

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Erection of two 2-bed houses following demolition of existing non-agricultural buildings

Hooke Farm
Effingham Common
Effingham
Leatherhead
Surrey
KT24 5JE

Prepared for Runnymede Homes Ltd & Godolphin Homes Ltd
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RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 30th June 2022 the Council refused planning permission (application reference 21/P/02609) to demolish the existing non-agricultural buildings and to erect five dwellings in their place. The site comprised a collection of former farm buildings set around a courtyard in what appears to have been the former farmyard to Hooke Farm.
- 1.2 The site lies in the designated green belt within a rural part of Effingham and within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (400m-5km). The previous planning refusal confirmed that whilst situated within the green belt, the site comprises previously developed land. Therefore, in accordance with green belt policies within the NPPF, redevelopment of the site in part or in full does not comprise inappropriate development in principle.
- 1.3 Runnymede Homes Ltd together with Godolphin Homes Ltd ('the applicant') has reviewed the reasons for refusal cited in application reference 21/P/02609 and has agreed an option with the landowner. The option allows the applicant to bring forward a scheme to redevelop the site for housing in a manner that seeks to address the previous reasons for refusal.
- 1.4 The scheme for which planning permission is now sought involves the demolition of the buildings that have been in non-agricultural use and to erect a single storey development comprising two detached 2-bed dwellings with parking. Just under half of the site will be set aside to create a wildflower meadow to be secured as part of the development.
- 1.5 This planning, design and access statement has been produced to accompany the planning application and to consider the points raised by the planning officer in the pre-application response. It takes into account the following material considerations:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2023
 - National Design Guide 2019
 - Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019)
 - Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (2023)



- Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2030)
- Parking Standards SPD (2023)
- Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy SPD (2020)
- Planning Contributions SPD (updated 2023)
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy (2017)
- Application 21/P/02609

1.6 The planning application is supported by the following documents:

- 1APP and Certificate B
- Scheme Drawings
- Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Transport Technical Note
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Bat Roost Survey
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- Energy Assessment
- Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Development Questionnaire
- Tree Survey and AIA



2. Site and Location

- 2.1 The application site comprises a rectangular plot connected to Effingham Common by a 160m long single-track lane. The track serves the application site and the adjacent Hooke farmhouse. Excluding the access, the plot is approximately 70m wide and 65 m deep with an area of some 0.46ha.



- 2.2 The site formerly comprised farmyard buildings associated with Hooke Farm. However, the farmyard and its buildings have, for some while, been in non-agricultural use as a livery, stables and storage use.
- 2.3 The assortment of buildings are grouped around a large area of concrete-panelled hard surface with one range of buildings lying adjacent and parallel to the access track with an L-shaped footprint with the other buildings sat in a very regimented, geometric layout. A vehicle accessway leads off the access track into the farmyard.
- 2.4 The existing buildings are low quality in appearance and constructed in a variety of different methods according to their former, and original uses. There are two buildings in active equestrian/livery use laid out as loose boxes, stabling, etc, a large open-sided barn for hay storage and a metal building for storage.

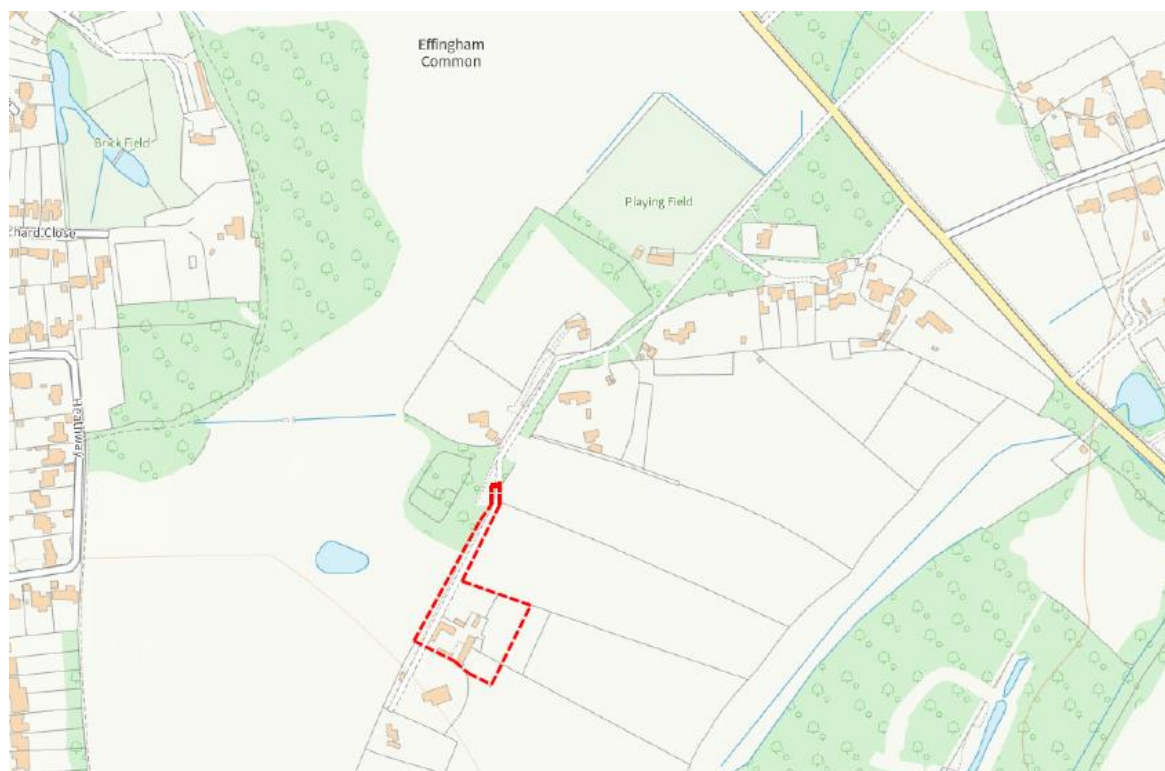


2.5 As the images above show, the existing buildings vary in terms of their footprint, roof form, height and depth. The buildings are single storey though one of the buildings is notably taller. Three of the buildings have duo-pitched roofs ranging between 2.5m and 4m at their highest extent. The L-shaped frontage building has a tower feature at the



