



T O M P K I N S T H O M A S

Planning, Design and Access Statement



57 Mears Ashby Road, Earls Barton

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of three detached dwellings within the existing residential planning unit

November 2022

Client	Mr M Warwick & Mrs A Poynter
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Executive Summary

- i. Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of three detached dwellings within the residential planning unit at 57 Mears Ashby Road, Earls Barton.
- ii. The application follows receipt of the Council's pre-application advice under reference NWP/21/00086/PREF, since when the applicant's have engaged the requisite ecological and architectural input in support of the application.
- iii. The pre-application advice confirms that the principle of residential development at the site is supported by the Development Plan, which comprises the Joint Core Strategy, Plan for Wellingborough and Earls Barton Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- iv. The proposals reflect the pre-application advice; with a comprehensive tree survey, Phase 1 Ecology Survey and optimal period bat surveys underpinning the design approach and habitat enhancement proposals.
- v. Importantly, the consultant arborist confirms that the fruit trees within the garden are not representative of a traditional orchard but are reflective of the commonly available garden varieties planted post-war and which are now, in view of their age, over-mature. Moreover, due to their location within an established garden with managed, amenity lawn, the understorey habitat typical of traditional orchards is not present either.
- vi. The optimal period bat surveys confirm the absence of bats within the existing dwelling and confirm no further requirement for survey effort.
- vii. The recommendation to appoint an Ecological Clerk of Works is noted and reflected on the plan drawings, together with the habitat enhancement proposals; the consultant ecologist and architect having liaised closely in designing the same.
- viii. The architect has designed the dwellings with input from the applicants who intend not only commissioning the project but living in the dwellings; hence the project is a self-build development. A deliberate decision has been made to take a unified approach to the design, which is considered appropriate on this small-scale site – the diversity of architecture along Mears Ashby Road, notwithstanding.
- ix. The proposals have been very carefully considered in response to the Council's pre-application advice. The requisite survey effort has been undertaken, identifying the important features of the site for retention to the extent that all bar two Category B trees are retained.
- x. In addressing the requirement to demonstrate positive effects on biodiversity, local character and absent any other technical harm, we submit that the application complies with the Development Plan whereby planning permission should be granted.

1 Introduction

1.1 Statement brief & structure

- 1.1.1 Tompkins Thomas Planning is instructed by Mr M Warwick and Mrs A Poynter to prepare a Planning, Design and Access Statement (hereafter 'statement') in support of an application for the demolition of No.57 Mears Ashby Road and erection of 3 no. detached dwellings on land within the existing residential planning unit.
- 1.1.2 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the associated plan drawings, topographical survey, tree survey, Phase 1 ecology survey and optimal period bat survey.
- 1.1.3 In the following sub-chapter, the statement introduces the site and surrounds and explains the proposals.
- 1.1.4 At chapter 2 the relevant provisions of the Development Plan (North Northamptonshire JCS – Part 1, Plan for Wellingborough and Earls Barton NDP) and national guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 are reviewed.
- 1.1.5 Chapter 3 deals with the assessment of the development proposal against the Development Plan, NPPF and other material considerations, before Chapter 4 draws this assessment together in a conclusion that the proposals comply with the development plan whereby planning permission should be approved without delay.

1.2 The application site and surrounds

- 1.2.1 The Site, No.57 Mears Ashby Road, is a detached bungalow set within a large residential curtilage towards the north-western end of a row of detached dwellings extending north of the A4500 and away from the main body of the village of Earls Barton. The nearest neighbour to the north-west is No.63 Mears Ashby Road; the absence of Nos. 59 and 61 reflecting the granting of planning permission for the erection of two further dwellings in the 1970s.
- 1.2.2 The aerial view overleaf shows the pre-app site in context, comprising the existing bungalow set towards the south-eastern boundary of the site and the remaining land forming part of its extensive curtilage.
- 1.2.3 The linear, residential development, of which No. 57 forms part, terminates to the NW opposite

Scotch Lodge Farm. The row of dwellings comprises an eclectic mix of dormer bungalows and larger, more modern detached dwellings set within individual plots and served by their own driveways from Mears Ashby Road. Opposite (E) and to the rear (W) there is agricultural land.

- 1.2.4 Vehicular access is gained via a tarmac drive leaving the western edge of Mears Ashby Road crossing the footway and highway verge. There is a secondary gated (pedestrian) access at the south-eastern end of the site frontage. There is a footway linking to the junction to the signalised junction to the south-east.

