

**PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF MR. ANDREW
SHERMAN SEEKING DETAILED PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF 5 TWO-STOREY DETACHED FOUR BEDROOM
HOUSES ON LAND SOUTH OF 4, SLICES GATE, SOUTHEND ROAD, GREAT
BURSTEAD, BILLERICAY, ESSEX,**

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 Architectural Design and Plan has been appointed to prepare the design and layout for the five dwellings and Raymond Stemp Associates has been appointed to advise on planning policy and to prepare the supporting planning report.

1.2 The application lies to the west of 4 Slices Gate, a residential dwelling. The site has a frontage to Southend Road, A129, of 66 metres and depth of 36 metres, giving a total site area of 0.24 hectares and is located within the urban village of Great Burstead. Within the site there are several structures and a recently built annexe. This structure would be demolished if permission is granted for the proposed development and the other structures would also be removed.

1.3 This statement will fully describe the site, the relationship of the proposal to the existing and adjoining residential development, to facilities in the wider area and to public transport services.

1.4 The proposed development will be fully described. Emphasis will be given to the residential development that has been allowed fronting Southend Road a short distance to the south of the proposed site.

1.5 The proposed development will be analysed against the Development Plan Policy and the conclusion will be drawn that the proposed development is appropriate development within the Green Belt.

1.6 The proposed development will also be analysed against Government policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023. Similarly, the conclusion will be drawn that the proposal is not in conflict with the Framework as it is considered the development is appropriate development within the Green Belt.

1.7 Consequently, the failure of the Council to provide a five-year supply of deliverable housing land means that the tilted balance exercise needs to be applied. This statement will demonstrate that the presumption in favour is for the proposed development to be allowed.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND THE WIDER AREA

2.1 As already indicated, the application site is located on the east side of Southend Road and to the south of the junction of Southend Road with Coxes Farm Road. 4 Slices Gate is a residential bungalow fronting onto Southend Road, with a large garden, which includes the application site. The property originally formed part of the Slices Gate Mushroom Farm which was located in Coxes Farm Road.

2.2 The southern part of the curtilage of this property forms the planning application site. A hedgerow runs along the western boundary of the site. There is also a substantial hedgerow running along the southern boundary of the site delineating a firm boundary between the proposed residential site and the open fields beyond. To the east of 4 Slices Gate, fronting onto Coxes Farm Road, is St. Peter's Primary School. This school serves not only the residential area around Coxes Farm Road but also the residential area to the west of Southend Road. These two catchment areas are linked by a pedestrian zebra crossing virtually outside the residential property of 4 Slices Gate, thereby linking the two residential areas together, i.e., those areas to the east and west of Southend Road.

2.3 Virtually opposite the junction of Southend Road with Coxes Farm Road, is the Kings Head Public House which contains a popular restaurant and a Beer Garden. This section of Southend Road has street lighting. Just north of the junction of Coxes Farm Road with Southend Road are bus stops on either side of the road. There are several bus services available at the Kings Head Public House bus stops which are within easy walking distance of the proposed development. These services are:

No 9 Basildon - Brentwood

No 12 Wickford - Billericay

No 251 Wickford - Warley

No 300 Chelmsford City Centre – Billericay

In addition to the bus stops at the Kings Head Public House there are bus stops in Mill Road also within convenient walking distance from the proposed development site.

This stop services route No 50 Ingatestone -Shotgate

The conclusion is drawn that the proposed development would be a very sustainable location with good services for public transport.

2.4 Billericay town centre is only about fifteen minutes bicycle ride from the proposed dwelling on this site. The town centre contains a good range of shops and facilities including a library, a community centre, health services, a good range of restaurants and other eating establishments, and Billericay railway station. Billericay, being located some 25 miles east of London, possesses a good fast rail link to central London which is one of the reasons why Billericay is a commuter town.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Although the application site falls within the Green Belt, it does form part of an extra-large garden to 4 Slices Gate. The rear part of the garden is not an attractive site and needs to be put to a beneficial use. It would still leave the existing host property with an adequate size garden area.

