



Planning Statement

Land at Southam Road
Radford Semele
Warwickshire
Montague Property

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Introduction

1. Cerda planning Ltd have been instructed by Montague Property to prepare a planning statement to support a full planning application to Warwick District Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) for the construction of 5 detached dwellings on land off Southam Road, Radford Semele.
2. The application has been preceded by pre-application discussions with planning officers. In addition, the applicant has sought the views of the Parish Council and with local residents through an online public consultation exercise. The proposals have been amended where appropriate to address comments received at the pre-application stage.
3. The proposal is fully aligned with Warwick District Council's strategic housing objectives insofar as the development represents infill development within the defined limits of a growth settlement.
4. The proposal has been thoroughly tested and a range of technical and environmental reports are submitted as part of the application. These comprise the following:
 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared by Wharton in partnership with Mood Landscape;
 - preliminary ecological appraisal prepared by Midland Ecology;
 - archaeological desk-based assessment prepared by RPS Ltd;
 - Built Heritage assessment prepared by RPS Ltd;
 - Arboricultural Assessment prepared by Apex Environmental and;
 - Transport Technical Note prepared by Assured Planning Ltd.
5. The statement will demonstrate that the proposals are compliant with the adopted Development Plan and that the Council should grant planning permission without delay.

Site Description and Wider Context

6. The site comprises a broadly triangular-shaped parcel of land totaling some 1.3 hectares in the north western part of Radford Semele. The site lies to the immediate north of Southam Road which defines its southern boundary and to the immediate west of Church Lane. To the north, the site is bounded by St Nicholas's church and residential dwellings within Church End and Southam Road. The Church and the Glebe House are grade II Listed Buildings. The whole of the site is within the Canal Conservation Area.
7. Access to the site is presently via a field gate on Church Lane, opposite the church. The land is undeveloped and was last used as agricultural land and for the grazing of animals.
8. Due to the current use of the site, there is limited vegetation which, in the main is confined to the boundaries and comprises grassland margins, existing trees, hedgerow and ditches. The site has negligible to low ecological value as a result. Full details can be found within the submitted ecological assessment.
9. Although unallocated within the Adopted Local Plan, the site lies entirely within the defined boundary for Radford Semele, a growth village as set out within the Local Plan. Development within the boundaries of the District's growth villages is supported by the Plan in principle.
10. The site is within a sustainable walking distance to all village facilities and amenities which include a primary school, village store, Post Office, community hall, two churches, one public house, sports and social club with playing fields and employment opportunities.
11. The village is served by public transport and regular bus services to Rugby and Leamington Spa and Coventry (via buses 63 and 64). Bus stops are located directly outside of the site on the Southam Road.

The Proposal

12. The proposed modest development comprises the erection of 5 detached dwellinghouses with detached garages and on site parking. The development will be accessed via one access point off the Southam Road and set within a service road. The built form proposed will be confined to the north-western corner (circa .03 of a hectare).
13. The remaining land to the east of the proposed housing (circa 1.1 hectares) will be retained as public open space. A new pedestrian path will be laid out across the site to link Southam Road to the Church and houses within Church End. As indicated on the coloured up proposed site plan, the area of open space directly adjoining the curtilage of the proposed dwellings could be laid out as a community orchard, if considered appropriate. An information board will also be provided within public open space to display local historical information.
14. The size of dwellings will range from 140 sqm to 193 sqm and will provide 4 and 5 bedrooms. They will be traditional in design of brick and tile construction and include design features to complement characteristics of dwellings within the immediate vicinity including projecting front gables, canopies above the front door and brick detailing beneath and above the windows and garage door. Projecting gables and recessed set backs are rendered in white to provide a contrast to the main brick built front elevations.
15. The final layout has evolved from initial pre-application advice from Council officers and a more detailed analysis of the landscape, visual and ecological impacts arising from the development of the site. Very careful attention to the impact of the proposed build form on the Glebe House and St Nicholas Church have been the overriding considerations to ensure that the setting of both of these designated heritage assets are not adversely impacted upon.
16. The proposal has been designed to respond appropriately to the existing context and to this end it retains existing hedgerows and trees where possible as well as views over the site to both grade II listed buildings.