Figure 1: Site location relative to adjacent properties



- 1.2.5 Boundaries are in the main demarked by hedgerow and trees. There are early mature tree specimens to the rear of the bungalow which will be retained as part of the proposals. Garden variety fruit trees on the garden, generally to the north of the bungalow, will require removal. These were planted by the applicants' father in the late 1940s and are now over-mature.
- 1.2.6 The north-western boundary to No.63 is formed by a mature screen of mixed native-species trees that will be retained.

1.3 The proposals

- 1.3.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of 3 no. detached dwellings in replacement, all within the confines of the existing residential planning unit.
- 1.3.2 Each dwelling would be two-storey with three bedrooms at first-floor and the potential for a

- 1.3.4 The first floor extends over the main body of the dwelling only, the garage, porch and garden room being single-storey only. Hence the accommodation at first floor comprises two bedrooms and a family bathroom at the front of house and a larger bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite bathroom at the rear.
- 1.3.5 The carport makes provision for a small workshop, bicycle and recycling storage facility.
- 1.3.6 The dwellings have been designed without necessity of windows on the first floor of the flank elevations so as to ensure privacy among the proposed dwellings and relative to the adjoining neighbours.
- 1.3.7 The proposed facing materials are denoted on the proposed elevations and comprise fair faced reconstructed stonework laid and jointed using lime mortar with weatherboarding in untreated sawn oak or larch. Plinths are in reconstructed stonework but in contrasting colour to that above.
- 1.3.8 The roof tiles are clay 'Rosemary' plain tiles. Doors and windows are in powder coated aluminium in contrasting colours as noted on the drawings.
- 1.3.9 Habitat enhancement is clearly demarked on the drawings and integral to the buildings' design, constituting bird boxes built under the eaves overhang and raised ridge tiles to allow access for bats. Other proposals are shown on the site plan as proposed and include hedgehog boxes, insect hotels and hibernaculum.
- 1.3.10 Each dwelling would benefit from separate vehicular access, a no-dig method confirmed and installed under the supervision of the appointed Ecological Clerk of Works who is also a qualified arborist.
- 1.3.11 In replacement of the fruit trees that will be removed, new planting is proposed as shown on the site plan as proposed. This will ensure continuity and diversity of tree species over the site.

1.4 Planning constraints

- 1.4.1 Our review of Magic Map and as confirmed by the pre-application advice, indicates that the site and surrounding area is not subject to any form of environmental designation.
- 1.4.2 The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone

1, that preferred for development by national planning policy and nor is it at risk from surface water flooding.

1.4.3 Interrogation of Historic England's on-line mapping confirms that the nearest designated heritage is found approximately 1km to the south-west and unaffected by the pre-app proposals.

1.5 Pre-application engagement

1.5.1 In recognition of the NPPF's advice at paragraph 39, the applicants sought the Council's pre-application advice for the development. The Council's written response was received on 20th September 2021 and confirmed the following: -

- The constituent parts of the Development Plan and material considerations relevant to an application's determination;
- The relevant policies of the constituent parts of the Development Plan; noting in particular the criteria of NDP Policy EB.GD1;
- That the principle of development is in accordance with the Development Plan; the JCS and Plan for Wellingborough both identifying a settlement boundary for Earls Barton which includes the application site;
- A comprehensive tree survey would be required, but it would appear that three houses could be fitted into the site without destroying the oak and walnut trees, but that many of the orchard trees would have to be removed;
- There should be no archaeological impediment to development; a condition to secure a programme of archaeological observation during groundworks would be appropriate;
- Parking should meet the requisite standards with 2.0m x 2.0m pedestrian to vehicle visibility;
- That NPPF paragraph 120 is relevant insofar as decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land;
- Proposals should demonstrate a high standard of design as per paragraph 130 of the NPPF;

- The proposals, at that stage in draft layout form only, would appear capable of preserving amenity;
- Proposals should be accompanied by adequate ecology surveys and proposals for biodiversity enhancement (net gain);
- Dwellings should meet the nationally described space standards and category 2 of the National Accessibility Standards as a minimum;
- The potential for contamination can be addressed by a condition.

2 Planning Policy and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021

2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- 2.1.1 Section 38(6) explains that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.1.2 In this case, the statutory Development Plan for the area comprises the **North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2011-2031) Part 1, The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (2019) Part 2** and **Earls Barton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016)**.
- 2.1.3 The **National Planning Policy Framework** ('NPPF' or 'Framework') declares itself an important material consideration for all planning applications in England.