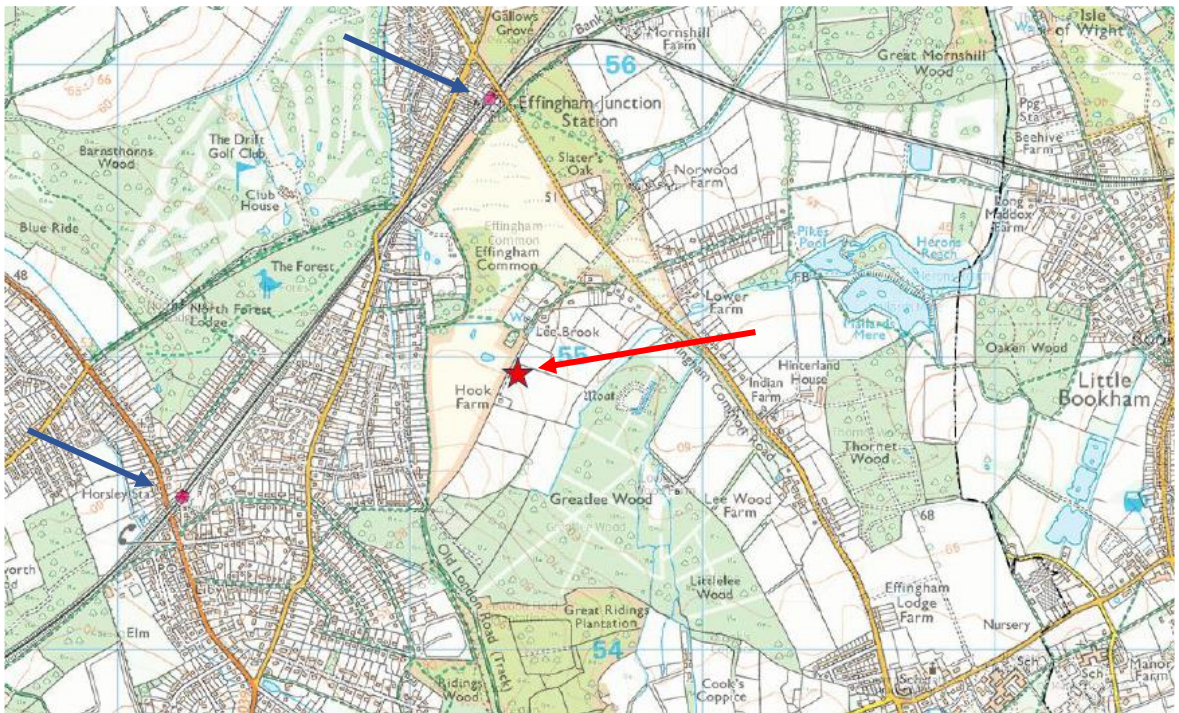
entrance into the farmyard and this is pyramidal in shape rising to a height of around 5.7m

- 2.6 The site is generally flat and beyond the farmyard, to the northeast and southeast, lie open fields. Around the northern and southern boundaries there are a range of trees and hedgerows and trees line the western side of the access track. It is estimated that just over 25% of the site ((excluding the access track) is covered with buildings or hard standing.



- 2.7 The access track to the site leads off Effingham Common which is also a single-track lane. The access track to the site together with Effingham Common as far as the cricket club forms part of a Public Right of Way (PRoW548). This is a shared surface used by all vehicles and walkers alike. As the extract above shows, there are a number of large, detached dwellings standing in large plots that take access off Effingham Common. In addition, there is a cricket club and ground (Effingham Cricket Club) that takes access off Effingham Common. There are a number of intersecting PRoWs in the immediate area providing good opportunities for non-car based travel to local amenities.

- 2.8 The site lies to the southeast of Effingham Common which provides a valuable source of recreation. Whilst the site lies within what may be described a rural enclave, it is by no means isolated. Within 16 minutes' walk time (or 4 minutes cycle time) from the site (1.2km travel distance) lies Effingham Junction railway station providing access to London Waterloo (approximately 47 minutes) and Guildford (approximately 20 minute). The site therefore lies within easy commuting distance by public transport.



- 2.9 The site lies in close proximity to both Effingham and East Horsley. Both centres provide a range of day-to-day facilities including restaurant, shops, library, post office and schools. The accessibility of the site with travel by non-car modes to the facilities necessary to support day to day living are very viable propositions would suggest the site actually lies within a sustainable location.

3. Relevant Planning History

3.1 As mentioned in Section 1, a planning application was submitted in 2021 by a housing developer to demolish all buildings and to erect five 2-bed detached dwellings with parking. All were single storey in scale and 4.75m to the ridge.



Front
| 1:100 | PROPOSED



Side
| 1:100 | PROPOSED

3.2 In terms of footprint, the Design and Access Statement that supported the application suggested an overall reduction in footprint of 6.1% (16% in GIA) over the existing

buildings. The officer report noted an overall reduction of 8.6% in volume noting that this would make a positive contribution to the openness of the site. The officer report also acknowledged that the development proposed was not considered to be inappropriate in green belt terms as it fell under the exceptions listed in NPPF149(g).

- 3.3 The officer report considered the location of the site was not isolated, but that it was not well connected to local facilities and was “on the edge of what is reasonably accessible to pedestrians in terms of physical separation (typically 800m-1200m)”. The report noted that Effingham Common Road had a continuous footway along its length, but as it was unlit and narrow in places “...pedestrians and cyclists are not likely to find the route suitable or desirable...”.
- 3.4 Officers considered the design and layout of the five dwellings would be repetitious and, together with the inevitable domestic paraphernalia associated with such a number of dwellings in close proximity would result in the development having an urbanising effect. The report noted that existing houses in the area were generally large, detached and with large gardens surrounding them. The fact several of the proposed houses appeared to have no gardens associated with them placed the development overall at odds with the prevailing pattern of development in the locality and hence out of keeping with that character.
- 3.5 The report noted that in terms of highway safety, whilst objections had been made relating to the narrow access track, the Highways Authority considered the proposed addition of five new dwellings to be acceptable.
- 3.6 The planning application was subsequently refused on the following grounds:
- “1. The proposals, due to the site’s rural location and characteristics of the local road network will not enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, and will fail to promote sustainable patterns of transport. As a result the proposals represent an unsustainable form of development contrary to the goals of policy ID3 of the 2019 Local Plan and paragraph 79 of the NPPF 2021.
 2. The proposals would, by virtue of the amount, layout, design repetition and use of the site would produce a contrived and incongruous domestic character that will result in harm to the rural context and character of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy D1



