



PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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*Netherfield,
The Street, Ash,
Sevenoaks TN15 7HB*

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Drawing and Planning Ltd, in support of a Full Planning Application at Netherfield, The Street, Ash, Sevenoaks TN15 7HB (See Fig. 1: Site Location Plan).
- 1.2 The proposal would see the: “Erection of 2 x 4 bed family dwellings, arranged over ground, first and second floor levels following the demolition of the existing bungalow.
- 1.3 The purpose of this statement is to clearly set out and consider all the relevant planning considerations for the proposed development. The statement will set out the national and local planning policies which are relevant to the application and provide an assessment of how the proposed development accords with those policy requirements.

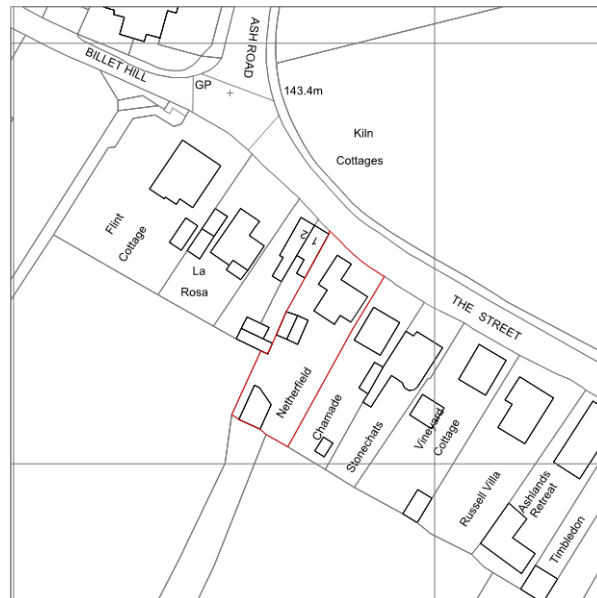


Fig. 1: Ordnance Survey Map - Site Location Plan

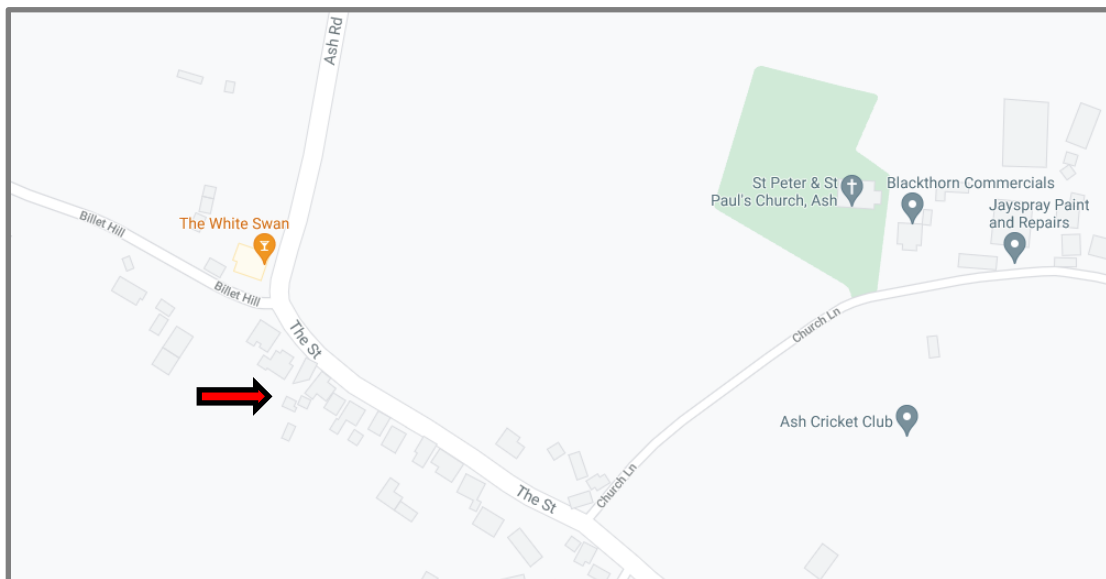


Fig. 2: Map of the local area, showing Netherfield, The Street, Ash in situation

2.0 The Proposed Development

Site Context and Location

- 2.1 The application site, 'the Site', is a rectangular plot of land known as Netherfield, which is located on the southern side of The Street in Ash, Sevenoaks. The site accommodates a bungalow with a gabled roof form which may date from the 1970s. The existing bungalow supports a somewhat plain and utilitarian appearance, with a front projection which juts out hard up against the footway. The main body of the house is set back from the pavement line. The existing bungalow is finished in white render and supports a small strip of soft-landscaping to the front, allowing for limited greenery to the front elevation. The property benefits from a side carriage driveway which leads to an ancillary garage. To the rear there is a single storey conservatory. The rear garden features a number of unsightly ancillary structures, including large shed type structures, see **Fig. 3: Aerial view**, with the site outlined in red. Also see **Appendix 1: Site Photos**.



Fig. 3: Aerial view of site outlined in red

- 2.2 The site is not located within a conservation area and the building is not listed. The site is however, located within Green Belt land. The grain of the area is distinctly rural with detached buildings which sit neatly in their surroundings. There is a somewhat informal layout and building line which follows the curve of the road. The height is generally of two storeys with some buildings having converted attic accommodation. There is considerable variety in the age and style of building within the frontage, as the street appears to comprise of individually designed houses, built as individual plots. The pallet of materials is varied with red/brown brick, pastel painted render and brown plain tiled roof and timber cladding featuring.

