

Land adjacent to 229 London Road, Wickford

Planning & Heritage Statement

March 2024



WARNER



Contents page

1. Introduction	2
2. Site and Surrounding Area	4
3. Proposed Development	9
4. Planning Policy Context	12
5. Heritage Statement	18
6. Analysis	22
7. Conclusion	32



1 Introduction

Warner Planning submits this Planning Application on behalf of CBS Developments Limited for the erection of four family homes with associated access, parking and landscaping on land currently utilised as a garden adjacent to 229 London Road, Wickford, Essex, SS12 0LG.

In addition to this Planning and Heritage Statement, the following document and plans are submitted in support of the application:

- ✿ Location Plan (Ref – P006-24-SPL001)
- ✿ Existing Site Plan (Ref – P006-24-SP002)
- ✿ Proposed Site Plan (Ref – P006-24-SP001)
- ✿ Proposed Floor Plan – House Type 1 (Ref – P006-24-GA110)
- ✿ Proposed Floor Plan – House Type 2 (Ref – P006-24-GA120)
- ✿ Proposed Elevations – House Type 1 (Ref – P006-24-GA210)
- ✿ Proposed Elevations – House Type 2 (Ref – P006-24-GA2200)
- ✿ Proposed Sections – House Type 1 (Ref – P006-24-GA310)
- ✿ Proposed Sections – House Type 2 (Ref – P006-24-GA320)
- ✿ Proposed Street Scene
- ✿ Design and Access Statement (Arch Two – March 2024)
- ✿ Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report (Sharon Hosegood Associates – SHA1776)
- ✿ Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS Report (EAS – 4789 Rev A)
- ✿ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Hybrid Ecology Ltd – March 2024)
- ✿ Transport Statement (EAS – 4789/2024 RevA)
- ✿ Landscape Plan

This Planning Statement sets out the background relevant to the determination of the application by describing the site and its general locality before setting out details of the proposed development. The statement provides an overview of the planning policy context against which the development is assessed, followed by a detailed consideration of the development proposals against this policy context and all other relevant material considerations.

In making this planning application, it is our submission that the application proposes a high-quality, sustainable development that will complement the immediate locality and the wider area.

The development will deliver significant benefits. It is considered that there are compelling grounds to grant planning permission for the proposed development, with these set out as follows:



- ✿ Provide homes that can be delivered immediately.
- ✿ Appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.
- ✿ Sympathetic design in regard to heritage assets.
- ✿ Bring into use an under-utilised site, that has been deemed acceptable in the SHLAA.
- ✿ Create a high quality design.
- ✿ Provide homes at a time when the Council are unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, and has also failed the housing delivery test.
- ✿ Additional residential units to further add to the mix of housing types.
- ✿ Development being located in the sustainable settlement of Wickford.
- ✿ The proposal is well related to the adjoining buildings and complements the area's character.
- ✿ Clear precedent locally and nationally of similar schemes being allowed.
- ✿ New landscaping with a biodiversity net increase.
- ✿ New biodiversity opportunities – especially bird and bat boxes.
- ✿ Safe and suitable access onto the site.
- ✿ The site is located in a sustainable location, close to facilities.
- ✿ Sustainability measures integrated into the development.
- ✿ Residents will deliver economic benefits by supporting local businesses.
- ✿ Economic benefits during the construction phase and post-construction, the occupiers of the dwelling will support the local economy by paying taxes and visiting local facilities and businesses.

This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting documents, existing and proposed plans, submitted to accompany this planning application.



2 The site and surrounding area

The application site is situated in the western portion of Wickford which is designated as a village in a recent decision (21/00762/FULL), with the settlement being one of the larger settlements within the jurisdiction of Basildon Council. As such it has good access, to employment opportunities along with services and facilities.

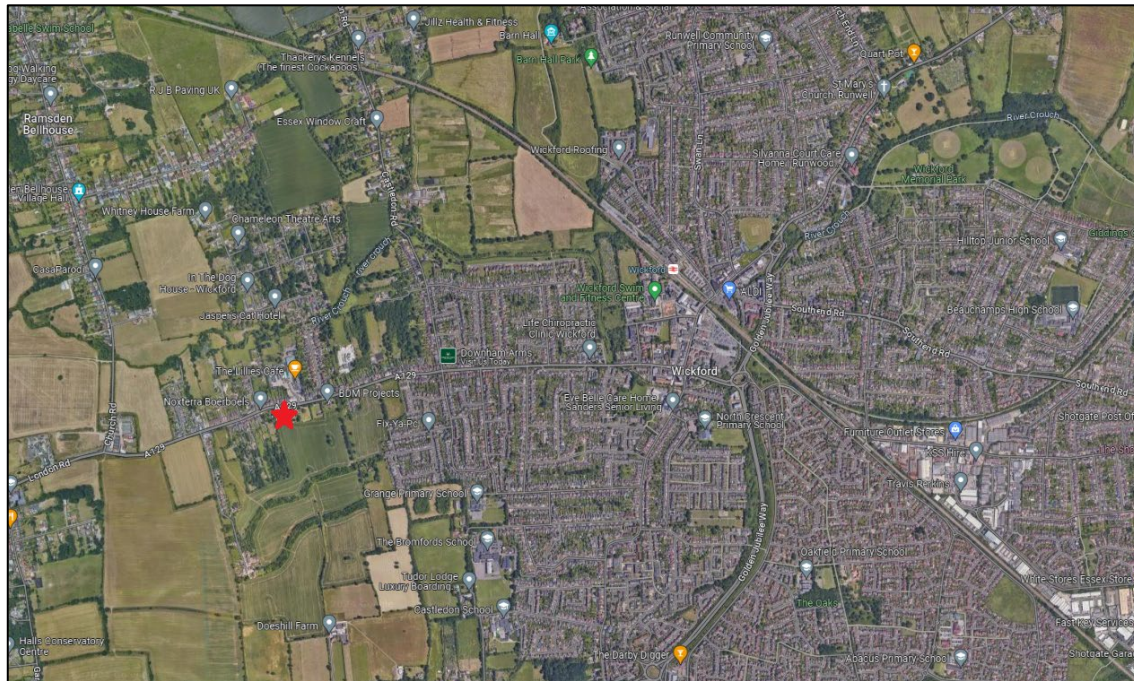


Figure 1: Wider Site Location (for identification purposes only)