Background

Planning History

17. An appeal by Gladman proposing the construction of up to 130 dwellings with open space and landscaping, vehicular access and footpath links, a car park and all associated works (outline application including details of access only) was dismissed in March 2015. The Inspector considered the main issues to be landscape (although specifically NOT in relation to the western fields (as built form was proposed only for the largest, most eastern field) and impact on the setting of heritage assets.
18. Whilst the appeal decision is a material consideration officers will take into account when coming to a view on the new proposals, there are obvious differences in the appeal scheme and that proposed by the applicant.

Pre-application Engagement

19. As advocated by paragraphs 39-42 of the NPPF the applicant sought to engage with Warwick District Council and the Radford Semele Parish Council.
20. A formal pre-application submission was made to the planning authority under PRE/20/0072. The response in July 2020 confirmed that the principle of housing on the site is acceptable as it would accord with the provisions of Policy H1c of the Local Plan which sets the boundaries of Growth villages—the site is entirely within the settlement boundary within the village which is an identified Growth village.
21. The officer considered that the main issues of the proposed development would be the impact on heritage assets and impact on the landscape.
22. In relation to heritage, the Council's conservation officer concluded that although the proposals were on a completely reduced scale to the previous appeal, the proposals were unlikely to receive support since the harm caused to the setting of the designated assets would outweigh any public benefits.
23. In relation to landscape impacts, and with particular regard to the emerging Radford Semele Neighbourhood Development Plan, the officer concluded that landscape sensitivity remains a primary key issue, of paramount importance in the assessment of any forthcoming planning application. It was recommended that the planning application submission

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include a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to demonstrate that a thorough assessment of the proposals had been undertaken.

24. Two options for layout were provided within the pre-application submission. The officer expressed a preference for option 2, which presented a more linear layout. This was considered to have marginally less impact from a heritage point of view and would better accord with the design principles of the Council.
25. Advice was offered in relation to the siting of the proposed dwellings together with concerns around hard surfacing and the proposed amount of car parking causing an over dominating effect in the street scene.
26. Some more limited concern was expressed at the provision of such large dwellings and it was suggested that the rationale for this should be explained within any future application.
27. The applicant sought to engage with the Parish Council. An email was sent to the Radford Semele Parish Clerk on 14th October 2020 from the applicant outlining their proposals for the development of the site and seeking their views or an opportunity to meet with the Parish or Neighbourhood Group to establish if the proposals could incorporate any particular needs that the village had identified.
28. The applicants offer to engage was discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 29th October 2020. They responded as follows:

“ You will be aware of the extent of subsisting housing development in and around the village of Radford Semele. The considerable environmental value of the area around St Nicholas’ Church was recognised by the Appeal Inspector when the application for planning consent by Gladman was considered and refused. My Council considers that the Village has already been over-developed. This issue was factored in by the representative of Warwick District Council Planning Department when addressing the Inspector who reviewed and approved WDC’s second edition of their New Local Plan—in fact the Inspector confirmed that viewpoint.

Therefore my Council do not consider it appropriate to support the proposals.”

Background

29. In an attempt to obtain views on how the land directly in front of the Church could, perhaps be put to some beneficial use to the local community, the applicant contacted Reverend Martin Green at St Nicholas'. He suggested further dialogue with the Parish and that views to the church should be retained as much as possible.
30. In addition to this, we distributed a letter which contained a link to a website displaying the proposals to local residents, seeking their views. A summary of any responses received will be provided to the planning officer in due course.
31. Local community groups (FORGE and the Willows Project) were also approached; the latter of which expressed some interest in the community orchard.

Planning Policy and Guidance

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

32. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides a legal framework for planning decisions. It requires that where making any determination under the planning act, regard is to be had to the Development Plan and the determination should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
33. In addition to the act the framework sets out the governments planning policies for England and how these policies should be applied. It provides both the framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced and framework in which planning decisions should be made.
34. The heart of the framework is the need to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 11 makes it clear that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; an economic role contributing to building a strong responsive and competitive economy; social role supporting strong vibrant and healthy communities; and environmental role contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. The framework makes it clear that these objectives should be delivered to both the preparation and implementation plans and the application of the policies in this framework although they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged.
 - Paragraph 11 sets out what is meant by the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The decision making means: approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date plan without delay; or
 - Whether or not relevant development plan policies, those policies which are most important determining application out of date, granting permission unless; or
 - The application policies in this framework protect areas assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken

Planning Policy and Guidance

as a whole.

