



## Woolf Bond Planning

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

WBP Ref: 8346/TR

E-mail: [t.rumble@woolfbond.co.uk](mailto:t.rumble@woolfbond.co.uk)

16 May 2023

Development Control  
Hart District Council  
Civic Offices  
Harlington Way  
Fleet  
GU51 4AE

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **Pre-Application Request regarding a replacement dwelling**

#### **Heckfield Heath House, The Causeway, Heckfield Heath, RG27 0LQ**

I write on behalf of the landowner in relation to the enclosed pre-application request in respect of a draft development proposal to demolish the existing detached dwellinghouse, and construct a replacement detached 5 bedroom house at Heckfield Heath House, The Causeway, Heckfield Heath.

This pre-application request is accompanied by the following drawings:

- 5927-1100 Location Plan
- 5927-1101 Existing Site Plan
- 5927-1110 Proposed Site Plan
- 5827-1200 Existing Ground Floor Plan
- 5927-1210 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- 5927-1211 Proposed First Floor Plan
- 5927-1212 Proposed Roof Plan
- 5927-1300 Existing Elevations (South & West)
- 5927-1301 Existing Elevations (North & East)
- 5927-1310 Proposed Elevations (South & West)

The proposed development falls under the category of a non-householder pre-application, which is subject to a fee of 25% of the planning application fee + VAT, which equates to £138.60. This fee has been paid separately. I would ask that an in person meeting is included as part of the service and that upon receipt of this submission, potential dates for that meeting are proposed.

## The Site

The site comprises a substantial detached dwelling house, situated within a cluster of residential dwellings, set in the woodland on the northern side of The Causeway. The site is accessed along a private access track and is largely screened from public views by its wooded surroundings. There are 2 residential dwellings which are occupied, located in a cluster close to the north-west of the site (visible on the aerial image below).

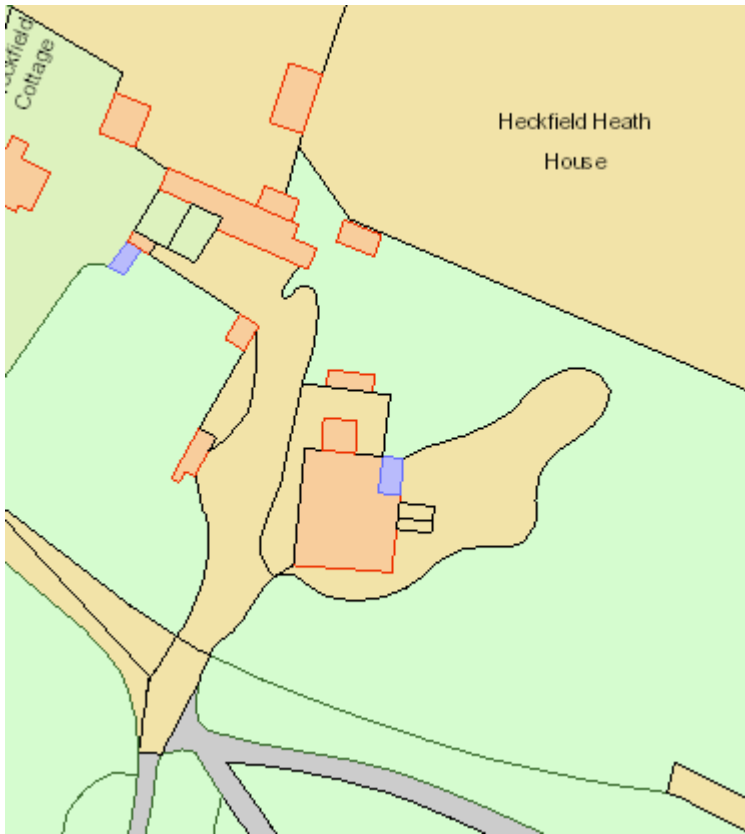
In terms of its location, the site is located in the designated countryside as defined by the Hart District Local Plan. It is within 5 Kilometres of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area ('SPA') but as a replacement dwelling only it is not envisaged any contributions would be required in this respect.

The existing dwelling is currently in a poor state of repair and is being protected from further deterioration through the erection of a scaffold tower, roof covering and tarpaulin.

For contextual purposes, views of the existing site are provided below.