2.2 The Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 ('JCS')

- 2.2.1 The JCS identifies Earls Barton as the largest village in the Wellingborough area.
- 2.2.2 Policy 1 'Presumption in favour of sustainable development', enshrines a positive and proactive approach to decision-making where development contributes to delivering the plan's vision and outcomes through compliance with relevant policies.
- 2.2.3 Policy 8 'Place Shaping Principles' requires development to, inter alia, create a distinctive local character by responding to the site's immediate and wider context and local character and ensure that unacceptable impacts on amenity are avoided.
- 2.2.4 Policy 9 'Sustainable buildings' requires the incorporation of measures to ensure high standards

of resource and energy efficiency and consequent reduction in carbon emissions.

- 2.2.5 Policy 11 ‘The Network or Urban and Rural Areas’ confirms that small-scale infill development will be permitted on suitable sites within Villages, including Earls Barton, where this would not materially harm the character of the settlement and residential amenity or exceed the capacity of local infrastructure and services.
- 2.2.6 Policy 28 ‘Housing Requirements’ outlines the spatial strategy underpinning the delivery of new homes and Policy 29 ‘Distribution of New Homes’ along with Table 5, sets out a housing requirement for the four largest villages in order to “provide a steer for Neighbourhood Plans.” This includes approximately 250 dwellings over the plan period at Earls Barton.
- 2.2.7 Policy 30 ‘Housing Mix and Tenure’ confirms that housing development should provide a mix of sizes and tenures to cater for current and forecast needs. The policy confirms that affordable housing will not be sought on sites of 10 or fewer dwellings and also that proposals for individual custom-build development that are in line with the spatial strategy will be supported.

2.3 The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough

- 2.3.1 Consistent with the JCS, the Borough Plan places Earls Barton, as the largest village, in the top tier of the local settlement hierarchy. Paragraph 4.2.1 confirms that the settlement boundary for Earls Barton is confirmed by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3.2 Section 7.3 ‘Housing Trajectory’ confirms the JCS requirement of 250 dwellings at Earls Barton over the plan period, with anticipated delivery (2018-2031) exceeding this requirement and with existing commitments (2011-2017) amounting to nearly double the indicative requirement. The Plan is, however, cognisant that a large proportion of the supply is based on Strategic Urban Extensions, noting that a variety of other sites will ensure a ‘robust contingency’ within the plan in the event that delivery of the SUE’s is problematic.
- 2.3.3 Relevant to ‘self-build’ proposals are policies H5 and H6. The former (and supporting narrative) relates to the availability of self and custom build plots on larger sites; which the application site is not. H6, meanwhile, makes provision for single plot exception sites for self-build i.e. on land within rural areas that would not normally be considered appropriate for residential development. That the proposal provides for self-build without reliance on an exception policy and without comprising part of a larger site is, therefore, a material planning benefit of the