Planning Practice Guidance (Adopted March 2014)

35. The planning practice guidance (PPG) is a live working document. It offers further detail and expands upon the framework's policies whilst offering further guidance on key points such as design, determination of planning applications, translating 5 year housing supply and flood risk.

National Design Guide (Adopted October 2019)

36. The National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well designed places demonstrating what good design means in practice.

Local Planning Policies

37. As set out previously the Development Plan for Warwick District comprises the Warwick District Local Plan (2011 – 2029) which was adopted in September 2017.
38. Policies relevant to the determination of this application are set out as follows:
39. **Strategic policy DS2** – providing the homes the district needs. This policy sets out the Council's full and objectively assessed housing need as well as unmet housing need arising from outside the District. Amongst other things the policy seeks to ensure new housing delivers the quality and mix of new homes required, including affordable homes and a mix of homes that meet identified needs including those that are suitable for the elderly.
40. **Strategic policy DS4** – spatial strategy. This policy makes it clear that the Council's spatial strategy focuses growth within and adjacent to built up areas whilst the majority of growth is focused in the main urban areas of Warwick, Leamington, Whitnash and Kenilworth, further growth is also planned for the growth villages in accordance with local plan policy H1. (Radford Semele is a growth village)
41. **Policy DS5** – presumption in favour of sustainable development. Amongst other things, the policy is clear in reflecting the framework's paragraph 11 approach insofar as planning applications that accord with the policies in this local plan (and where relevant with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay.

Planning Policy and Guidance

42. **Policy DS6** – level of housing growth. The policy sets out that provision will be made for a minimum of 16,776 new homes across the district over the plan period (2011 - 2029). This equates to an average annual housing requirement of 1098 homes between 2017 to 2028. It is important to note that this level of housing growth includes an allowance for windfall sites coming forward between April 2015 and March 2029. This allowance is estimated to be 1010 homes.
43. **Policy H1** - directing new housing. This policy makes it clear where housing development will be permitted. Including:
- within the urban areas, as identified within the plan and on the policies map;
 - within the allocated housing sites; and
 - within the boundaries of the growth villages and limited infilling villages.
44. **Policy H4**— securing a mix of housing. This policy sets out the Council's expectations in relation to developments including how a mix of market housing contributes towards a balance of house types and sizes across the district.
45. **Policy BE1** – layout and design. This policy sets out what the Council expects of new developments in order that they achieve good standards of layout and design and in turn positively contribute to the character and quality of the environment. Amongst other things proposals are expected to demonstrate that they:
- harmonise with, or enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, patterns of movement and land-use;
 - relate well to local topography and landscape features;
 - respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
 - adopt appropriate materials in detail; incorporate design and layout to reduce crime and fear of crime;
 - provide for convenient, safe and integrated cycling and walking routes within the site and linking to related routes for public transport;

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- provide adequate public and private open space of the development in terms of both quantity and quality; and
- ensure all components, e.g. buildings, landscaping, access routes, parking and open spaces are well related to each other and provide safe and attractive environments.

46. **Policy BE3** amenity. This policy makes it clear that development will not be permitted where it has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of nearby uses and residents and/or does not provide acceptable standards of amenity for future users' occupiers of the development.
47. **Policy TR 1** access and choice. This policy sets out the Council's requirements in terms of providing safe, suitable and attractive access routes for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, emergency vehicles, delivery vehicles, refuse vehicles and other users of motor vehicles as appropriate. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they are not detrimental to highway safety, can provide suitable access and circulation of a range of transport modes, create safe and secure layouts for all users to take account of the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.
48. **Policy HE4** archaeology. Amongst other things, the policy sets out that the Council will require that any remains of archaeological value are properly evaluated prior to determination of a planning application.
49. **Policy NE3** biodiversity. This policy is clear that new development will be permitted provided that it protects, enhances and/or restores habitat biodiversity. Development proposals will be expected to ensure that they lead to no net loss of biodiversity and where possible and appropriate by means of an approved ecological assessment of existing site features on development impacts. Development proposals should protect and enhance biodiversity assets and secure long-term management and maintenance. Moreover, development proposals should avoid a negative impact on existing biodiversity. The policy notes that where this is not possible, mitigation measures must be identified.