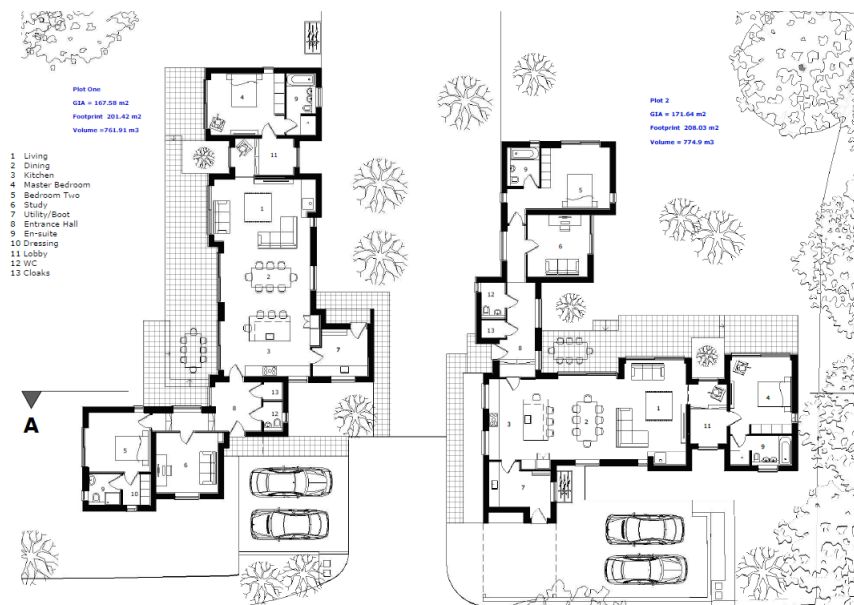
of the 2019 Local Plan, G5 of the 2003 Local Plan (as saved by CLG Direction on 24/09/07), Policy ENP-G2 of the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan and Chapter 12 of the NPPF 2021.

3. The proposed dwellings do not meet required amenity standards due to the lack of gardens proposed and are therefore contrary to Policy D1 of the 2019 Local Plan and Chapter 12 of the NPPF 2021.
4. The site lies within the 400m to 5km zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA). The Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that there will be no likely significant effect on the Special Protection Area and, in the absence of an appropriate assessment, is unable to satisfy itself that this proposal, either alone or in combination with other development, would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Special Protection Area and the relevant Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In this respect, significant concerns remain with regard to the adverse effect on the integrity of the Special Protection Area in that there is likely to be an increase in dog walking, general recreational use, damage to the habitat, disturbance to the protected species within the protected areas and road traffic emissions. As such the development is contrary to the objectives of policy NE4 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (as saved by CLG Direction on 24/09/07), policy P5 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (LPSS) 2015-2034 and conflicts with saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan 2009. For the same reasons the development would fail to meet the requirements of Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended, and as the development does not meet the requirements of Regulation 64 the Local Planning Authority must refuse to grant planning permission."



4. Proposed Development

4.1 Planning permission is sought to demolish the existing building (except a small part of the wall to Building 4) and to erect two detached 2-bed single storey dwellings.



- 4.2 The site is accessed off the original access track that also serves Hooke Farmhouse adjacent on the right. A small turning head is created off which are sited two parking spaces for each dwelling.
- 4.3 Both houses are set back slightly from the access track with the house on Plot 1 having a garden area immediately adjacent to the track and House 2 set behind a retained wall to Building 4. This provides continuity of street enclosure and screens the parking. It also provides a link to the previous use of the site.
- 4.4 Each dwelling is different in plan form and layout. The house on Plot 1 is sited mainly perpendicular to the access track although there is a small element that returns across the frontage. The house on Plot 2 faces the access track but with a lesser element running perpendicular to create an L-shaped footprint, again, reflecting the layout of existing Building 4.
- 4.5 Each house has a large, open-plan kitchen/dining/family room, with a double bedroom accessed at either end with the main living space acting as the hub around which all other rooms take access.



PLOT ONE AND TWO WEST ELEVATION 1:100



PLOT ONE AND TWO EAST ELEVATION 1:100

- 4.6 The top drawing shows the two houses viewed from the access track. The bottom drawing shows the houses viewed from the wildflower meadow at the rear. Both

drawings give a clear indication of the contemporary architectural style proposed for the site, but a style that clearly has its roots in the traditional farm building design idiom. Each house comprises a number of smaller modules or blocks joined together. This building form presents blocks that require only short roof spans so that even though traditional roof forms are utilised, the roof ridges are not excessive in height. The roof forms provide visual interest and a clear reference to the agricultural roots of the site.



PLOT ONE SOUTH ELEVATION 1:100



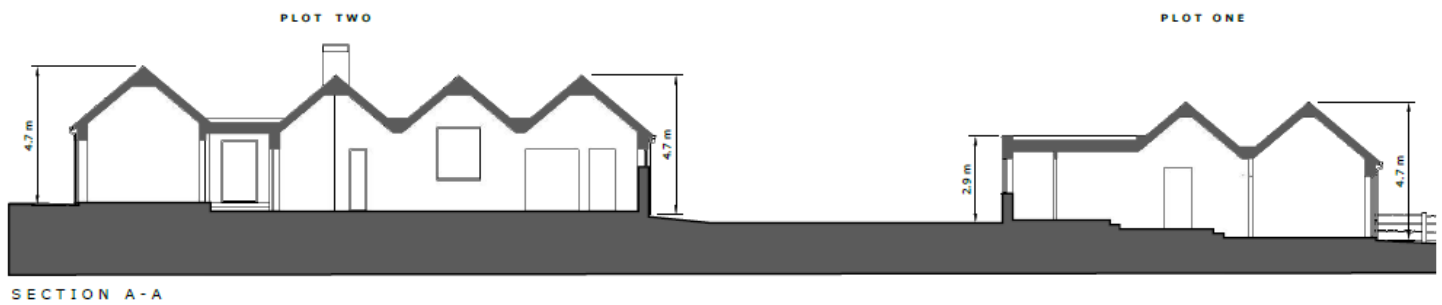
PLOT ONE NORTH ELEVATION 1:100



PLOT TWO NORTH ELEVATION 1:100



PLOT TWO SOUTH ELEVATION 1:100



4.7 Each house has a generous garden wrapping round three sides of the building. In addition, there is a large soft-landscaped courtyard sitting between the two dwellings which leads to a large wildflower meadow at the rear of the site. This part occupies approximately 40% of the red line site and will not be included within either of the respective residential curtilages. This will provide a valuable opportunity to secure biodiversity net gain over fields that have been extensively grazed by horses in the past and which are habitat poor. The meadow will also help preserve the openness of the site as you will be able to see straight through the site in either direction. The use of open timber fencing will also help maintain the openness of the site and views through it. The image below shows the rear elevation of both houses viewed over the proposed wildflower meadow.