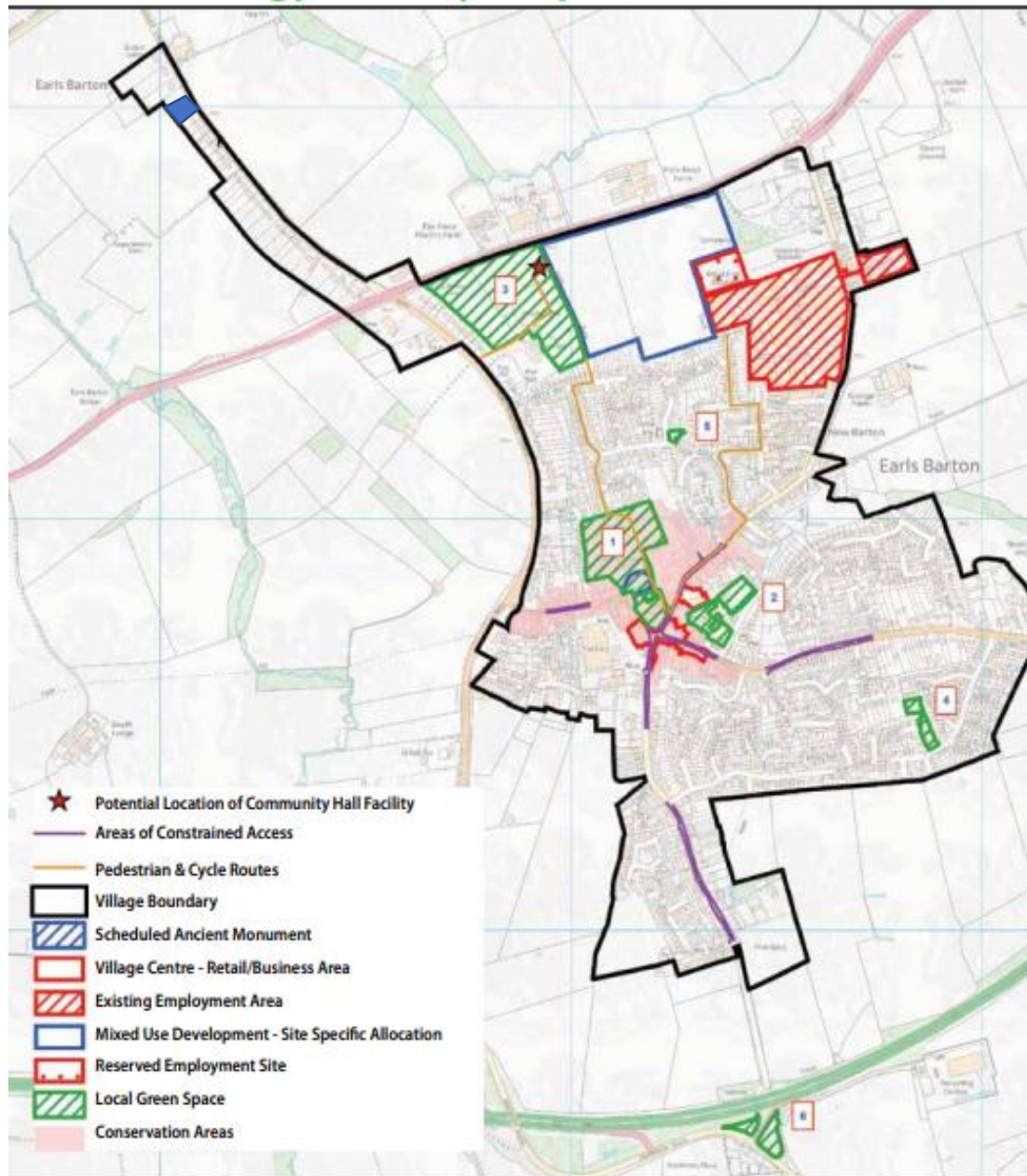
scheme.

2.4 The Earls Barton NDP 2016

2.4.1 The Settlement Boundary is identified on p.16/7 of the NP and is found overleaf at Figure 3. It includes the application site, which is shaded blue.

Figure 3: Earls Barton Settlement Boundary with Pre-app site shaded blue

5. The Strategy and Key Proposals



Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan Key Diagram (Fig 3)

- 2.4.2 Paragraph 6.4 confirms that “*small scale residential development within the village boundary, has and will continue to provide windfall development and will contribute towards housing needs and improve amenity for neighbours of derelict or redundant sites. These developments will be supported subject to their ability to demonstrate they will have no adverse effects on the amenity of neighbouring properties; through loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion by a building or structure, loss of car parking, and additional traffic resulting from the development.*”
- 2.4.3 EB.GD1 then sets the criteria against which proposals for residential development on infill sites within the village boundary will be assessed, confirming that such schemes will be permitted provided that all of the relevant criteria are met. In summary, these include being in keeping with the character of neighbouring buildings and the village in general; preserving amenity and highway safety; housing needs are met and sustainable and energy efficient design achieved.
- 2.4.4 EB.D1 requires development to be of a high standard of design and layout, again in keeping with the local character and seeking to utilise sustainable building techniques and materials wherever practicable. Support will be confirmed for new development proposals that achieve the stated criteria of which the following are of relevance to the application: -
- *Protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment;*
 - *Minimisation of tree and hedgerow loss;*
 - *Utilisation of sustainable drainage schemes;*
 - *Good performance relative to locally adopted design guidance, including the North Northamptonshire Sustainable Design SPD.*

2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 2.5.1 The NPPF 2021 sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It does not supplant the statutory Development Plan, but it is a significant material consideration when determining planning applications; particularly in instances where Development Plan policies are absent, silent or out-of-date.

- 2.5.2 **Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development**, sets out the three objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways if sustainable development is to be achieved. There is an **economic objective** – which challenges planning to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that *“sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support economic growth.”*
- 2.5.3 The **social objective** refers to the necessity to support strong, vibrant communities by ensuring *“...a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations...”* whilst the **environmental** objective seeks the protection and where possible enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. Thus, the social objective refers directly to the provision of a sufficient number and range of homes, whilst the economic and environmental objectives each refer to the need to ensure availability of sufficient land in pursuit of those objectives, whilst ensuring effective use is made of that land.