Planning Policy and Guidance

Radford Semele Neighbourhood Development Plan

50. The Examination of the Radford Semele Neighbourhood Development Plan (RSNP) is now complete. The Examiner's report was received by the Council on 29th December 2020. It recommends a number of modifications to the Submitted Version of the NP. Subject to these modifications being made, the Examiner has recommended that the neighbourhood plan may proceed to referendum. At the time of writing this planning statement Warwick Council and the Qualifying Body were reviewing the Examiner's report.
51. Enabled as a result of the Localism Act 2011, the RSNP was developed to provide guidelines for land use and to enable effective influence on future development within the designated area. Once made (formally approved), the NP forms part of the Development Plan and due weight must be given to the policies contained within, according to their consistency with the Framework.
52. Paragraphs 28-30 of the Framework set out that neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area and that they can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development but it is made clear that neighbourhood plans must not promote less development than that set out in the strategic policies for the area.
53. Relevant policies are considered to be as follows:
54. Policy RS1—Securing a suitable mix of housing types, tenures and sizes in new developments. Development proposals for new housing should be informed by and demonstrate how they have met local housing needs based on up to date information, including local housing needs identified in the Parish Needs Housing Survey. Applicants must also show how they have considered and responded to guidance provided in the WDC Residential Design Guide, Secured By Design and Lifetime Homes Standard. New housing must seek to meet WDC's Climate Emergency commitments. Infill will only be supported where there is a need for housing.
55. Policy RS2—Local Green Spaces. The application site, together with the east field are designated as one of the Local Green Spaces. Development proposals affecting designated Local Green Spaces will be assessed against national Green

Planning Policy and Guidance

Belt policy.

56. Policy RS6—Conserving and Enhancing Radford Semele's Landscape Character— requires any new development to protect, conserve and enhance the area's landscape character by :
- a. Protecting the historic character and settlement pattern of the area, particularly the distinct settlement of Radford Semele, individual farmsteads and key heritage assets;
 - b. Retaining the network of water features of rivers, streams, ponds and canal;
 - c. Looking up to open any existing culverts;
 - d. Protecting the mosaic of woodland, trees and hedgerows;
 - e. Planting new hedgerows and improving redundant and gappy existing hedgerows;
 - f. By protecting the essential character and quality of certain views—RS6/2—view of Church and Church Fields from corner of A425/Offchurch Lane is identified and relevant to these proposals;
 - g. Retaining and improving existing Public Rights of Way, and where feasible, creating new ones;
 - h. Screening urban forms of development and having appropriate transitions from urban to rural areas; and
 - i. In appropriate locations, introduce new planting of coverts and tree belts to restore the Feldon Parklands character.
57. Policy RS8—Footpaths seeks improvements to footpaths which will enable safe access to the surrounding landscape for walking.
58. Policy RS9—Cycling seeks measures to provide and improve safe cycle routes to Leamington and into the wider countryside.
59. Policy RS10 Traffic Management and Public Transport. Proposals to improve road safety, traffic management and public transport will be fully supported.

Planning Policy and Guidance

60. Policy RS11—Community stresses the importance of a healthy, inclusive community. Where viable, development proposals should include the following
- a. Well-designed streets that are accessible to all and offer people places to meet.
 - b. Footpaths, cycleways and bridleways that link to existing networks;
 - c. Facilities for young people including premises for the Scout and Girl Guide Groups;
 - d. New adult/sport training facilities such as a running track and exercise machines could be installed on the village recreation ground;
 - e. Parish noticeboards and other signage.
61. The Examiner's Report dated 16th November 2020 recommended that the draft NDP proceed to referendum subject to recommended modifications. The majority of the modifications suggested are very minor. The main modification proposed is the removal of the easternmost field from the proposed area of separation. (which does not have a bearing on these proposals).
62. Of particular importance to the current proposals is the Examiner's view that all of the proposed areas for designation as Local Green Space should be supported.
63. There is no published date for the referendum and so until this has taken place, it is not clear when the Neighbourhood Plan will be made. Policies at this time therefore cannot be afforded full weight but should be afforded considerable weight.