Planning History

- 2.3 There is only one planning application registered on the Council's online planning records, which is listed as follows:
- **86/01370/HIST** - Continued use as private dwelling house **Granted 17 Sep 1986**

3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application, proposes the erection of 2 x 4-bedroom semi-detached dwellings, arranged over ground, first and second floor levels, following the demolition of the existing Bungalow. The proposed dwellings would support a stepped front building line, tiled gabled roofs with rear dormers, traditional multi-pane windows and front porches. The front elevation would be rendered at ground floor level and support hanging tiles at first floor with traditional multi-pane windows. The front roof slopes would benefit from three rooflights per dwelling, with a projecting chimney to both flank elevations. To the rear, a single storey extension would enhance the ground floor level, with a central rear wing projection mirroring the development to each property. This element would support a matching tiled pitched roof, rising above the main roofs' eaves line adding visual interest to the dwellings. A modest patio area to the rear, would complete this development.
- 3.2 The existing bungalow would be demolished. The proposal also involves the removal existing outbuildings and structures across the site. See **Appendix 1 - Site Photos**.
- 3.3 As advised at pre-application stage, the proposal would provide two independently accessible off-street parking spaces per dwelling. No changes are proposed to the existing dropped kerb line, as this existing full width amenity, is to be retained as existing.
- 3.4 As part of this proposal, dedicated secure cycle storage, would be provided to the rear of each dwelling. This amenity would be fully secure and accessible. Dedicated refuse storage for each dwelling, would be screened and enclosed within a simple timber structure located within the front forecourt. Soft landscaping would be retained and interspersed within the front forecourt, to add colour, texture, interest and amenity to both dwellings and will act as a buffer between public and private spaces.