*Aerial view of the Site (marked with a red star) and nearby dwellings to the north-west (Google, 2023)*



*View of the Heckfield Heath House property using Council's planning map (May 2023)*



*Streetview of the site access (on the left) and view along The Causeway (looking east) (Google Maps, February 2023)*



*Photograph of the existing dwellinghouse (taken circa 1999)*



*Photograph of the existing dwellinghouse (taken January 2022)*

### **Planning History**

There is limited information regarding the site's planning history available on the Council's website. However, the below applications are referenced:

- Planning application ref: 88/17218/FUL, Erection of replacement dwelling, Granted 04.11.1988

- Building control ref: 89/00360/OLDFP, Erection of detached dwelling, Complete 07.09.1989
- Section 32 notice ref: 03/00815/MULBN, Repairs and improvements, 09.09.2003

It is understood that the 1988 replacement dwelling permission was not implemented. However, it is clear that the Council previously approved a replacement dwelling application on this site in 1988. Whilst it is acknowledged that this would have been under different planning policies, the principle of a replacement dwelling on the site remains relevant.

More recently, the site was subject to pre application advice relating to a proposed replacement dwelling in April 2012 (LPA Ref. GRCA/12/00407/SITE). For completeness, a copy of the submitted pre-app. drawings and the Council's response are appended to this submission. Whilst the Council's planning policy has changed since 2012, the overall principle relating to a replacement dwelling proposal remains similar. In relation to the principle of development, the 2012 pre-app. response confirms the principle of a replacement dwelling on the site as acceptable:

## 1. Policy and Principle of the proposal

The application site is located outside of a defined settlement boundary, as defined by the Hart District Replacement Local Plan, and therefore is classified as a countryside location. It should be noted that the site is located on the boundary of Hart District and Waverley District.

In terms of Hart's policies, policies RUR2 and RUR3 are general policies governing development in rural locations. These policies do not prevent development, providing there are other policies within the Local Plan which cover the development proposal and that the proposal is not detrimental to the character and setting of the countryside by virtue of its siting, size and prominence in the landscape. It is noted that Policy RUR3 refers to buildings of high quality design.

The principle policy for a development of this nature is RUR23, which allows for replacement dwellings in rural locations subject to conforming to the following criteria;

- 1). The existing dwelling has lawful residential use.
- 2). The existing dwelling is not the result of a temporary or a series of temporary permissions.
- 3). The proposed dwelling is not disproportionate in size to the existing dwelling, or in its impact on the countryside

Clearly, with any formal application would need to demonstrate how the proposal complies with these criteria. This would be best achieved through setting of the floor area of the original dwelling, the approved scheme and this proposal, indicating the % increases of total floor area. As a general rule, developments which exceed 50% increase in floor area would be considered to fail to comply with the point 3 above in terms of being proportionate to the size of the original dwelling.

The second matter to consider is the impact of the development as the countryside is protected in its own right for its intrinsic character and beauty. Any development which would have a detrimental impact on this character would not be permitted. In this instance, the development seeks to replace an existing building. Whilst it is noted that the size and scale of the replacement development would not be significantly increased compared with the existing, with the scale and proportions of the dwelling appear commensurate with many other dwellings found within the surrounding area. The Design and Access Statement should make reference to how the dwelling accords with the local distinctiveness.

On the merits of the points discussed above, the proposal accords with the requirements of policy RUR23. Given that this is a development for a replacement dwelling, the principle of development has to be accepted.

At this time, the proposals were for a 2 storey, 6 bedroom dwelling sited largely on the existing footprint of the building. This was also considered, and the Council determined that the proposed scheme would not appear unduly large or disproportionate and would not have any unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring residents:

## 2. Site constraints and impact

As stated above, the application site is located outside of a settlement boundary, as such; any development has to be of a quality to ensure there would be no unacceptable impacts on the character of the countryside or this nearby historic building.

The replacement dwelling would be of a similar bulk and mass as the existing dwelling and therefore would be unlikely to appear unduly large or disproportionate in size compared with its surrounds. The size of the dwelling would be commensurate with the large detached properties within the surrounding area and therefore the proposal is acceptable in this respect. Full details of the proposal materials should be provided with any formal application submission.