Supplementary Planning Documents

64. The Residential Design Guide SPD was adopted in May 2018. It seeks to promote high quality and innovative design, sensitive to and in keeping with the area in which it is located. It supplements local plan policy BE1 layout and design. In addition to setting out general urban design principles it stipulate numerical standards to which development should seek to meet.
- a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare (unless it is clear that a lower density is more appropriate to the site);

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- Garden size of 50 sqm for 3 bedroom house and 60 sqm for a 4 bedroom+ house;
 - Each dwelling will require external storage space for 1 x 240L grey bin, 1 x 240L green bin for garden/food waste and 3 boxes and 3 bags recycling containers.
65. The Parking Standards SPD was adopted in June 2018. It aims to ensure the delivery of sufficient cycle and vehicle parking to meet the demands of new development and offers design principles for optimum layout.
66. For dwellings containing 3 bedrooms, there is a requirement for 2 car parking spaces and 3 cycle spaces; for dwellings with 4+, three car parking spaces and 1 cycle space per bedroom is required. Dimensions for the required size of parking bay is stipulated depending on the site specifics.
67. Where possible, facilities for electric charging points should be provided at 1 point per house.

Planning Analysis

The Principal Issues

68. Having set out a description of the proposed development and both national and local planning policy the remainder of this statement considers the principal planning issues against which the proposed development should be assessed as follows:
- The principle of development
 - Character and appearance
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway safety and parking
 - Ecology/arboriculture
 - Landscape and visual impacts
 - Heritage
 - The planning balance

The principle of development

69. The starting point in the determination of every planning application is Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act which states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
70. Paragraph 11 of the Framework sets out what is meant by the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date plan without delay; or
- Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important in determining an application are out of date, granting permission unless;
 - The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas of assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed (land such as Green Belt/ Local Green Space); or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would

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significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

71. As has already been set out, the Development Plan comprises the Warwick District Local Plan (2011-2029) and the Emerging Radford Semele Neighbourhood Plan.
72. The Local Plan was adopted in 2017. It defines Radford Semele as a Growth Village and sets out within its associated policies map that the application site falls wholly within the village boundary.
73. Local plan policy H1 could not be clearer in stating that housing development will be permitted within the boundaries of growth villages, and limited infill villages as identified within the plan and as shown on the policies map.
74. Accordingly, it is beyond question therefore, that the principle of developing the application site in the manner proposed is entirely aligned with the adopted local plan.
75. As set out earlier the RSNP has been examined. In relation to the proposed LGS designation at Church Fields (East and West) the Inspector states within his report ” ***For centuries Church Fields have been part of the setting of St Nicholas’s Church. They have been seen by villagers and travellers through the village and are very much part of the character of the village. I have no hesitation in agreeing that they are “intrinsic to the character and identity of the village” and agreeing with the description in Table A1.a on page 69. The fields met the requirements of the NPPF, including being demonstrably special to a local community and holding a particular local significance.***”
76. It is important to note however that the application site does not currently fall within a Local Green Space designation but will become restricted as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan being made. The plan cannot take effect unless there is a majority of support in a referendum population.
77. The RSNP is not yet made (adopted) and therefore does not carry full weight. It may never be made and until such time that it is, the land at Church Fields cannot be treated as having LGS protection as set out in the Framework.
78. In cases where development is proposed and a draft

Planning Analysis

neighbourhood plan has not reached the end of the local planning authority publicity period, paragraph 50 of the NPPF makes it clear that refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified.

79. The applicant asserts therefore that the modest housing scheme to provide 5 detached dwellings and a large area of public open space at the application site which would result in built form on only a fraction of the western Church Field fully complies with the adopted development plan and should be approved without delay.