4.8 The external materials chosen for the two houses again seeks to reference the former agricultural use of the site whilst working with the chosen design aesthetic. Plot 1 will use a combination of red multi stock facing bricks and a recessive dark stained timber

cladding whilst Plot 2 will use a buff multi stock facing brick and dark stained timber cladding. Both houses will have powder coated aluminium double-glazed windows and patio doors, whilst each front door will be oak. All pitched roofs will be clad in natural slate with rolled lead ridges and galvanised rainwater goods. The use of a very limited palette of materials using shared elements will help create a uniform but not repetitious external appearance referencing the agricultural past of the site.



PLOT ONE

- ① RED MULTI STOCK FACING BRICK
- ② BUFF MULTI STOCK FACING BRICK
- ③ DARK STAINED TIMBER CLADDING
- ④ NATURAL SLATE
- ⑤ POWDER COATED ALUMINIUM WINDOWS AND SLIDING PATIO DOORS
- ⑥ OAK FRONT DOOR
- ⑦ ROLLED LEAD RIDGE
- ⑧ GALVANISED STEEL RAINWATER GOODS



PLOT TWO



5. Development Plan and Other Material Considerations

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Other material considerations include statements of national planning policy set out in the NPPF.
- 5.2 The Development Plan for the Borough comprises the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019) and the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (2023). Relevant material considerations include Parking Standards SPD (2023); Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy SPD (2020); Planning Contributions SPD (updated 2023); and Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy (2017).

Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019)



- 5.3 The Guildford Borough Key Diagram shown above identifies Hooke Farm as lying within from the green belt. As the diagram shows, significant parts of the borough are defined as green belt. The spatial vision set out in the Plan is to meet the identified growth needs of the borough in terms of housing, employment, retail and leisure whilst maintaining the extent and function of the green belt. The plan has a target of 10,678 new homes by 2034, 1,200 of which will be non-strategic sites within villages inset from the green belt. The spatial vision acknowledges that not all of the required housing can be met within the borough's urban areas. Half of the new homes target is to be met through two urban extensions and a new planned settlement.
- 5.4 Policy S1 sets down the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy S2 sets out a sequential preference for the location of new homes with Guildford town centre first, the urban areas of Guildford, Ash and Tongham second, inset villages third, and identified green belt villages fourth. Policy S2 sets out a target for 562 new dwellings per year over the plan period, and Table S2b (Spatial Strategy: Distribution of Housing 2015-2034 (net number of homes)) targets 195 arising from previously developed and within the green belt. Supporting paragraph 4.1.9 to Policy 2 acknowledges that whilst identified sustainable locations are the preferred locations for new development, there are not enough sustainable locations to accommodate all the new development necessary to meet identified needs.
- 5.5 Policy H1 requires new residential development to deliver a range of housing choices to meet the needs identified in the SHMA. All new homes must meet the Technical Space Standards. The SHMA identifies the need for 10% 1-beds, 30% 2-beds, 40% 3-beds and 20% 4-beds for new market dwellings.
- 5.6 Policy P1 defines various areas of the borough on the Proposals Map as the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value. Within the AONBs, it is the Council's objective to conserve and enhance these areas to maximise their special landscape quality and beauty. Within AGLVs, development is required to ensure that no harm is caused to the setting of the AONB or the distinctive character of the AGLV itself. The site does not lie within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty nor within an Area of Great Landscape Value.



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- 5.7 Policy P2 defines areas of the borough as Metropolitan Green Belt where a presumption against inappropriate development will be maintained. The site does lie within the designated Metropolitan Green Belt but the Council has confirmed the site is regarded as previously development land.
- 5.8 Policy P3 defines areas of countryside as designated on the Proposals Map. Development that can justify the need for a rural location will be permitted so long as its proportionate to the nature and scale of the site, its setting and the location and it causes no coalescence between certain defined areas. The site does not lie within designated countryside.
- 5.9 Policy P5 sets out the measures in relation to development affecting in isolation or cumulatively the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Within the zone of influence (400m-5km linear distance) avoidance and mitigation measures must be delivered prior to occupation of any new dwelling based on a combination of SANG and SAAM. The site lies within the zone of influence.
- 5.10 Policy D1 requires new development to achieve a high design whilst responding to locally distinctive character. Within villages, new development should have regard for settlement patterns and how built form interacts with the surrounding landscape.
- 5.11 Policy D2 sets out the need for new development to be of sustainable design and construction, be fit for purpose considering climate change, and be designed to incorporate climate change mitigation measures with decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy.
- 5.12 Policy ID3 sets the sustainable transport objectives for new development. Off-street parking should be provided to ensure that any on-road parking arising from development does not adversely impact on road safety.
- 5.13 Policy ID4 sets out the Council's policy in respect development proposals that may affect its blue and green infrastructure including biodiversity, blue infrastructure, and open space. On biodiversity, the policy seeks to "maintain, conserve and enhance biodiversity" and new development is required to aim to deliver biodiversity net gains. The Policy Map defines sites of European, National and Local significance in terms of



nature conservation in its broadest sense. The policy framework for new development is most restrictive for European sites with a gradual relaxation towards local sites, though development would still not be granted for proposals likely to materially harm local sites unless clear justification overrode the biodiversity impact. The site does not lie within a designated area.

Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (2023)

- 5.14 Policy P6 sets out the measures required to safeguard Ancient Woodland and significant trees. The policy requires applications to be accompanied by a BS5837 arboricultural survey and proposals should include a minimum buffer strip of 15m between new development and ancient woodland. Proposals are also required to protect and enhance priority species and habitats.
- 5.15 Policy P7 sets out in detail the Council's approach to biodiversity in new developments. Development proposals are required "to seek maximum biodiversity gain on site balanced with delivering other planning priorities..." Planning applications submitted for development *after* the national BNG scheme comes into effect are required to deliver upto 20% BNG or the advised national minimum. The national scheme had not come into effect at the point to application was submitted and therefore this does not impact on the present proposal.
- 5.16 Policy P11 requires new development to put in place measures to reduce surface water run-off. The use of permeable surfaces is to be maximised. SuDS are required for major developments and in areas at risk of flooding.
- 5.17 Policy D4 requires development proposals to achieve high quality design whilst respecting local distinctiveness. The design of development proposals should be informed by the ten characteristics of well-designed places set out in the National Design Code. Residential development densities should take account of the site, its context and the character of the area but all development should make efficient use of land with higher densities if it would not result in a detrimental impact on the character of the area. The future development potential of adjoining sites should not be prejudiced by the form and layout of development on the subject site.

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- 5.18 Policy D5 requires new development to ensure that it has no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. New residential development should ensure future occupiers will have access to private outdoor amenity space.
- 5.19 Policy D14 requires new development to be energy efficient, use sustainable construction materials and techniques, be designed to be long-lasting and be flexible to respond to changing lifestyles. Policy D15 sets out the requirements for new development to be adapted and adaptable to future climate and weather conditions. Policy D16 sets out the requirements for the use of low carbon energy in new development.
- 5.20 Policy ID10 sets out that car parking standards for non-strategic sites for new residential developments within village areas should have regard for the standards within the Parking Standards for New Development SPD.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

- 5.21 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Government indicates that this has three dimensions:
- An **economic role** to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. This requires sufficient land of the right type to be available in the right places and the right time to support growth and innovation
 - A **social role** to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring a supply of housing to meet present and future need and by creating a high-quality built environment
 - An **environmental role** that contributes to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.
- 5.22 Paragraph 11 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of decision-making, the document states that where a development accords with an up-to-date local plan, applications should be approved without delay. Where a plan is out of date, permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the 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.

- 5.23 The NPPF expresses the Government's strong support to securing economic growth to create jobs and prosperity. The planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 5.24 Paragraph 60 indicates the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Delivering this objective requires that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward. Paragraph 69 sets out that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and they can often be built out quickly. Councils are required to promote the development of a good mix of sites and one of the measures is that councils should identify land in their areas to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than 1ha. Windfall sites are to be supported with great weight being given to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements.

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 5.25 The NPPF expresses the Government's strong support to securing economic growth to create jobs and prosperity (para 81 refers). The planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

Making effective use of land & achieving appropriate densities

- 5.26 Paragraph 119 promotes the effective use of land in meeting housing need while safeguarding and improving the environment. The efficient use of land should take into consideration, amongst other things, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (para 124 refers). Residential densities should be optimised and



a significant uplift in density should be sought unless it can be shown to be clearly inappropriate.

Achieving well-designed places

5.27 Paragraph 126 makes clear the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to the planning process, good design being a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 130 requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

5.28 Paragraph 131 stresses the importance of the contribution trees make to the character and quality of the urban environment and also to helping mitigate the effects of climate change. New streets should be tree-lined and opportunities should be taken to retain existing trees wherever possible.



5.29 Development that is not well-designed should be refused (paragraph 134 refers). It also advises that development reflecting local design policies and government guidance together with local design guidance and SPDs should be afforded significant weight.

Proposals affecting the Green Belt

5.30 Paragraph 137 sets out the five purposes for including land within the green belt. Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is harmful by definition and should only be permitted in very special circumstances.

5.31 Paragraph 149 sets out the seven development exceptions applying to the construction of new buildings within the green belt that would mean development is not considered to be inappropriate. In the case of the application site, the land comprises previously developed land as defined in the Glossary to the NPPF. Therefore, NPPF149g) applies to the present application with the appropriate test being the consideration of whether the proposed development will have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt than the present development.

Effingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2030



- 5.32 The NP identifies the site as lying outside the Effingham settlement boundary but within the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary, opposite Effingham Common, within the green belt and within the 5km SPA boundary. It also lies within the Ockham and Clandon Wooded Rolling Claylands landscape character area.
- 5.33 Policy ENP-G1 directs development towards the formal settlement area, allocated sites and sites assessed as suitable for residential development under Policy ENP-G5. Policy ENP-G2 seeks to conserve the landscape, heritage and rural character of the area whilst supporting sustainable development. The site lies just to the northeast of Effingham Viewpoint N2 which looks across the Common in a northerly direction.
- 5.34 Policy ENP-G5 sets out that new residential development will only be acceptable on Green Belt inset sites, limited village infilling, or on previously developed land. Policy ENP-H1 aims to deliver a minimum of 50 new homes during the plan period from allocated sources, sites with an extant consent, and windfall sites assessed under Policy ENP-G5. The Plan anticipates a significant additional housing contribution from windfall sites. Policy ENP-H2 requires at least 50% of all new dwellings on schemes of less than 10 units to provide a housing mix where at least 50% of market homes have 1 or 2 bedrooms. Policy ENP-R1 requires all new 2-bed dwellings to provide 2 allocated parking spaces.



6. Planning Arguments

Principle of Development within Green Belt Policy Context

- 6.1 NPPF11 applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means approving development proposal which accords with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Paragraph 60 indicates the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Delivering this objective requires that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward. Paragraph 69 sets out that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and they can often be built out quickly. Paragraph 130 states that residential densities should be optimised and a significant uplift in density should be sought unless it can be shown to be clearly inappropriate.
- 6.2 In accordance with NPPF149g), the application site is identified as previously developed land within the green belt. This has been confirmed by previous planning applications, most notably 21/P/02609. Within the officer report, it was asserted that the existing buildings (B, D and E) were in equestrian use, C was an open-sided hay barn with tractor storage, and F was used for storing cars. Given the officer report was produced in 2022, there has been an insufficient passage of time to assert any other use, including agricultural use, has become lawful through the passage of time. Therefore, in accordance with the NPPF Glossary, the site comprises previously developed land within the green belt.
- 6.3 The complete redevelopment of the whole site is, therefore, not inappropriate development within the green belt, so long as the proposed development does not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt than the existing.
- 6.4 When assessing the impact of the previous application upon the openness of the green belt, officers examined and compared the physical manifestation of the existing buildings with the proposed buildings in terms of changes in volume, footprint, GIA and extent of site coverage. As part of that exercise, the heights of the buildings were also compared.



