undertaken as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.3 The current Development Plan (East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007) contains no specific policy criteria relating to density or the mixture of housing sizes/types. The pre-submission District Plan however sets out a new policy approach, and emerging policy HOU1 identifies that an appropriate mix of housing tenures, types and sizes will be expected, taking account of most up to date evidence. Emerging policy HOU2 sets out that development should demonstrate how the density of the development has been informed by the character of the local area.

- 10.4 This is a new policy position within the emerging District Plan and therefore the weight that can be attached to it must be considered (as set out in section 5.0 above). Given that it is based on new and up to date evidence contained in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and that it was the subject of public consultation at the Preferred Options stage of the District Plan, Officers consider that it can be afforded some moderate weight.
- 10.5 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies a clear need for affordable housing in the district, with the majority of the need for two and three bed dwellings.
- 10.6 Standon Parish Council have undertaken a survey (September 2015) as part of their preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. A summary of that survey identifies that there is no clear preference for housing format so a wide range of housing types is identified with demand for smaller units and fewer flats/maisonettes. The survey indicates a feeling in the community that one third of new dwellings should be affordable.
- 10.7 The proposed development provides for 40% affordable dwellings (of 2 and 3 bedrooms and a mix of tenure) with no flats or maisonettes. It also provides for a range of open market house types, with approximately 58% of the total dwellings on the site being either 2 or 3 bedroom properties. Officers consider that the mix proposed reflects the findings in the Parish Survey, and is in accordance with emerging policy and latest evidence relating to this matter.
- 10.8 With regard to density matters the applicant has not provided detailed information of how the density of the development has been reached. However, Officers consider that the relatively low density of 23dph and the generous amenity space to the east of the site is appropriate to the rural character of this site and its juxtaposition with development to the north which comprises of the existing village settlement where there is a mixed grain and density of built form.
- 10.9 In accordance with the above considerations, the proposed density and housing mix is considered to be acceptable.

Layout

- 10.10 The layout proposed follows the same parameters and general design as shown on the indicative drawings submitted with the outline application. In considering the appeal relating to the outline application

the Planning Inspector considered that the green frontage with Cambridge Road is the defining characteristic of the site and retention of this feature would assist in retaining the verdant edge along Cambridge Road and reduce the impact of the dwellings.

- 10.11 The proposed development includes the provision of dwellings with gardens which 'back-on' to the Cambridge Road boundary, but allowing the retention of the existing landscape feature / hedge outside those gardens and along Cambridge Road. Such a design approach follows the comments from the Planning Inspector and reduces the impact of the development from that street.
- 10.12 Internally, the development follows the shape of the site with dwellings fronting onto a central access road which runs along an approximate north-south axis. Such a design allows for appropriate spacing around the front, side and rear of dwellings and appropriately sized garden spaces commensurate with the size of the dwellings. A turning head for refuse and emergency vehicles is provided to the north and south and a small cluster of dwellings is proposed to the south of the site with gardens backing onto the southern boundary with the dwelling known as Shenley. This neighbouring property is the closest to the proposed dwellings which will be impacted by the development and an appropriate relationship and distance (approximately 25 metres) is proposed which, together with retention of landscape features, will ensure that there is no significant harm to the living conditions of that neighbour.
- 10.13 The road layout and overall spacing and relationship between the proposed dwellings is acceptable which, together with the generous open space to the east and north of the development will ensure that the development assimilates into the setting without resulting in significant harm to the setting. The development is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan policy ENV1. Emerging policy DES3 seeks to establish a high standard of design and layout and sets out some specific objectives which are broadly similar to current policy ENV1 of the Local Plan and section 7 of the NPPF – accordingly, some modest weight may also be attached to that policy. For the reasons outlined above, the development is not considered to result in any conflict with that emerging policy.

Scale and appearance

- 10.14 The proposed development incorporates the provision of predominantly two storey dwellings with some dwellings with accommodation (dormer windows) within the roof scape. The predominant character of

development to the north within the main village of Puckeridge is two storey dwellings. To the south, along Cambridge Road there is some flatted three storey development. The dwellings themselves are of mixed footprint and differing shapes and layout. However, having regard to the mixed shape and volume of development to the north, the proposed scale of the proposed dwellings is considered to be acceptable.

- 10.15 With regard to detailed design matters, the applicant sets out in the Design and Access Statement how they have sought to take reference from the architectural treatment of other dwellings in the surroundings in terms of the form and materials of construction of dwellings. The development includes a mixture of traditional architectural treatment including gables, pitched roofs and dormer windows which, in Officers opinion, is appropriate to the local context. A detailed material schedule is submitted in the proposed plans which is similarly considered to be appropriate to the site and surroundings. A planning condition is recommended requiring that those materials are used.