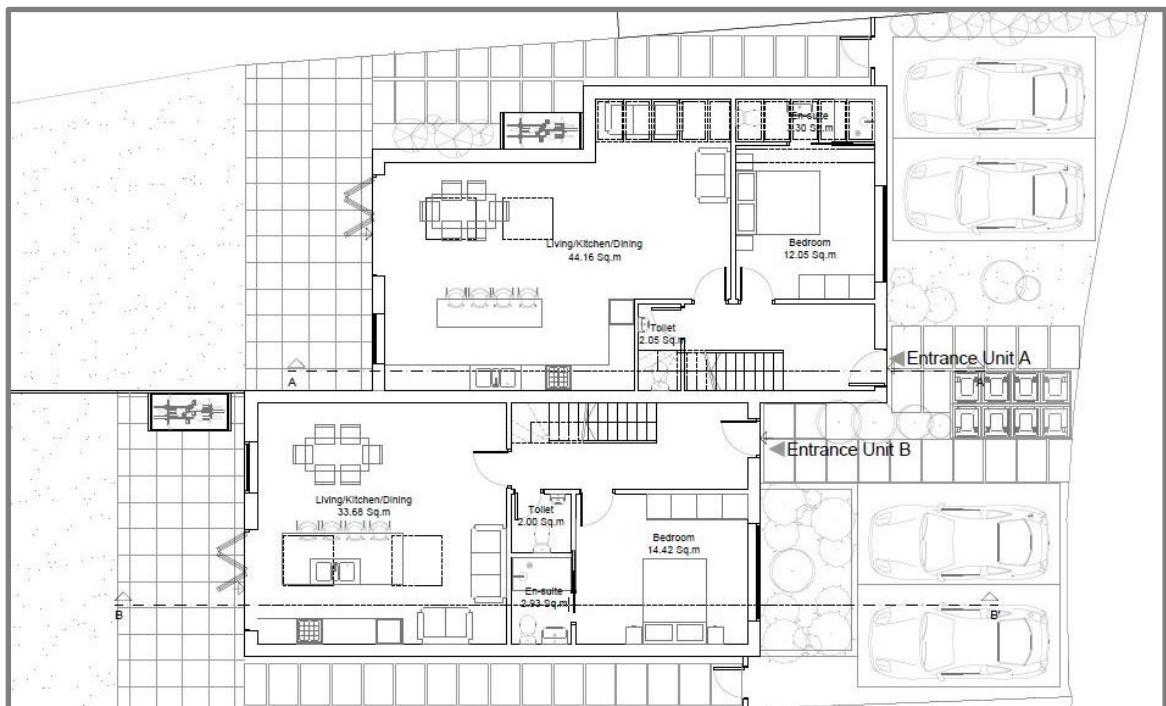


Fig. 4: Proposed Ground Floor Plan

4.0 Planning Policy Context

Primary Legislation

- 4.1 Under Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('The 2004 Act'), the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework ["NPPF"] sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role:** contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role:** supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role:** contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

Decision-taking

- 4.3 Para 11 of the NPPF confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. Para 11 of the NPPF also states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:
- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or 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 the Framework taken as a whole.
 - Footnote 6 relates to policies including SSSIs, Green Belt, AONBs, designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding.

Chapter 11 - Making effective use of land

- 4.4 Paragraph 117 states that *'planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions'*. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs in a way that optimizes previously-developed or 'brownfield' land. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states how Planning policies and decisions should facilitate effective use of land. The most relevant criteria to the application site are as follows:
- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains
 - b) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
 - c) promote and support the development of under-utilized land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure).
- 4.5 Paragraph 68 promotes the development of small and medium-sized sites, which *'can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly... local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes'*.
- 4.6 The NPPF makes clear that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land, encouraging multiple benefits, where possible. Paragraph 123 states that *'development should take place at appropriate densities, making 'optimal use of the potential of each site'*.

Chapter 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land

- 4.7 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. The exception relevant to the site and development is criterion g):
- "Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*
- 4.8 This requires that development should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development;"

5.0 Local Planning Policy Context

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that any planning application must be determined in accordance with the development plan for the area unless any material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council has an emerging Local Plan. The draft local Plan was rejected by Planning Inspectors. The draft Local Plan was rejected as it was found not to comply with the 'duty to co-operate'. At present, Officers will be speaking with the Secretary of State to put forward a strategy for the new Local Plan to move forward to adoption. The currently adopted Local Plan for Sevenoaks District Council comprises of the following Development Plan Documents:

- The Core Strategy Development Plan (February 2011)
- The Allocations and Development Management Plan (February 2015)

5.2 The policies relevant to the application are as follows:

Core Strategy (February 2011)

- Location Policies
 - Policy LO 1 (Distribution of Development)
 - Policy LO 2 (Development in Sevenoaks Urban Area)
 - Policy LO 7 (Development in Rural Settlements)
- Strategic Policies
 - Policy SP 1 (Design of New Development and Conservation)
 - Policy SP 4 (Provision of Affordable Housing)
 - Policy SP 5 (Housing Size and Type)

Allocations and Development Management Plan (February 2015)