6.5 The table below shows the various comparisons between the existing buildings, and the proposed buildings.

	FOOTPRINT M ²	GIA M ²	VOLUME M ³	ROOF HEIGHT M	EAVES HEIGHT M
EXISTING					
B1	154.14	151.16	667.4	4.157	3.519
B2	33.34	47.29	74.16	2.542	1.814
B3	37.85	35.05	98.59	3.458	2.403
B4	161.64	144.63	550.84	6.140	4.415
B5	55.85	47.29	267.3	4.085	2.496
TOTAL	442.82	425.42	1658.19		
PROPOSED					
PLOT 1	201.42	167.58	761.91	4.7	2.9
PLOT 2	208.03	171.64	774.9	4.7	2.9
TOTAL	409.51	339.22	1536.81		
REDUCTION	7.53%	20.3%	7.33%		
EXISTING FOOTPRINT & HARDSTANDING	1263				
PROPOSED FOOTPRINT & HARDSTANDING	750				
REDUCTION	40.7%				

6.6 As the comparison shows, the proposed development represents a 7.33% reduction in volume, a 20.3% reduction in GIA, and a 40.7% reduction in overall site coverage. The



proposed building heights rise to a maximum of 4.7m to ridge and 2.9m to eaves, and the building form comprises a series of smaller elements linked together with the elements all having short length and depth allowing for traditional roof forms and spans. Each of the two dwellings has a disaggregated mass and form and it is considered the development will have no greater impact upon the openness of the green belt than the present development. As such, the principle of the development meets the requirements of ENP-G5 and Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2019.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 6.7 Policy D4 of the Guildford Local Plan: Development Management Policies 2023 requires development proposals to achieve high quality design whilst respecting local distinctiveness. The design of development proposals should be informed by the ten characteristics of well-designed places set out in the National Design Code. Residential development densities should take account of the site, its context and the character of the area but all development should make efficient use of land with higher densities if it would not result in a detrimental impact on the character of the area. As with all new development, the policy framework requires high-quality, well-designed development influenced by and respectful of local character and local distinctiveness.
- 6.8 The previous application for five houses was considered by the Council to have an unwanted urbanising effect upon the character and appearance of the area as a consequence of the number of dwellings proposed, their layout and external appearance. A number of dwellings appeared to lack private amenity space and were sited very close proximity to plot boundaries, and the overall plots were considered too small by comparison with the much larger plots forming the residential curtilages of nearby dwellings which themselves formed part of the character and context for the site. Officers noted that existing houses in the area tended to have large gardens surrounding the houses. The development was considered to represent poor quality design that did not reflect local distinctiveness.
- 6.9 The proposed development comprises two detached dwellings in a single storey form. Each dwelling stands in a large rectangular-shaped plot the size of which better reflect the spatial arrangements exhibited by dwellings in the immediate area. Plot 1 sits to

the lefthand side of the site with a small built form sitting across the frontage and the remainder of the dwelling extending 90° rearwards up the site. Plot 2 sits on the righthand side sited opposite Plot 1. A small turning head and large soft landscaped finger separate the two dwellings. The dwelling on Plot 2 is sited towards the access track with a subservient element extending rearwards up the site. The building on Plot 2 incorporates part of the wall to the existing building B4. This wall partly encloses the plot along the access track in the same way as it presently encloses part of the existing farmyard.



6.10 The distance of the site from existing plots further along the access track and Effingham Common means the main "townscape" relationship is with the Hooke Farm adjacent on the right. The architect has sought to reflect the general local distinctiveness of the area and the existing site in the layout and architecture of the two plots and their

dwellings. Each dwelling sits in a generous plot with good sized gardens and the architect has sought to ensure the openness, that is a general characteristic of the green belt, is respected. In consequence, the two dwellings are grouped close together reflecting the arrangement of the original buildings. Their built form is low being only single storey and the arrangement of individual building elements and their roof forms ensures the overall bulk and mass of each house does not intrude unacceptably into the openness of the green belt and its rural character.



Views along the access track of Plots 1 and 2. The white wall around Plot 2 is part of the retained wall from Building 4

- 6.11 The form and scale of development, coupled with the architectural design seeks to respect and reinforce the rural character of the area. In this immediate part of Effingham dwellings are sited more informally and sit within the wider landscape without causing undue harm. The proposed development has no immediate context other than the adjacent farmhouse and detached dwellings further along Effingham Common. The design response is considered to be appropriate to the site setting and one which will cause harm to the character or appearance of the area.
- 6.12 The second reason for refusal on the 2021 application considered the development proposal to be too intense, design repetitious and of a clearly domestic character that would cause harm to the rural character area. The present proposal seeks to shy away from an overly domestic architectural form and layout to create two houses that make an efficient use of the site having regard for the green belt and rural location constraints. The resultant character of development will be neither contrived nor incongruous. The development of two houses in generous sized plots and where those houses share a common design ethos yet demonstrate design differences will help to ensure the development does not have a urbanising effect on the more rural character of the area.
- 6.13 The development meets the aims and objectives of Policy D1 of the 2019 Local Plan Policy D4 of the Local Plan: DMP (2023) and Policies ENP-G2 and -G5 of the Neighbourhood Plan (2016).

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.14 Policy D5 requires new development to ensure that it has no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. New residential development should ensure future occupiers will have access to private outdoor amenity space. Private outdoor amenity space has been dealt with in the paragraphs above.
- 6.15 The only existing property close to the application site is Hooke farmhouse lying to the south of Plot 2. The house itself stands some distance off the common boundary with Plot 2 and there are a number of trees within the curtilage of the adjacent property standing between the farmhouse and Plot 2.

6.16 Windows in the house on Plot 2 face both to the rear of the site and also towards the common boundary with farmhouse. However, given the intervening separation distances coupled with the fact the proposed house of Plot 2 is only single storey in height, the development will have no undue impact on amenities of the occupiers of the farmhouse in terms of privacy, overlooking, or overbearing impact.