3.2 The Important aspect of this unique site is that it is located between residential development to the west of Southend Road as well as to the north and residential development including the local primary school on the east side and adjoining the application site.

3.3 The proposed development consists of five 4-bedroom two story detached dwellings. Each dwelling would include a double garage and an electrical Vehicle Charging Point. There would be adequate turning space on each site for a car to turn around and to leave the site in forward gear.

3.4 Each dwelling would have an individual access to the main road. There is no existing public foot path running along this section of Southend Road. However, the Applicant is willing to enter into a legal agreement with the County Council (Highways) to donate land to the County Council for a public footpath to be provided and for the work to be funded from the development. Thus, if the County

Council and Basildon Council are minded to grant planning permission the final decision will need to be deferred so that a legal agreement can be prepared.

3.5 The front garden of each of the 5 plots would be attractively landscaped to make a positive composition and to enhance the character and appearance of the area.

3.6 Turning now to the design of the dwellings, all 5 properties would contain similar accommodation although there are some subtle changes to enable a degree of co-ordinated change to be achieved.

3.7 The proposed accommodation at ground level would consist of an entrance hall leading through to an open plan lounge, dining area and kitchen. There would be a separate sitting room although that room could also be used as a study or home office, There would also be a cloakroom at ground floor level. The dining area and lounge area would have patio doors leading onto a paved patio and the rear garden which would be in excess of the Council's minimum size rear garden space.

3.8 The proposed accommodation at first floor level consists of a master bedroom with an ensuite shower room, three further bedrooms and a family bathroom.

3.9 The proposed accommodation complies with the Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards. The dwellings have been designed as family homes. These proposed dwellings would function and fit in well with the existing residential area and would not intrude into open countryside. In addition, these 5 dwellings would make a valuable contribution to assisting the Borough Council in meeting its housing targets - a matter which is dealt with in more detail later in the statement.

3.10 Although the 5 proposed dwellings are two storey, they would not be out of character with the host dwelling 4 Slices Gate, because of the distance between the existing residential dwelling and the proposed dwellings. In addition, no harmful overlooking would occur to the detriment of the occupiers of the host dwelling.

3.11 The dwellings have been designed either as a chalet style dwelling with a two storey gable projection, or a two storey with a similar gable projection The walls of the dwellings would be finished with facing brickwork. The roof tiles and the vertical tile hanging would be the same colour and texture. Horizontal timber boarding is proposed around the gable projection and on parts of the first-floor elevations as

shown on the elevations. The precise colour and texture of materials could be dealt with by way of a planning condition.

3.12 The proposed dwellings would blend in well with the existing development in the area. Attention is drawn to the detached dwellings also fronting onto the opposite side of Southend Road just to the south of the current application site.

4. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

4.1 Basildon District Local Plan was adopted in March 1968. Alterations to the Plan were carried out in September 1999. A direction by the Secretary of State relating to saved policies followed in September 2007. The Saved Policies have been reviewed against the National Planning Policy Framework published in 2018 to assess the level of compliance each policy has with the NPPF.

4.2 Work started on a new Local Plan in December 2014 to cover the period from 2014 to 2034. This draft Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 28th March 2019. However, following a change in the political control of the Council, the Emerging Local Plan was withdrawn from the Secretary of State. The Borough Council has commenced the preparation of a new Local Plan but that has not reached the stage of completion whereby it can be examined by the Secretary of State.

4.3 The Council relies on the old out-of-date Basildon District Local Plan which is not an adequate policy base to determine planning applications for new housing development. This is a fundamental reason why the Council can only achieve 1.48 years supply of deliverable housing land.

4.4 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 section 38 (6) and in addition section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, requires Local Planning Authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.5 In the absence of a Local Plan to steer development to a specific location and taking into account the Council's shortfall in deliverable housing, land regard needs

to be given to all the physical features of the application site. These factors are listed as follows:

a) The site is located between the South Green Residential neighbourhood to the west and St Peter's Primary to the east.

b) the site does not project into open countryside but is screened from the open countryside by a mature tree screen on the southern boundary of the land.

c) The site does not form an attractive garden but a previously developed parcel of land containing several structures, garages, and sheds. It forms a previously developed parcel of land and should be put to a beneficial use. This property originally formed part of the Slices Gate Mushroom Farm located also

4.6 The site is shown on the now out date Basildon Local Plan as falling within the Green Belt. It is now considered necessary to consider the objectives of Green Belt policy. The five purposes of the Green Belt are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and for convenience are reproduced below:

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The application is an underused parcel of land located between existing developments.