- Sustainable Communities and Development Principles
 - Policy SC 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Environment
 - Policy EN1 Design Principles
 - Policy EN2 Amenity Protection
 - Policy EN5 Landscape
- The Green Belt
 - Policy GB4 Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt
 - Policy GB3 Residential Outbuildings in the Green Belt
- Travel and Transport
 - Policy T2 Vehicle Parking
 - Appendix 2 of the Development Management Plan

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Development in the Green Belt SPD (February 2015)
- Countryside Character Assessment SPD (October 2011)
- Residential Extensions SPD (May 2009)

- 5.3 Core Strategy Policy LO 1 (Distribution of Development) states that development will be focused within the built confines of existing settlements. New Ash Green is identified as a location for limited development in accordance with Policy LO7.
- 5.4 Policy LO 2 (Development in Sevenoaks Urban Area) states that in Sevenoaks provision will be made for an annual average of 165 dwellings which is approximately 1,330 dwellings (2006-2026). Policy LO 7 (Development in Rural Settlements) states that between rural settlements, provision will be made for a total of approximately 1,160 dwellings (2006-2026). The number of homes that are required to be planned for over the plan period is set by the government using a standard calculation.
- 5.5 Policy SP 4 (Provision of Affordable Housing) In residential developments of less than 5 units that involve a net gain in the number of units, a financial contribution based on the equivalent of 15% affordable housing will be required towards improving affordable housing provision off-site.
- 5.6 Policy SP 5 (Housing Size and Type) states that the Council will expect new housing development to contribute to a mix of different housing types in residential areas taking into account the existing pattern of housing in the area, evidence of local need and site-specific factors.
- 5.7 Policy LO 7 states that within the settlement confines of New Ash Green, development on a modest scale will be permitted where it can take place in an acceptable manner consistent with local character. Policy LO 7 requires new development should be of a scale and nature appropriate to the village concerned and should respond to the distinctive local characteristics of the area in which it is situated.
- 5.8 Policy SP 1 (Design of New Development and Conservation) requires all new development to be designed to a high quality which should respond to the distinctive local character of the area. Account should be taken of guidance adopted by the Council including local Character Area Assessments. In areas where the local environment lacks positive features new development should contribute to an improvement in the quality of the environment.
- 5.9 Policy EN1 (Design principles) states that proposals should create high quality design. The policy lists a range of criteria, those relevant to the application site are listed below:
- a) Sensitively respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area; the layout would respect the topography and character of the site and the surrounding area and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site;
 - b) the proposal would ensure satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and provide adequate parking and refuse facilities;
 - c) The proposal would incorporate, opportunities for increasing biodiversity potential and retain and enhance Green Infrastructure features including sustainable drainage systems.
 - d) Make satisfactory provision for the safe and easy access of those with disabilities; and

- e) Include infrastructure that meets modern communication and technology needs and restricts the need for future retrofitting (Broadband, high speed internet cabling, digital TV cabling and provision of a power supply that would support green technology)
 - f) Subject to the above considerations' development should make efficient use of the land on which it is proposed.
- 5.10 Policy EN2 (Amenity Protection) states that proposals should provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development. This includes consideration of factors such as excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicle movements, overlooking or visual intrusion and where the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.
- 5.11 Policy EN5 (Landscape) states that proposals that affect the landscape throughout the district will be permitted where they would conserve the character of the landscape, including areas of tranquility.

6.0 Assessment

Green Belt / Visual Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The Green Belt aims to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The NPPF states that construction of new buildings in Green Belt is inappropriate, but lists exceptions under paragraph 145.
- 6.2 The pre-application advice letter issued on 04.08.2020 (Ref. PA/20/00199) stated that:
- “As the site currently contains a dwelling in a rural area, the site could be considered previously developed land under the NPPF (exception g). The proposal could also be considered as infilling in a village (exception e). While Ash is not formally defined as a village in Sevenoaks local policy, this is clearly a developed frontage. On this basis I am of the view that the principle of the development is likely to be acceptable.*
- The proposals would have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt through increasing the scale of the development on the site to two storeys, however the impact on the wider openness of the Green Belt can be reduced by keeping within the established building lines and building heights of this frontage.*
- The proposed site plan suggests the removal of the existing outbuildings and structures across the wider site. This is welcome and would also help to improve the openness of the Green Belt, focusing development at the front of the site.”*
- 6.3 If a replacement building is larger (takes up more Green-Belt space) than the one it replaces it will have an impact – spatially/volumetrically – on openness. This is considered in terms of the spatial / volumetric assessment (based on physical measurements) and a visual judgment based on the impact on the sense of space. The proposed building would have an increased height on the existing bungalow, however as noted within the pre-

application advice letter, the 'impact on the wider openness of the Green Belt can be reduced by keeping within the established building lines and building heights of this frontage.'