Decision-making

- 2.5.4 **Paragraph 11** requires that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In cases where the proposal is in accordance with an up-to-date Development Plan this means granting planning permission without delay in accordance with Paragraph 11 c).
- 2.5.5 Where policies *“which are most important for determining the application are out of date”* this means granting permission unless the policies listed at footnote 6 apply (which is not the case here) or any adverse impacts would **significantly** and **demonstrably** outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole – paragraph 11 d) ii).

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 2.5.6 **Paragraph 60** confirms the Government’s objective of boosting significantly the supply of homes.
- 2.5.7 **Paragraph 62** requires that planning policies reflect the needs of different groups in the community, including those people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- 2.5.8 **Paragraph 69** confirms that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area.

2.5.9 **Paragraph 74** underscores the necessity of ensuring a 5-year supply of homes, it being clear from appeal decisions that attainment of a 5-year supply should not operate as a cap.

2.5.10 **Paragraph 79** says that in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Traffic and transport

2.5.11 **Paragraph 105** recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account in decision-making.

2.5.12 **Paragraph 110 b** requires development proposals to provide safe and suitable access to the site for all users and **Paragraph 111** states: -

*“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an **unacceptable** impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be **severe**.*

Effective use of land, design and environmental quality

2.1.20 **Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land** – requires planning decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes... while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

2.5.13 **Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places** – requires that schemes should be visually attractive and add to the overall quality of an area. Developments should reinforce a sense of place and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible... with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

2.5.14 **Paragraph 134** confirms that permission should be refused for *“development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.”*

2.5.15 **Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**, sets out that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through several measures, which are encapsulated by **paragraph 170**.

3 Main issues

3.1 The principle of development

3.1.1 The Development Plan confirms Earls Barton as a main village, wherein the principle of residential development will be acceptable provided compliance is secured with relevant policies. As per Figure 3, the Pre-app site is clearly within the defined settlement boundary and the ‘gateway’ test of NP Policy EB.GD1 is satisfied. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

3.2 Assessment against Policy EB.GD1.

3.2.1 The principle of development being established, it is our view that NDP Policy EB.GD1 is the most pertinent to decision-making as it confirms the criteria that residential development will be expected to fulfil. This section of the Statement therefore assesses the scheme against the respective criteria of the policy in tabular form, relating the individual criteria and providing our assessment as to compliance.

Table 1: Assessment against EB.GD1

Policy EB.GD1 – Development on infill sites within Earls Barton settlement boundary
<p><i>Criterion 1: development is of a scale, massing, density and design in keeping with the local character of neighbouring buildings and the village generally</i></p> <p>Assessment: As noted in the pre-application advice, the application site is not subject to any specific environmental designation. Development along Mears Ashby Road comprises an eclectic mix of predominantly post-war, detached residential development. Within this context No.57, being a single-storey property, is something of an oddity; the vast majority of other dwellings in the vicinity being either full 2-storey height (sometimes more) or of dormer style. The proposal is for two-storey dwellings with single-storey garaging and rear garden/dining room. In respect of scale and massing, the design is entirely in keeping with the local character.</p> <p>In respect of density and as explained above, the site is understood to have been the beneficiary of planning permission for 2 further dwellings, hence the gap in the numbering</p>

from No.57 to No.63. As per the proposed site layout, all three dwellings would benefit from generous private amenity spaces to the rear and generous parking and manoeuvring to the fore, which again, is entirely consistent with the character of the local area; which although lacking a unifying or prevailing architectural style is consistent in terms of plot depth and the general arrangement of development within those plots.

The *design* of the properties has been overseen by a highly experienced, registered architect working to a client brief that anticipates the applicants and wider family members will occupy at least 2 of the proposed dwellings. As above, our assessment of local character is such that the traits common to development along Mears Ashby Road in particular are that dwellings are detached and mostly two-storey in plots of consistent depth and with individual points of vehicular access. The application proposals are entirely consistent with these themes.

There is a mix of architectural styles and materials such that it is difficult to take direct design cues from the existing stock. The architect has, however, conceived a traditional two-storey form with an appropriate and high-quality palette of materials that will sit comfortably within the local context.

It is our assessment that the proposal complies with this element of the policy and by extension the design policies of the JCS and NPPF.

Criterion 2: development does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring uses through loss of privacy, loss of daylight or visual intrusion

Assessment: The pre-application advice confirmed it unlikely that the proposal would result in adverse impacts on residential amenity. The detailed designs have followed through on this assessment by adopting an internal layout that obviates any requirement for first floor windows in flank elevations; instead focussing views out towards the open countryside to the west (rear). This arrangement also ensures adequate privacy within the scheme and not just in respect of neighbours.