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The development of the application site would not stop neighbouring towns from merging with one another.

c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The application site is not open countryside but previously developed land.

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

The development of the application site would not have any effect on the preservation of the historic character of Billericay

e) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

The policy is stopping the re-cycling of the underused derelict land being put to a beneficial use.

4.7 As a starting point the above paragraph clearly demonstrates that the site the subject of this planning application does not fulfill any of the functions of Green Belt Policy, It is now necessary to consider how the proposal complies with Green Belt Policy. The Green Belt Policy is not compliant with the National Green Belt Policy. It is now necessary to have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 where the Government's policy is set out. Although the Framework does not form part of the Local Development Plan it is a material consideration.

4.8 Government advice is Local Planning authorities should regard the construction of any new building as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, Government policy sets out a list of developments which are exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Such a development would be regarded as appropriate.

4.9 Paragraph 149 of the Framework sets out exceptions to the Green Belt Policy. Sub paragraph (e) refers to "*Limited Infilling in villages*" The application site as already referred to in this statement is located within the village of Great Burstead which is known as an urban Village. Although this village is contiguous with the Town of Billericay it does have its own identity. Great Burstead is referred to in the Norman Domesday Book (1086) as a village having 150 sheep, 2 horses. 3 teams of Oxen and 118 Villagers

4.10 The Church of St Mary Magdalene at Great Burstead is linked to Saint Cedd (D. 664) who was a missionary Monk and later Bishop of the East Saxons. The old Yew Tree to the south of the church is one of Essex oldest trees. Nowadays the village has a shopping centre in South Green. It consists of 19 units including a Pharmacy, take away shop, post office, Doctor's surgery, convenience store and a post office. There is also a memorial Hall and a petrol filling station.

4.11 There can be no doubt that Great Burstead is a self-contained village, and the proposed development is a logical infilling within this village. The proposed development falls within the exception class as stated in the Framework and is therefore appropriate development within the Green Belt.

4.12 In addition, paragraph (g) of the list of exceptions to Green Belt policy is also relevant. This paragraph refers to limited infilling of previously developed land where the proposals would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. Reference has already been made to the site

forming part of the Slices Gate Mushroom Farm located in Coxes Farm Road. The site is previously developed land.

4.13 The reason why it will not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt is that the site is bounded on the west side by residential development, it is bounded on the north side by the residential property of the host dwelling and it is bounded on the east side by the primary school. The southern boundary consists of a substantial tree screen which makes a strong defensible boundary between the urban development to the north of the tree screen and the open countryside to the south of the tree screen.

4.14 The above paragraphs, it is submitted, clearly demonstrate that the site could be developed without causing harm to the Green Belt Policy. Such development would put this under-utilised parcel of land to beneficial use and generate 5 much needed new homes which would assist in meeting the shortfall of the identified need for dwellings in the Council's housing target.

4.15 It is now essential to consider whether the proposed development is sustainable development. This is the over-arching policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, The achievement of sustainable development is driven by three objectives, namely:

*Economic Objective

*A Social Objective

*Environmental Objective

4.16 The Framework makes it clear that these objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the three objectives. The proposal is examined against these three objectives as follows:

An Economic Objective

4.17 In the short-term, jobs will be created in the construction industry for building these dwellings and provide income and trade to local subcontractors, suppliers of building materials and plant services.

4.18 In the longer term, it is highly likely that the occupiers of the dwellings would rely on local businesses and use local service providers for garden maintenance,

window cleaning, domestic house cleaning and maintenance, delivery of food from supermarkets and other large delivery companies such as Amazon, delivery of cooked food from restaurants, and take-away facilities, taxi services and other local services provided by the service industry.