- 6.4 This assessment follows on from the 2016 case of Turner, where the Court of Appeal confirmed that:

"The concept of 'openness of the Green Belt' is not narrowly limited to the volumetric approach suggested by [counsel]. The word 'openness' is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant... Prominent among these will be factors relevant to how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up it would be if redevelopment occurs ... and factors relevant to the visual impact on the aspect of openness which the Green Belt presents." [25]

- 6.5 As illustrated in **Fig. 5** below, the proposed front elevation would present two storeys with a pitched roof over, fronting The Street, Ash. This design characteristic, would keep within the established heights on this frontage. Please refer to **Appendix 1 - Site Photos**. The proposal would be appropriately integrated in terms of scale, height and mass. As an infill development, it would be in character and proportion with its context and setting, and have an appropriate relationship to adjoining properties. It would keep within the existing footprint of the bungalow and would see the removal of the existing front projection. The proposal would respect the existing building lines on the frontage and would have little to no visual impact on openness.



Fig. 5: Proposed Front Elevation

- 6.6 The proposal also involves the removal existing outbuildings and structures across the site. The total developable area of the site would reduce following the development. The reduction in structures on site can be appreciated through referencing: Fig. 6 - Site Demolition Plan, Fig. 7: Proposed Site Plan and Appendix 1 - Site Photos. The existing garage and shed structures harm the openness of the Green Belt through their excessive bulk and visual intrusion. It is noted that the existing structures are located to the rear

garden which backs onto unbuilt open landscape. The rear garden is considered to be a sensitive location in terms of the impact of the structures on openness. Therefore, the removal of these unattractive structures from the rear garden would significantly improve openness, both from a spatial / volumetric assessment and a visual judgment.