In terms of the impacts on the amenities of the neighbouring residents, due to the size of the plot and the position of the dwelling within the site, it could not be said that there would be any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residents through overlooking or overshadowing. In this respect the development proposal is likely to be acceptable.

Accordingly, the submitted proposals seek to respond to the previous positive pre-app advice and have been designed to follow similar approaches in seeking a proposal of a similar footprint to that proposed in 2012 and the footprint of the existing building. For context, a copy of the west elevation submitted at the 2012 pre-app. stage is provided below.



*Extract from the 2012 Pre-App. West Elevation*

### **Proposed Development**

The proposed residential development would demolish the existing dwelling and replace it with a new 5 bedroom detached family home. The siting of the replacement dwelling is on the same location within the site as the existing dwelling. The proposed footprint is to be approximately 199sqm, which is a slight reduction from the current footprint of 214sqm. The existing first floor of the house is deteriorated, so it is not possible to provide any existing floorplans of this level, however previous written information on the site indicates that it had 9 bedrooms.

The design of the proposed replacement dwelling is in a traditional Georgian architectural style, with a symmetrical southern elevation and symmetrical main façade (western). Windows align vertically and include details such as sash bars, cills and stone lintels, with some feature circular shapes. The front door is centrally located and includes a simple porch. The roof form has been designed with a shallow pitch and two large chimneys.



West Elevation

*Extract from Proposed South and West Elevations – drawing no. 5927-1310 – showing the main/front elevation*

The area immediately surrounding the dwelling would be laid out for car parking, landscaping and for residential amenity space. Access would be via the existing access track from The Causeway. The scheme would enable a traditional and appropriate design respecting the surrounding vernacular and be of a similar footprint and mass to that of the building it would replace.

### **Planning Policy Considerations**

The principle of the proposed development accords with relevant local planning policy NBE1 (Development in the Countryside, Hart Local Plan 2032), which only supports development proposals outside of the settlement policy boundaries in limited circumstances, including;

*‘g) providing a replacement dwelling; or*

*j) located on suitably developed previously developed land appropriate for the proposed use.’*

Detailed development management considerations will be addressed in any future planning application; however the proposals meet the current technical housing space standards and will not have any impact on neighbouring dwellings by virtue of the separation distances.

### **Site Constraints**

In terms of constraints, the house is not listed, and the site is not in a Conservation Area. The site is in flood risk zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding). There are trees on site, and the potential for the presence of protected species, so the future planning application will be accompanied by a comprehensive suite of supporting documents covering these matters.



## **Principle of Development**

The site is occupied by an existing residential property, in a cluster of dwellings in the countryside. Local Policy NBE1 is supportive of redevelopment proposals where a replacement dwelling and/or development of suitable previously developed land is involved. The site and proposals benefit from both of these supportive criteria. With regard to supporting paragraph 227, the replacement dwelling is positioned within the site on the existing footprint and would not result in any material harm, including to the local landscape or amenity when compared to the existing situation. It follows that similar to the 2012 pre-app. response, the principle of development on the land can be supported.

In addition, the NPPF encourages the re-use of previously developed land and is generally supportive of new homes. It is therefore considered that the principle of redeveloping the site for a single dwelling house is established.

## **Parking Provision**

It would be helpful if the Council could advise on the current parking standards required for the proposed development. It is envisaged that driveway parking for at least 3-4 cars will be laid out, given the site's location. Secure cycle parking will be included in the application proposals.

## **Validation Requirements**

A suggested list of technical reports / documents to be prepared in support of any detailed application is detailed below. I would be grateful for your confirmation through this pre-app. process that the below list is appropriate:

- Planning Statement
- Design & Access Statement
- Arboricultural Report
- Ecology Report

## **Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area ('SPA') Mitigation**

The development proposed is for a replacement dwelling. As the proposed dwelling includes 5 bedrooms, and it is understood that the existing dwelling contained 9, it is therefore considered that no contributions would be needed in respect of SPA mitigation.

## **Summary**

I trust that the above, together with the submitted drawings and documents are sufficient for the Council to assess the proposed development in order to provide detailed feedback at this pre-application stage. As mentioned, we would welcome a meeting to discuss the proposals and in due course look forward to receiving the Council's written response.

In the meantime, please get in touch should you require anything further or have any questions at this stage.

Yours faithfully

***7. Rumble***

Thomas Rumble BSc MSc MRTPI

Encs.