4.19 The families occupying the dwellings would be able to contribute to the local workforce by entrepreneurial skills.

4.20 The efficient running costs of the dwellings would allow the occupants to make a positive and meaningful contribution to the economy of the area.

The Social Objective

4.21 The proposed dwellings would create well-designed comfortable homes located on reasonably sized plots and meeting the objectives of the NPPF to produce a beautiful and safe place in which to live.

4.22 The proposal does achieve a social objective in providing a property to meet the aspirations of the occupiers who would be able to support local activities organised by the church, the school, the local public houses and the wider community.

4.23 The location of these dwellings would help the occupiers achieve a healthy life-style by walking or cycling to some local facilities.

An Environmental Objective

4.24 The design of the dwellings would significantly enhance the immediate setting whilst being sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area.

4.25 These improvements will be obtained through different aspects of landscape design to enhance the setting of the dwellings and to contribute to the biodiversity of the site.

4.26 The dwellings have been designed to incorporate a number of energy efficient measures that will minimise waste and pollution as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Conclusions on sustainable development

4.27 Having analysed the proposal against the three objectives of sustainable development, it is considered that the proposal does represent a sustainable development when taken as a whole, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

4.28 The National Planning Policy Framework does provide a presumption in favour of sustainable development where Local Planning Authorities have a shortage of deliverable Housing land. In this case Basildon Borough Council has a severe shortage of deliverable housing land. Whilst this case is only about 5 dwellings the proposal could be considered as a windfall site and is capable of being developed quickly once planning permission is granted and planning conditions have been discharged.

4.29 It is recognised that the site falls within the Green Belt and the presumption does not apply but in this case it has been demonstrated in paragraph.....that the site does not perform any of the functions for including this site within the Green Belt. The Green Belt boundary in which this site falls was defined in the Basildon Local Plan. It was drawn tightly around the towns and villages within the District and allowed very little space for future growth of the settlements in the plan. This is why the Council is now in such a difficult position in relation to achieving sufficient housing land for the identified housing needs.

4.30 It is considered that having regard to all the physical features of the site. The fact that it formed previously developed land, that the site lies within the Village of Great Burstead and the proposal results in limited infilling in the village, the development of the site would make a positive contribution to meeting the identified housing need of the Borough and the site does not perform any Green Belt function it is considered that Very Special Circumstances do apply to this site which outweigh the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

5 THE TILTED BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

The Considered Advantages

5.1 The application site is an untidy parcel of land containing a number of structures and formerly formed part of the Slices Gate Mushroom Farm. Although the site falls within the residential curtilage of 4 Slices Gate the site is not used in an efficient way. The development of the underused parcel of land for 5 dwellings would enable this land to be put to a beneficial use in helping to meet the shortfall of homes in the Area. This is a real and positive advantage,

5.2 The development of this site which does not fulfill any Green Belt function will help to protect Green Belt that does have a positive Green Belt function.

5.3 The proposed dwellings would result in energy efficient homes with good levels of sustainability.

5.4 The occupiers of the dwellings would be able to make a positive contribution to the economy of the area by supporting local services facilities and public transport.

5.5 The construction of the 5 dwellings would generate construction jobs in the short term and service jobs in the longer period, such as window cleaning, gardening, decorating, house cleaning, etc. The local jobs would help the economy of the area.

5.6 All of these benefits, which include public benefits, can be achieved without causing harm to the Green Belt Policy or any harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The Considered Disadvantages

5.7 It may be considered that the proposal would result in the loss of countryside or open land.

Comment : The application site is not open countryside. It is an untidy parcel of land not making any contribution to the area whereas if it was developed it would assist in meeting the shortfall in the Council's deliverable housing needs.

5.8 The benefits of putting this parcel of land to a beneficial use exceed any perceived harm to the countryside.

CONCLUSIONS

5.9 In the Applicant's opinion the balance falls in favour of planning permission being granted in this case. The real and positive advantages of the proposal outweigh any perceived harm if permission were to be granted.

5.10 The Borough Council is respectfully requested to allow this proposal subject to appropriate conditions.