Fig. 6: Demolition Roof Plan

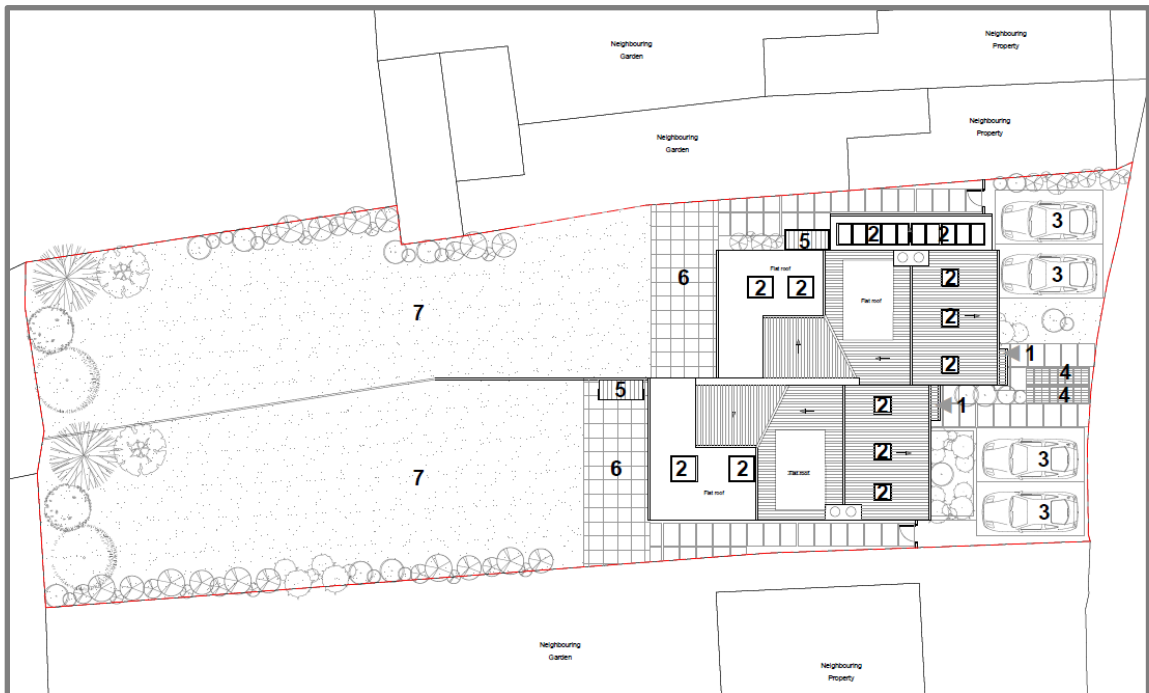


Fig. 7: Proposed Site Plan

- 6.7 There is a clear priority to identify land in existing built-up areas for development. The proposal would provide additional high-quality housing on a previously developed site to meet the districts housing requirements and help to alleviate the pressure to release unbuilt Green Belt land for development.

Design and impact on character of the area and landscape

- 6.8 As stated above, the massing and height of the proposal is of a modest scale which is in keeping with established heights on this frontage. The stepped front building line would provide articulation and to help reduce the appearance of bulk when viewed from the street. The proposal would remove the existing front projection which juts out and appears dominant within the street-scene. There would be a single storey side element with a glazed roof to the westernmost house. There would be timber gates to each side passage and soft-landscaping to the front which is a visual improvement on the existing stark lack of vegetation and greenery to the front of the site.
- 6.9 The location of the site is distinctly rural in its character and the use of a tiled roof, traditional fenestration and front porches would help the building sit comfortably within its context. The front porches are of an appropriate scale and would not attract undue attention or compete with other features of the building. Following on from Officers advice, the front parapet roof and enlarged fenestration have been scaled back. The roof is now a traditional pitched gabled form and features modestly sized rear dormers to each property. There would be three sets of rooflights to the front roof slope. The windows would be timber framed multi-pane units to match neighbouring properties. The windows would have square proportions to reflect the horizontal emphasis of the building. The proportion of solid wall to window would reflect that of local buildings.
- 6.10 To the rear there would be a single storey projection and half-width projection to the middle first floor of each dwelling. This would rise above the roof eaves line and add visual interest.
- 6.11 The material palette of painted render at ground level with hanging tiles at first floor, would replicate the style of the neighbouring 'Chamades' & other properties to the east. Overall, the new dwellings would be a significant visual improvement to the unattractive bungalow and ancillary structures which currently occupy the site.

Residential design and layout (standard of accommodation)

- 6.12 The new homes would have an internal area of 134 sqm and 131 sqm respectively which would exceed the minimum nationally described internal space standard of 121 sqm for a four-bedroom seven-person dwelling. The dwellings would be dual aspect, which has many inherent benefits including better daylight accessibility, a greater chance of direct sunlight for longer periods, natural cross-ventilation, a greater capacity to address overheating and a choice of views. Outlook is the visual amenity enjoyed by occupants when looking out of their windows or from their garden. Both units would have an outlook over a rear garden and green space. Therefore, both dwellings would receive adequate light, sunlight and have a high standard of internal amenity.

Impact on Amenity

- 6.13 The pre-application advice letter issued on 04.08.2020 (Ref. PA/20/00199) stated that:

I would advise you to review the 45-degree test for daylight which is described in our "Residential Extensions" SPD (derived from BRE guidance). It appears that the development may restrict sunlight and/or daylight to the ground floor windows of the property to the north. I would advise you to carry out these tests and, if necessary, revise the first-floor building lines.

- 6.14 The proposal has been revised in order to maintain adequate separation distances between the neighbouring windows. The rear building line would comply with the 45-degree test when measured in plan and elevation against the ground floor windows of the property to the north. As the proposal replaces an existing dwelling, there would not be an increase in overlooking of habitable rooms or the perception of being overlooked.
- 6.15 Overall, the proposal would not cause undue harm to neighbouring residential amenity in terms of overlooking, loss of light or outlook.