Criterion 3: the traffic generation and parking impact created by the proposal does not result in an unacceptable direct or cumulative impact on congestion or road and pedestrian safety

Assessment: The pre-application advice confirmed that subject to the provision of vehicle/pedestrian visibility and sufficient parking the scheme would comply with relevant

design standards.

The application has been designed with such provision in mind; the open-fronted car port providing 2 no. spaces with generous parking and manoeuvring space within the plots such that vehicles will be able to enter, turn and leave in a forward gear. As noted on the proposed plan, visibility is excellent along Mears Ashby Road in both directions and the depth of the highway verge such that the requisite visibility can be readily achieved. It should be noted that the 30mph restriction begins to the north-west, whereupon vehicles will have slowed on the signed entrance to the village.

The proposals comply with this criteria.

Criterion 4: where a DAS is required in support of the application, it can be demonstrated that the proposal meets the criteria set out in the North Northamptonshire Sustainable Design SPD checklist

Assessment: We have reviewed the checklist at Annex 5 of the 2008 Design SPD, which are founded on Building for Life standards. As is to be expected, a number of the criteria are applicable to large-scale schemes and given the time since adoption, the Building Regulations have been twice revised; mostly recently in June this year whereby many of the requirements are now taken as standard.

Of those criteria that are relevant to small-scale village infill schemes, we consider the car parking proposals sensibly and well-integrated. We also consider the proposals to respond positively to the SPD questions concerning the portrayal of a distinctive character, architectural quality and the design of private space; which in this case incorporates the good, mature trees and evidence that the development works with the important, natural features of the site. Otherwise, the scheme also incorporates measures for waste management and recycling, water efficiency standards are now mandatory and ecological considerations are embedded within the scheme's design.

Insofar as they are relevant, the application demonstrably complies with the requirements of the Sustainable Design SPD.

Criterion 5: the development provides a beneficial net contribution, through the provision of

a mix of dwellings to meet needs

Assessment: The proposal is for small-scale infill. The scheme nonetheless results in a positive net contribution to meeting housing need by providing an overall uplift of 2 dwellings against the baseline. The dwellings are designed for flexible use and adaptation as need dictates. The family room at ground floor is capable of use as a ground-floor bedroom or study as the case may be. This flexibility will allow people to reside in their homes into old age and avoid the potential necessity to enter care homes/sheltered accommodation, relieving the pressure on these sectors.

The application complies with this criterion.

Criterion 6: the development provides on-site affordable housing or an off-site contribution in line with other policies of the development plan

Assessment: It is our understanding that a scheme of this scale is not required by the JCS to provide affordable housing (ref: JCS Policy 30). The pre-application advice would appear to confirm our understanding.

3.3 Efficient use of land

- 3.3.1 Chapter 11 of the NPPF ‘Making effective use of land’ confirms that planning 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. Decisions should, therefore, promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.
- 3.3.2 Paragraph 124, in support of achieving appropriate densities, confirms that policies and decisions should supply development that makes efficient use of land. Such efficient use is contingent upon the development maintaining, where desirable, an area’s prevailing character and setting and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. Although we note the Council’s current housing land supply position, the advice at paragraph 125 of the NPPF, wherein it is stated that applications which fail to make efficient use of land should be refused.

3.3.3 The application site extends to c. 0.26ha. The erection of 3 no. dwellings on the site would thus give rise to a density of 12 dwellings/ha. This is not, by any measure, an over-development of land, but is entirely characteristic of the local area.

3.3.4 The proposals therefore reflect the prevailing character of the area whilst giving rise to an effective and efficient use of land for housing within a settlement where infill development is supported.

3.4 Highway safety and accessibility

3.4.1 The Council's pre-application advice confirmed that parking should be provided in accordance with the parking standards and Policy 8 (b) (ii) of the JCS, which confirms the requirement that development ensures a satisfactory means of access and provision of parking, servicing and manoeuvring.

3.4.2 The Site plan notes the requirement for a bound surface over the first 5 metres, specifying a tarmac crossover leading to a rolled, gravelled parking and turning area for each plot. It also appropriately provides for cycle storage within a dedicated cycle store attached to the garage.

3.4.3 Excellent visibility is achievable across the frontage and the wide highway verge will ensure the required 2m x 2m vehicle/pedestrian visibility.

3.4.4 The application demonstrates a safe means of vehicular access and therefore complies with Joint Core Strategy Policy 8, NDP Policy EB.GD1 and chapter 9 of the NPPF, having particular regard for paragraph 111. The proposals would not cause significant highways or transportation impacts that would preclude the grant of planning permission.