Highways, Parking and Accessibility of Location

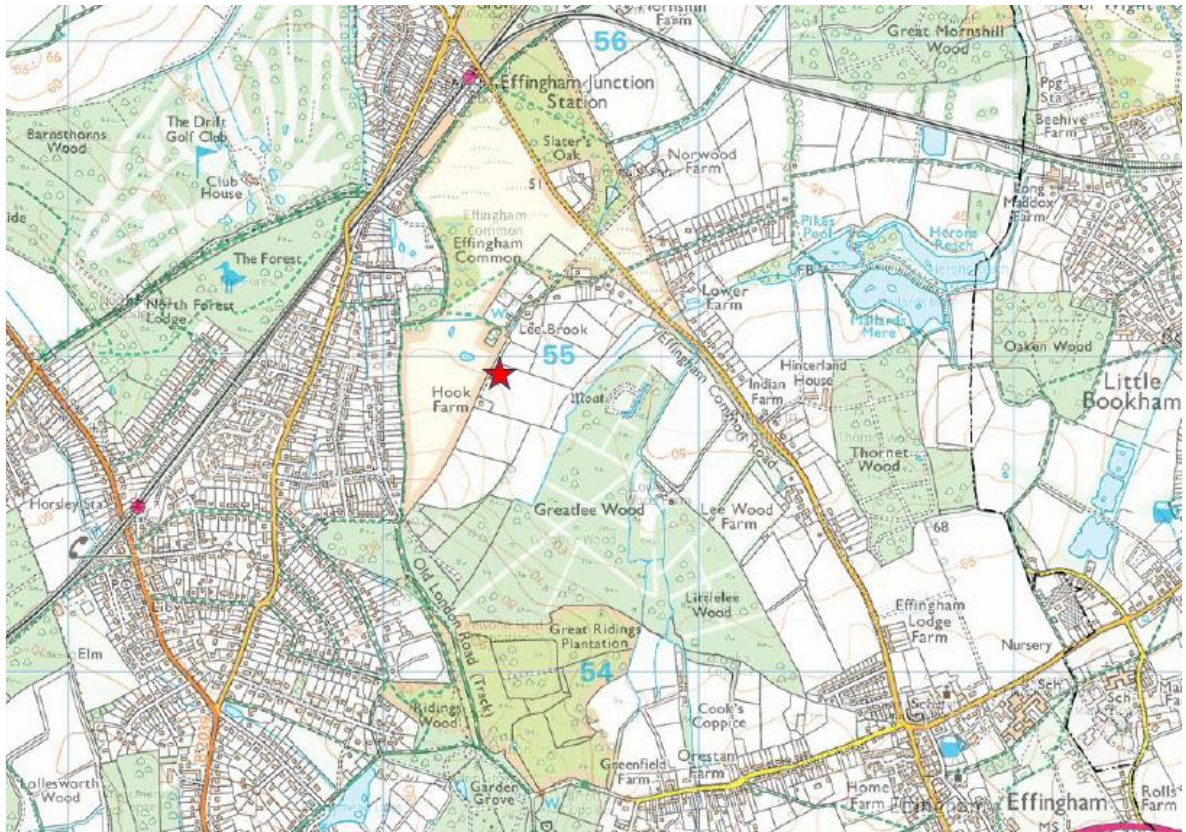
6.17 The proposed development of two houses will generate less vehicle movements along the access track than either the lawful use as an equestrian centre/self-livery operation, or a development of five 2-bed dwellings. Surrey County Council as Highways Authority raised no objection to the five-house development on highway safety grounds. It can therefore be reasonably concluded that a development of only two houses will similarly result in no issues of highway safety or adequacy of the access from the public highway network. Parking on site is provided to the Council's published standards and there will be cycle parking and electric charging available to both cars and cycles.

6.18 A Transport Technical Note accompanies this application, and part of the reason for that is to address the question of the sustainable location of the site raised by the Council in the first reason for refusal on the five-house scheme. Despite no objection from the Highways Authority, the Council concluded the surrounding road network made the site unsustainable in location terms due to their conclusion the site was not reasonably accessible. This is despite the Council finding the site was not in an isolated, rural location as defined by case law and the NPPF.

6.19 The site lies within the green belt and as with so many similar designations, that generally infers sites are not within a built-up location and hence access to public transport and other non-car modes of movement are likely to be quite limited. Notwithstanding, previously developed land within the green belt is one of the locations new development is directed to in the Neighbourhood Plan. By definition therefore, such locations are likely to be less accessible than their urban counterparts but still considered by the development plan to be acceptable in principle.

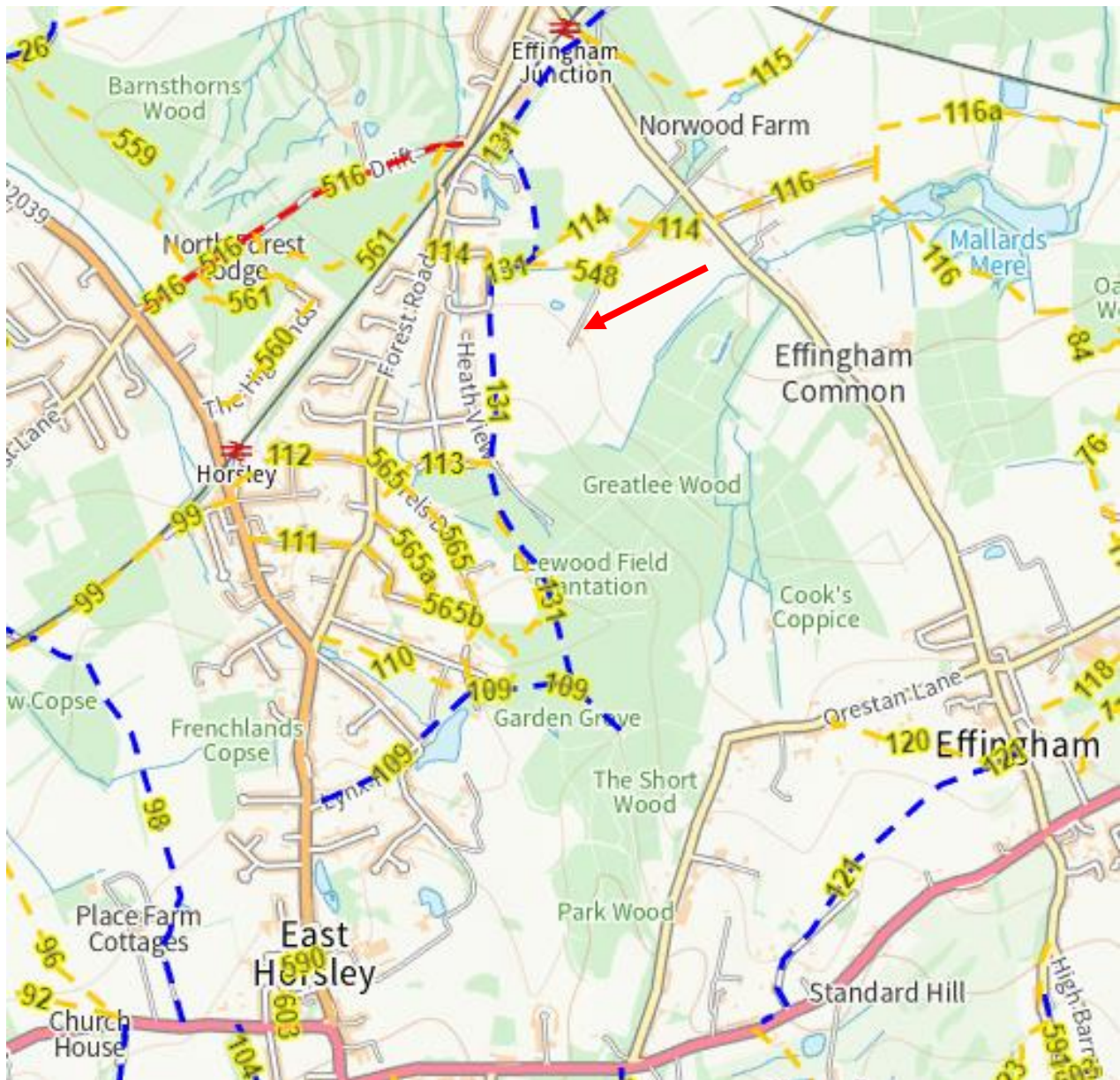
6.20 It is accepted the site has a rural character. However, as the plan extract below shows, its location is not isolated and the site lies in very close proximity to both Horsely and