Character and appearance

80. The proposals have evolved to take account of local character and comments made from the planning officer within the pre-application response and from the professional consultant team, in particular in relation to landscape and visual impact and heritage (impact on the setting of designated heritage assets—grade II listed buildings; St Nicholas' Church and the Glebe House).
81. The proposed dwellings will be accessed from one access point on the Southam Road to allow the majority of the existing trees along the back edge of pavement to be retained. The linear layout will respect the building line set by adjacent properties and mirror the pattern of development set by houses, which are also set behind a service road, on the opposite side of Southam Road.
82. Plot sizes proposed are also similar in shape (width, depth and length) to those opposite.
83. Each house would consist of a traditional brick and tile roof construction and incorporate projecting front gables which would be finished in white render to contrast with the brickwork used within the main front façade. Brick headers and footers are also used to add detailing to the appearance of the dwellings.
84. The proposals therefore are in full compliance with adopted policy BE1 of the Local Plan as well as the Residential Design Guide SPD.

Residential amenity

85. Each dwelling would provide high quality family housing and range in size from 192 sqm to 170.7 sqm.

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- 86. All garden sizes exceed guidelines set within the Council's design guide and there is plenty of space within each plot to provide the requisite number of refuse bins.
- 87. The rear elevations of the proposed dwellings on plots 1 and 2 would face the front elevation of the Glebe House which is located to the north of the site. However, the minimum distance separation between windowed elevations required by the Council are achieved to ensure residential amenity for both occupiers of the proposed dwellings and the Glebe House would be safeguarded.
- 88. Occupiers of dwellings on plots 3 to 5 would enjoy open views of the retained western field and new area of open space.
- 89. There would be no impact on loss of privacy or light at the adjoining 27 Southam Road. Although the proposed garage block serving plot 1 would be set slightly in front of the building line, the proposals comply with the 45 degree code.

Highway safety and parking

- 90. A Technical Note and Visibility Splay Analysis has been provided to support the proposals.
- 91. A swept path analysis has been undertaken on a refuse vehicle along the carriageway within the proposed development based on the size of vehicle used by WCC. It demonstrates that the refuse vehicle can access the site via the proposed junction in a forward gear, and service all plots and manoeuvre within the site to leave the site in forward gear.
- 92. Based on the guidance contained within MfS and the 30 mph speed limit along Southam Road the required vehicular visibility splay is 2.4m by 43m in both directions. This can be provided.
- 93. Each dwelling will have 3 off street car parking spaces (a combination of garage and driveway parking) which complies with the Residential Guide, Adequate space for cycle parking would also be available.

Ecology and Arboriculture

- 94. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was undertaken by Midland Ecology to inform the proposals. The assessment notes that there are three statutory designated sites within the study area (Leam Valley, Welches Meadow and Whitnash

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Brook Local Nature Reserves which are located between 430m and 1.66km of the site). The site also falls within the impact Risk Zones of two SSSI; Long Itchington and Ufton Woods and Ufton Fields although it is noted that the site does not share similar habitats or has strong connectivity with either of these sites.

95. A small woodland, a traditional orchard, two areas of woodpasture/parkland, semi improved grassland and 8 areas of floodplain grazing marsh are noted within the study area which are likely to be classed as Priority habitats of principle importance, and of particular value to bats.
96. The site itself is dominated by improved grassland bordered with trees and a patch of shrub in the north-western corner. It is considered that the site has some potential to act as a stepping stone for bats roosting nearby as well as some foraging potential, particularly for pipistrelles and brown long eared bats. One tree (T7) had some knot holes with some roosting potential.
97. No evidence of badger setts were found either on site or within 50m of the site boundaries. No notable bird species were recorded on site.
98. The site would provide suitable foraging habitat for Great Crested Newt but without suitable ponds on site or other waterbodies identified within 250m radius, it is likely that this species is absent.
99. The report notes that whilst there is some foraging opportunities for hedgehog and reptiles, the likelihood of them being present on site is low.
100. The appraisal concludes that no further surveys are required but goes onto recommend suggestions which could be included within the scheme to enhance the ecology of the site; they include the installation of hedgehog houses along the rear of new houses which back onto the public open space/ grassland and installing a wildlife pond if suitable to the north or east of the site.
101. Apex Environmental have surveyed all trees on the site and assessed the implications for the proposed development on the future retention. As the site is located within the Canal Conservation Area all trees within the site are afforded protection.