3.5 Drainage

3.5.1 It is proposed to connect foul effluent to the mains foul sewer, which is the sequentially preferable solution, whereas surface water will be discharged to a soakaway on land in the applicant's control.

3.6 Ecology

- 3.6.1 JCS Policy 4 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' confirms that a 'net gain' in biodiversity will be sought through a series of measures which include the protection of existing biodiversity and geodiversity assets by refusing proposals where significant harm to an asset cannot be avoided, mitigated or as a last resort, compensated with weight accorded to an asset reflecting its status in the hierarchy of biodiversity and geodiversity designations.
- 3.6.2 The NPPF likewise adopts a hierarchical approach to the protection of biodiversity assets whereas the NDP via EB.D1 requires, among other things, the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment including areas of nature conservation value and the minimisation of tree and hedgerow loss.
- 3.6.3 The applicants instructed H.E.C. to conduct a Phase 1 Ecology Survey, which is submitted with the application. The survey is based on desktop review of available resources, including biological records data, and fieldwork conducted by a suitably qualified surveyor in June 2022. This principal conclusion of the Phase 1 survey was confirmation of the requirement for optimal period bat surveys, which were then conducted by Naturally Wild – see below.
- 3.6.4 In respect of other protected species, the Phase 1 survey confirmed no evidence of badgers, dormouse, hedgehogs or newts. Bird species recorded at the time of survey were all common and representative of the general population locally. At the time of survey no nesting activity was observed. This notwithstanding, any requisite tree and hedgerow removal will be conducted outside of the bird nesting season under the supervision of the ECoW.
- 3.6.5 As explained above, there has been consultation between the ecologist and architect whereby the habitat enhancement measures are recorded on the plan drawings and delivery can be subject to a planning condition.

Bat surveys – August 2022

- 3.6.6 Two bat activity surveys were carried out on 5th August and 16th August respectively. The former was a dusk emergence survey, the latter a dawn swarm survey. There are no Statutory Designated Sites within 1 km of the site. The nearest is Wallaston Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) approximately 3.2 km to the southeast and comprises two diverse and species-rich hay fields and is designated for being the largest known example within the county.

Due to the scale of the proposed works and them being limited to the red line boundary, the impacts upon the non-statutory and statutory sites are expected to be minimal.

- 3.6.7 The dusk survey showed activity in the area in the form of foraging and commuting within the garden, but no bats were observed emerging from the building.
- 3.6.8 The same activity was witnessed during the dawn survey on 16th August 2022, but again no bats were recorded swarming or returning to roost within the building. The report concludes that while the habitats on site and surrounding the dwelling offer suitable foraging and community habitat for a range of bat species, the building itself does not contain any bat roosts. No further bat surveys are required, but it is recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is used to minimise light-spill.
- 3.6.9 These recommendations have been followed as shown on the scheme drawings, whereby LED lighting is carefully directed and kept to the minimum practicable.
- 3.6.10 It follows from the above, that subject to the imposition of conditions the development proposals will not conflict with the objectives of the relevant policies and are demonstrably capable of delivering biodiversity net gain.

3.7 Trees

- 3.7.1 The pre-application advice noted the presence on site of a number of tree specimens and recommended the submission of a detailed tree survey and categorisation. The applicants appointed Andrew Cunningham Arboricultural Consultant to conduct a full tree survey and constraints plan. The outputs of his fieldwork are included with the application.
- 3.7.2 The applicants then appointed HEC to conduct the Phase 1 Ecology Survey. The assessor is also a qualified arborist, whereby the trees on site were surveyed by two, suitably qualified professionals. Both experts agree in respect of the categorisation of the trees and hence agree the terms of the necessary protection and retention proposals and the justification for removal of category C trees.
- 3.7.3 The majority of fruit trees, which as explained in the Phase 1 Ecology Survey should not be defined as a Traditional Orchard, are category C. They are over-mature fruit trees with a short life-expectancy and situated within a managed, garden setting. The only Category B trees

requiring removal are a Bramley (T12) and one of G4.

- 3.7.4 All category B trees (English Oak and Walnut) in the western portion of the site will be retained and protected during the course of development; the tree protection to be erected under the supervision of the Ecological Clerk of Works.
- 3.7.5 The layout has been clearly informed by the tree constraints and to as great an extent as possible, Category B trees are retained. Where this is not practical, compensatory planting is proposed.
- 3.7.6 We conclude that the impacts of development upon the tree resource on site is acceptable and in accordance with the principles of NDP, JCS and NPPF. Put simply, the removal of category C and U trees and 1 no. category B tree cannot in these circumstances amount to a sustainable objection to the proposals.