Landscaping

- 10.16 The Parish Council raise concern in respect of the potential impact on the boundary hedge with Cambridge Road and the inadequacy of the proposed design in terms of the relationship with the Puckeridge Tributary which is located to the east of the site.
- 10.17 No such concerns are raised by the Councils Landscape Officer and it is considered that the development is located an appropriate distance from the landscape features to the west of the plot and adjacent to Cambridge Road which are proposed to be retained. The development incorporates an appropriate mixture of planting, including native hedge to the eastern boundary with the open space. The overall landscape strategy sees retention of landscape features where appropriate and the provision of an appropriate mix and design of soft landscape features.
- 10.18 With regard to hard landscape features, the plans submitted show appropriate design for hard surfacing, which incorporates provision of differing hard surface materials to demarcate the different spaces (e.g access road and parking areas) and the plans submitted show appropriate height and design of boundary treatment between the dwellings and in relationship with open spaces / retained landscape features.

- 10.19 The plans show retention of the landscape features to the western boundary (albeit with their height reduced) and the plans show that trees and landscape features on the southern boundary are located outside the application site. Those landscape features are considered to be important to the setting of the site and surroundings and help to soften the impact of the development, it is therefore necessary and reasonable to attach a planning condition requiring retention and protection of existing trees and landscape features on the site.

Parking and highway access arrangements

- 10.20 In terms of access arrangements, the grant of outline planning permission approved the main access into the site from Cambridge Road, and the internal layout and pedestrian links with Cambridge Road, are considered to be acceptable having regard to the comments from the Highway Authority.

- 10.21 With regard to parking matters, a representation has been received raising concern that an insufficient amount of parking has been provided. The applicant has set out in a schedule that a total of 58 parking spaces are proposed. This falls slightly below the maximum standards in policy TR7 of the Local Plan but is above the maximum requirement in the emerging policy. As an average, 2.2 spaces are provided per dwelling and the plans submitted show that more generous parking areas are proposed for the larger dwellings. Having regard to the proximity to village amenities and, having regard to the above considerations, the level of parking proposed is considered to be acceptable.

Other matters

- 10.22 The comments from the Parish Council and LLFA are noted in respect of matters relating to drainage. The developer is required, via planning conditions attached with the outline planning permission, to provide detailed information regarding surface water drainage. The landscape design proposals do not specifically show the proposed sustainable drainage systems but a significant area can clearly be allocated for the provision of above ground sustainable drainage systems which will form part of the landscape design.
- 10.23 The Environmental Health advisor recommends a planning condition relating to contamination – this is a matter which is the subject of a separate planning condition as part of the outline planning permission. It is not therefore necessary to attach a further condition relating to this matter.

10.24 The Parish Council request further financial contributions relating to highway infrastructure improvements. Such a requirement is not requested from the Highway Authority and, in any event, details relating to financial contributions to offset the impact of the development on infrastructure have been previously considered and, as noted in section 3 above, a legal agreement is attached to the outline planning permission relating to such matters. Further planning obligations are not therefore necessary nor justified in this case.

11.0 Conclusion

11.1 The principle of residential development on this parcel of land has been established through the grant of outline planning permission at appeal. The remaining reserved matters, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are the only relevant considerations relating to this application therefore.

11.2 For the reasons set out above, the development proposals are considered to result in an acceptable layout for the site and a mix and density of development that is appropriate to the context of the site and its surroundings. Similarly, the proposed development is considered to be of an appropriate scale and appearance which is reflective of the character and appearance of the village setting to the north of the application site.

11.3 In landscape terms, an appropriate design has been proposed which is capable of incorporating the sustainable drainage systems which are required under the provisions of the outline application. The retained landscape features, proposed planting and new open space, will also ensure that the development assimilates well into the site and surroundings.

11.4 An appropriate level of parking provision is proposed and the layout and scale proposed will not result in significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

11.5 Officers therefore recommend that the Reserved Matters are approved subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. Approved plans (2E103)
2. Materials as on plan (2E421)

3. Tree/hedge retention and protection (4P051)
4. All hard and soft landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with drawing references 11217.01 and 16053(D)080 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with others of species, size and number as originally approved, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason

To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscaping in accordance with the approved designs, in accordance with policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and national guidance in section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. Outline Permission Reference (07OP)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

East Herts Council has considered the applicant's proposal in a positive and proactive manner with regard to the policies of the Development Plan; the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

KEY DATA**Residential Development**

Residential density	23dph	
	Bed spaces	Number of units
Number of existing units demolished		
Number of new flat units	1	
	2	
	3	
Number of new house units	1	
	2	5
	3	9
	4+	10
Total		24

Affordable Housing

Number of units	Percentage
10	41.7%

Residential Vehicle Parking Provision

Current Parking Policy Maximum Standards (EHDC 2007 Local Plan)

Parking Zone		
Residential unit size (bed spaces)	Spaces per unit	Spaces required
1	1.25	
2	1.50	7.5
3	2.25	29.25
4+	3.00	30
Total required		66.75
Proposed provision		58

Emerging Parking Standards (endorsed at District Plan Panel 19 March 2015)

Parking Zone		
Residential unit size (bed spaces)	Spaces per unit	Spaces required
1	1.50	

2	2.00	10
3	2.50	22.5
4+	3.00	30
Total required		62.5
Accessibility reduction	25%	15.625
Resulting requirement		46.9
Proposed provision		58

Legal Agreement – financial obligations

No agreement required as financial contributions secure under previous outline application.