Transport (including car parking and servicing)

- 6.16 As the new dwellings each have three bedrooms or more and as the houses are located in a rural location, Appendix 2 of the ADMP requires that each unit benefit from two independently accessible off-street parking spaces. This proposal would provide two independently accessible off-street parking spaces per dwelling. Fig. 7 - Proposed Site Plan demonstrates that these parking spaces are an adequate depth and would not overhang the highway.

Cycle parking and refuse

- 6.17 The proposal provides 2 x secure cycle storage units, which would accommodate 3 bicycle spaces per dwelling for future occupiers. This would exceed the requirement of 2 spaces per unit, as set out within the Cycle Parking Standards. These facilities would be provided adjacent to the rear elevations of the new dwellings, within the private rear gardens, and are considered to be fully secure and accessible. The refuse storage area has been provided adjacent to the front boundary of the site, for ease of access.

Flood Risk

- 6.18 The proposal includes the removal of impermeable hard-landscaping which have high water run-off rates. The development would utilise Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in line with the drainage hierarchy to achieve a green field run-off rate where feasible.
- 6.19 The proposal would increase the soft landscaping on the site. In terms of hard-surfaces, the preferred method is to use an on-site soakaway using partial and non-infiltration methods set in permeable surface. The proposal would look to introduce a sub-surface means of water retention, or other measures which would avoid the reliance on using the street as a gully and the sewer system as the immediate point of water removal, without any on-site attenuation.

Sustainability

- 6.20 The proposal would produce 15% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013) requirements. The development would meet the carbon reduction targets as part of Part L1B of Building Regulations for retained thermal through the application of the energy hierarchy. The proposal has given consideration to the Energy Hierarchy, with the primary focus on reducing the energy demands of the existing building at the Be Lean stage of the hierarchy. The proposed dwellings will be enhanced through the use of A++ rated boilers, double glazing, and through upgraded insulation in order to meet a 15% reduction in carbon emissions. The proposal would use passive cooling measures identified through the cooling hierarchy, with no energy intensive mechanical cooling proposed.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 states that proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay and that where plans are absent, out of date, silent or indeterminate, applications should be approved unless the adverse impacts of allowing development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 7.2 On balance we consider that the proposed 2x 4-bedroom semi-detached dwellings are acceptable for the reasons set out below:
1. The building would respect the existing building lines and heights on the frontage and would therefore have little to no visual impact on openness;
 2. The proposal involves the removal of existing unattractive outbuildings and structures across the site which would reduce the total developable area of the site;
 3. The proposal would develop a previously developed site to provide additional high-quality housing to meet the districts housing requirement;
 4. The new dwellings would reference the traditional style and character of other properties on the frontage and be a significant visual improvement to the unattractive bungalow and ancillary structures which currently occupy the site;
 5. The dwellings would meet minimum internal space standards and have a high standard of internal amenity;
 6. The development would not cause harmful undue impacts to neighbouring residential amenity;
 7. Each dwelling would benefit from 2No. independent off-street parking spaces;
 8. The dwellings have been designed to produce 15% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013);
- 7.3 We consider that the proposed dwellings to be of high-quality design which would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt and we seek the support of the Local Planning Authority for this planning application.
- 7.4 For the above reasons, when taken as a whole, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development as defined within the NPPF and should be granted planning permission.

Appendix 1. Site Photos



1. Existing bungalow (Netherfield) as viewed from street level



2. Existing bungalow (Netherfield) showing neighbouring two storey property 'Chamades'

Site

Blank gable wall



3. Existing bungalow within context looking toward The Swan pub

Site

Blank gable wall



4. Existing bungalow as viewed from the rear garden



5. View of neighbouring building to the rear



6. Side access to the bungalow and drive



7. Neighbouring two storey properties 'Kiln Cottages'



8. Existing bungalow as viewed from The Street, showing neighbouring two storey properties 'Kiln Cottage' in the foreground



9. Existing bungalow as viewed from The Street, showing neighbouring two storey properties 'Stonechats' in foreground



10. Existing outbuilding structures in rear garden



11. Existing outbuilding and shed structures in rear garden