3.8 Social and economic benefits of the scheme

- 3.8.1 The provision of a dwelling delivers social and economic benefits.
- 3.8.2 In terms of the **social role** of sustainable development, the scheme would provide housing at a settlement where residential development is directed by the Development Plan. In doing so, the development would help to meet local housing needs within the borough, providing people with the houses they need.
- 3.8.3 The provision of new dwellings also provides choice in the marketplace and, in increasing supply, will help to reduce house prices thereby aiding affordability across the county.
- 3.8.4 The site is a small site as defined by paragraph 69 of Framework whereby it would be built out quickly and would provide housing in the immediacy, whilst the dwellings are also a self-build – referenced at paragraph 62 of the NPPF as a sector for whom planning policies should make adequate provision; footnote 28 citing the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
- 3.8.5 Turning to the **economic role**, the development would ensure short-term employment of the construction trade. Given the dwellings are bespoke units, local tradespeople and suppliers will be employed, helping to sustain local jobs.
- 3.8.6 The new homes bonus from which the Council would benefit as a result of the development

and the increase in Council Tax precepts are also economic benefits of the scheme.

3.9 Sustainable design

3.9.1 As referenced above, the Council's SPD outlines a number of design-related criteria, including the use of renewable energy sources and the avoidance of undue impacts on the amenity of adjoining land uses. In this respect, and as acknowledged by the pre-application advice, the development would not give rise to substantial adverse effects on amenity.

3.9.2 In terms of energy efficiency, the applicant will incorporate a range of energy saving and generating devices. The applicant will install Air Source Heat Pumps in conjunction with solar panels in combination with a highly insulated fabric; as required by the recent iteration of the Building Regulations. These measures are confirmed by the proposed drawings and will ensure compliance with the markedly more robust Part H of the Building Regulations 2022.

3.9.3 In this manner the scheme will deliver a highly sustainable design which, by virtue of the use of renewables and appropriate massing, scale, material use and detail, accords with the distinctiveness of the locality. The proposals thus represent sustainable design in accordance with the Development Plan.

3.9.4 The materials and finishes specified for the proposed dwellings have been selected to be largely maintenance free. The walling and roofing materials, windows, doors and rainwater goods are naturally hard wearing and durable. The intention is to minimise the requirement for routine decoration.

3.10 Section conclusion – compliance with the Development Plan

3.10.1 The foregoing sub-chapters have demonstrated the application complies with the Development Plan. It is a small-scale residential development within an existing settlement identified as a focus for growth.

3.10.2 The application site is of demonstrably low environmental sensitivity, not subject to any landscape or ecological designation and is also in Flood Zone 1. This Statement confirms compliance with relevant policies and guidance.

3.10.3 The final chapter of this Statement will conclude our assessment and invite the Council to approve the application without delay.

4 Should planning permission be granted?

- 4.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that *“where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.”*
- 4.1.2 The Development Plan is the Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (JCS) and Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough and Earls Barton Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 4.1.3 NDP Policy EB.GD1 is permissive policy supporting infilling within the defined settlement boundary. The application site fulfils this requirements and in a location that is of demonstrable low environmental sensitivity.
- 4.1.4 In the language of the NPPF, the application would thus attain environmental benefits alongside economic and social benefits associated with the supply of self-build homes that will be commissioned and constructed by local tradespeople and suppliers.

<p>Environment</p>	<p>Moderate benefit</p>	<p>The proposal would result in a well-considered, environmentally responsible development.</p> <p>The scheme would respect the prevailing, linear development along Mears Ashby Road and enhance bio-diversity value relative to the baseline position by maintaining tree cover and providing extensive habitat creation to support key species.</p> <p>The application site is not part of a designated landscape but would represent an appropriate infill development within the settlement and nor would it affect the setting of designated heritage assets.</p>
<p>Social benefits (arising from the supply of housing)</p>	<p>Moderate benefit</p>	<p>The development represents a small-scale housing scheme in the context of the Government’s express intention of significantly boosting the supply of homes. At this scale the development is</p>

		proportionate to the host settlement. This has attendant social benefits by creating a greater supply of homes for which there is evident need, including self/custom build dwellings.
Economic benefits	Limited benefit	Although limited in this case, the development will give rise to economic benefits associated with the construction phase and supply chain and the new homes bonus.

4.1.5 It follows from the above that the application is representative of sustainable development and that as per Policy 1 of the JCS and as per the direction of paragraph 11 of the Framework, planning permission should be granted without delay.