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- 102. A total of 39 trees were inspected. The majority of the trees are Category B trees (21) with the remainder Category C (18), mostly comprising of Wild Cherry, Walnut, Silver Birch, Oak and Ash. Only one of these trees (T06—a Crab Apple) would be removed to facilitate the site access.
- 103. In general, the trees were considered to be in good overall condition. Most of the trees on the southern boundary are on Local Authority Land overhanging the field but their root protection areas extend into the site.
- 104. Constraints posed by the trees to the development of the site include current height and ultimate spread and height of the trees, species characteristics (density of foliage, honey dew, branch drop and fruit fall), shading to new gardens or rooms.
- 105. The AIA and Tree Shadowing plans within the Tree Report demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact on retained trees resulting from the proposed layout and that gardens and habitable rooms to all new dwellings will not be in shadow. Trees therefore are not considered to be a constraint to the proposed development.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 106. Mood Landscape has produced a detailed Landscape and Visual Appraisal. This section provides a summary of their findings.
- 107. Development will result in permanent change to the fabric of the site itself, however, there are no notable landscape features within the site itself. The existing field is of limited ecological value and proposed native planting to the green space will provide biodiversity enhancements.
- 108. The site is rural in character and pending status as a Local Green Space, but due to the proximity of the main road and adjacent buildings, it is heavily influenced by the surrounding settlement and can be described as having moderate landscape value. The remainder of the field, to the east (which the current application includes to lay out as Public Open Space), can be described as having high landscape value.
- 109. Development will result in a permanent change to the character of the site; however, the character of the wider landscape is retained due to the small-scale nature of the proposed development, its position adjacent to existing development and the provision of a new area of public open

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space.

- 110. Development of the site will have a neutral effect of the character of the Canal Conservation Area, due to its small scale, its position away from the canal itself and the lack of any visual connection.
- 111. The heritage of the site is sensitive due to the proximity of listed buildings and features. The siting and layout of the development retains important views to these buildings while retaining the rural setting of the church.
- 112. There are no-long distance views of the site. The most visually sensitive vista is from the village, from Southam Road and the Church.
- 113. The proposals form a very small pocket of infill to the settlement within the Growth Village Envelope. Appropriate development of the site and provision of landscape enhancements in the form of a new public open space will successfully integrate the proposed development into its surroundings.
- 114. An overall net gain of trees and species-rich grassland is proposed. The public open space will provide biodiversity enhancement and a natural resource to be enjoyed by the local community.

Archaeology and Built Heritage

- 115. RPS were instructed to undertake both archaeological and Built Heritage Assessments in order to inform the evolution of the proposals.
- 116. The Archaeology DBA confirms that there are no Scheduled Monuments within or outside of the site.
- 117. A Geophysical survey of the site undertaken in 2014 did not identify any anomalies indicative of significant archaeological features within the site. There is no suggestion that the site contains archaeological remains of a significance that would be prohibitive to the development or require to be designed around. Its potential for significant, non-agricultural remains, of all periods is assessed to be low.
- 118. Due to the limited size of the site and the limited archaeological potential identified, there are no fundamental archaeological constraints to development. If any further archaeological works are deemed necessary; they can be

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required by condition.

119. As set out earlier, there are several grade II listed buildings within the vicinity of the site. The Built Heritage assessment describes them in detail as well as their relationship with the site. The impact on the setting of these heritage assets, particularly St Nicholas' Church and the Glebe House have been important considerations during the evolution of the proposals.
120. The approach taken to the design of the proposal ensures that the elements of the site that have been assessed as providing the strongest contribution to these listed buildings are maintained to reduce the level of impact on their respective significance .
121. The assessment concludes that the proposed development will result in less than substantial harm to the significance of St Nicholas' Church and The Glebe House. (and that if a spectrum of harm exist within the less than substantial harm test, it is considered the level of harm from the scheme to these listed buildings would be at the lower end of the spectrum).
122. Whilst the proposed housing along the western boundary of the site will slightly reduce the area of separation between the northern group of buildings and the area of the village to the south-east, the legibility of the two settlement foci and the contribution this makes to the respective group significance and the church and The Glebe House will be maintained by the majority of the site remaining as open space. Additionally the most important views to and from these listed buildings will not be affected.
123. The site has also been assessed as providing a low positive contribution to the significance of the lychgate and The White Lion. However, the potential impact on these listed buildings has been mitigated by the retention of the central and eastern areas of the site as open space which will not be harmed by the proposals.
124. The site also comprises a neutral element of the Canal Conservation Area. The proposed development will not result in any changes to the views from the canal and the towpath where its significance is principally understood. The design approach to the scheme means its character will be largely unchanged. The proposed development will not cause harm to

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the significance of the conservation area and its character and appearance will be preserved.