Effingham and is actually sited much closer to Effingham Junction railway station than the village of Effingham itself.



6.21 The Transport Technical Note indicates the site lies within an acceptable distance of 1.2km to the station (16 minutes' walk, 4 minutes' cycle) which the Institution of Highways and Transportation considers suitable for residents to be able to walk or cycle on a regular basis. In addition to this, there are a number of local public footpaths that would mean travel along the Effingham Common Road is not essential.

6.22 The map extract below is taken from the County Council Surrey Interactive Map. The mapping layer shows that the site is linked by a number of public footpaths/public rights of way so that journeys to Effingham Junction Station (1.2km) and Horley Station (1.9m) can realistically be made by cycle or on foot together with access to East Horsley and the facilities and amenities it has.



6.23 It is acknowledged that during winter months such routes may be less desirable, however, during the winter months it is quite typical even in urban areas that cars are used as people tend to place a high value on comfort and convenience. The above routes do show though that in addition to walking along Effingham Common Road, there are realistic alternatives to the private car that shows the site may be described as being

reasonably accessible. The proposed development is therefore not unsustainable and meets the aims and objectives of Local Plan Policy ID3 and the NPPF.

Sustainable Construction

- 6.24 The application is accompanied by an Energy Statement and the Climate Change questionnaire to demonstrate compliance with Local Plan Policy D2.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees

- 6.25 To demonstrate compliance with Policy ID4, this application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA), a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA), and a BNG assessment using the DEFRA 4.0 Small Sites Metric.
- 6.26 The PEA concluded development of the site would not impact on any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. The site itself contains no notable nor protected habitats nor protected species though the PEA suggests as a precautionary measure, Reasonable Avoidance Measures are employed during habitat clearance to avoid impacting on reptiles and Great Crested Newts. Neither were observed on site during the PEA.
- 6.27 Given the presence of a number of older farm buildings a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was undertaken. None of the buildings were assessed as supporting any potential for roosting bats and no further surveys were recommended.
- 6.28 In terms of BNG, the assessment demonstrates a net gain of +43.56% in habitat units and +15.43% in hedgerow units. 40% of the site is to be planted as a wildflower meadow and a range of measures to improve the overall ecological value of the site are recommended within the PEA which can be secured by planning condition.
- 6.29 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Survey is submitted in support of this application. This shows that there will be no trees removed to facilitate the development and with one very minor exception, there is no conflict between any of the buildings and the RPA of retained trees. There is a minor incursion by a garage structure into the RPA of T1 a Common Oak. However, the structure re-uses the foundations of the existing outbuilding and therefore it is assessed that there will be no adverse impact upon safeguarding T1.

Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Appropriate Assessment

- 6.30 The site lies within the 400m-5km zone of influence of the SPA, and the proposed development involves a net increase in two dwellings. Previously the Council assessed the five-unit scheme would not affect the integrity of the SPA which is a European Site subject to securing the mitigation measures set out in the Avoidance Strategy.
- 6.31 The applicant will enter into an agreement under s106 to secure financial contributions to SANG and SAMM to mitigate any likely adverse effect on the SPA.



7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Following an earlier refusal of planning permission, the applicant has taken account of the shortcomings of the scheme prepared by and on behalf of other parties as highlighted by the Council in their refusal notice.
- 7.2 It is common ground the development site lies within the green belt and that it comprises previously developed land. Therefore, the relevant test as to the principle of development being acceptable rests on an assessment of whether the proposed development has a greater impact on the openness of the green belt than the existing buildings.
- 7.3 This application demonstrates that in all measures, the proposed development has a lesser volume, smaller GIA and substantially smaller overall footprint than the existing development on site. The development will have no greater impact on the openness of the green belt than the existing buildings.
- 7.4 In terms of accessibility and a sustainable location, as previously developed land within the green belt, the site location being suitable for residential development is one supported by the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The level of vehicle usage arising from a development of only two houses would be significantly less than the level that may be generated if the site was to remain in its lawful use for an equestrian centre/DIY livery. Whilst the site is rural, it is by no means isolated. The site is also readily connected to a network of public rights of way giving easy access to public transport facilities and amenities in nearby Horsley such that there is a realistic expectation that there will be no over-reliance on the private car with alternative modes of travel available.
- 7.5 The development comprises two 2-bed dwellings meeting a defined housing need. The form of architectural expression seeks to underpin local distinctiveness and the overall development is judged to cause no harm to the character or appearance of the area.