125. The public benefits of the scheme will therefore need to be balanced against the low level of harm in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

Planning Balance

126. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development—an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. The Framework goes on to state that these should not be considered in isolation and are interwoven with each other.

127. The development subject of this application accords with the three dimensions of sustainable development as follows:

- **An economic role**—the proposal will have economic benefits during the construction phase which would include employing local labour as well as sourcing materials from the local area, There would be an on-going contribution from the future occupiers of the dwellings towards the economy supporting the numerous businesses, facilities and services in the area.
- **A social role**— the proposed development will provide a limited number of additional dwellings within the village to provide extra choice within the housing market, freeing up the smaller housing stock within the village to be used by first time buyers and opportunities for residents within existing larger house types to downsize. The scale and design of the scheme will create a high quality built environment and ensure no adverse effect on neighbouring properties and occupiers. Local residents will be able to access the new area of public open space to sit and contemplate or for exercise. The new footpath through the site will connect Southam Road to the Church and residential properties within Church End, increasing permeability and connectivity in this part of the village. A notice board or similar could also be provided within the open space to make reference to the history of the site (to enhance the understanding of the non-designated stocks) and

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there is also the opportunity for a community orchard to be included within the scheme.

- **An environmental role**—the proposed development will be built to a high standard that will complement the existing character of the area. The proposal will cause very limited short term harm during the construction phase which will be compensated for by the provision of a high quality landscaping scheme. The proposals will maintain important views to the Church and Glebe House from the Southam Road. A new area of public open space will ensure that these important views are safeguarded and that the site/land is used effectively for local residents. Bat, bird and hedgehog boxes will be provided to increase biodiversity and ecological opportunities and existing trees and hedgerows retained and bolstered where necessary.

128. The proposal complies with the Development Plan as a whole and there are no material considerations which indicate otherwise. The proposal will provide considerable benefits as follows:

- A limited, small scale residential development comprising of 5 larger house types entirely within the settlement boundary of village which is identified as a Growth Village and sited to have no landscape or visual impact;
- The proposed dwellings would be well located in terms of proximity to existing urban area within easy reach of local shops, services and facilities including bus stops.
- Proposals would include electric vehicle charging points for each unit;
- A new 1.1 hectare area of public open space would be created, thereby securing access to the land for locals which is currently not available. It could be used for a range of recreational purposes or merely as an outdoor space for seating and could provide a community orchard. A historical information board could be displayed which inform local residents about the history of the site.

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- Views of the St Nicholas's Church and the Glebe House will be retained.

129. Conversely, there is only one minor adverse effect that could be considered to outweigh the benefits of the proposal. As set out in detail within the Heritage section of this statement, it is considered that there would be less than substantial harm caused to the setting of the listed buildings arising from the proposals. This being the case and in accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits; the benefits are listed above.
130. Local Planning Authorities are required to consider the harm attributed to elements of a proposal against the perceived benefits. In this case the limited harm to the setting of designated heritage assets must be balanced against the identified benefits and the current status of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
131. The proposals must be considered in the context of the adopted development plan and the NPPF, which sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development.
132. The proposed development is in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan when taken as a whole and should be approved without delay.

Conclusion

133. This statement has been prepared to accompany a full application for the erection of 5 detached dwellings and associated works together with the creation of a new area of public open space.
134. The statement sets out that the proposals are in compliance with both national and local adopted planning policy.
135. There will be minor adverse impact on the setting of designated heritage assets but the public benefits associated with the proposals would outweigh any harm. There will be no adverse impact on residential amenity, ecology, trees, landscape character or highway safety.
136. In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.