Figure 2: Site Location (not to scale, for identification purposes only)



The site area measures circa 0.29ha, with the site being utilised as garden land at present in association with the host dwelling. Therefore the site has limited built form at present, but there are aspects such as a greenhouse and personal allotment on the site, with the majority of the site consisting of managed grassland. All of the significant mature vegetation is located along the boundaries of the site.

In terms of the surrounding uses this is predominantly residential which surrounds the site to the west, north and east. There is a garden centre use to the north east of the site on the opposite side of London Road. To the south is agricultural land.

The site is bound by a mixture of mature vegetation (including trees and hedgerows) on all sides, with this currently being slightly looser on the eastern side due to the existing relationship with the host dwelling.

At present the site is accessed through the host dwelling, and does not benefit from its own dedicated access point, with London Road abutting the northern boundary of the site.

Planning History

No relevant planning history was identified from a search of the Council's website.

There are several applications locally which provide precedence for the application being submitted, to which a summary is provided below of the most pertinent.

21/00762/FULL – Newhouse Avenue, Wickford

This scheme was initially refused by the Council on the grounds of being inappropriate development in the Green Belt, amenity of residents and impact on SPA/RAMSAR sites. However, it was appealed and the Inspector allowed the development on the basis that the site was suitably surrounded by development, and that Wickford being a village, constitutes the proposals as infill development, which is an appropriate use in the Green Belt. The applicant can also look to address the RAMSAR issue through the provision of Unilateral Undertaking.



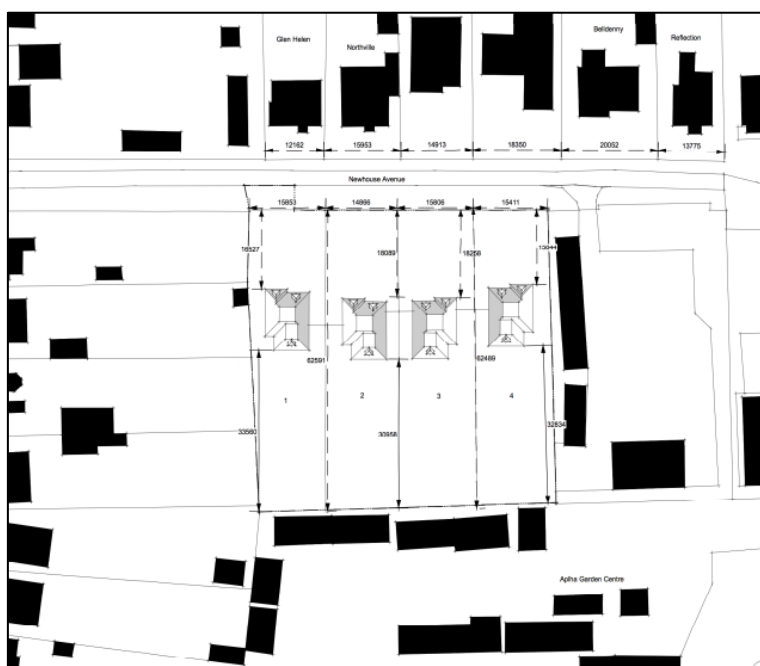


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan for 21/00762/FULL

There are other examples at 58 and 290 London Road, Wickford of infill developments that have been allowed and built out by the Council.

21/00375/FULL, Land between 'Green Oak' and 'Woodlands', Branksome Avenue, Wickford, Essex – Allowed via appeal 21/3278853

The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a detached 3- bed roomed chalet bungalow, on land between 'Green Oak' and 'Woodlands', Branksome Avenue, Wickford.

The Inspector stated *"This part of the settlement has many of the features and characteristics of a village, or indeed those of an urban area. In terms of its effects on the GB, the development now proposed would be indistinguishable from infill development in any other settlement. Consequently, having regard to the aims of the NPPF's GB policies as a whole, I can see no reason why the appeal site should not be considered to be located within a village setting."*

Land East of Denewood, Studland Avenue, Wickford, Appeal (23/3317008)

An appeal for an infill dwelling on Studland Avenue, was considered, and whilst the above was dismissed the Inspector agreed that the principle of infill was acceptable, they stated:

For the reasons given above and in accordance with Paragraph 149.e) of the Framework, I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would constitute limited infilling in a village. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Accordingly, there is no requirement for subsequent assessments of the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt, or impact on its purposes. Therefore, it is not necessary for



me to consider whether very special circumstances exist in order to justify the development.

SHLAA Assessment 2020

As part of the emerging Local Plan, the application site was put forward as part of a larger site that included the host dwelling. The Council within the SHLAA assessed the site to be suitable, available and achievable for residential development, this was even with the site being within the Green Belt, due to the sites relationship within Wickford.

Planning Context

The search also identified a number of planning precedents for the site, which are set out in the below table:

Attribute / Constraint	Comment
Green Belt	Site is situated within the Green Belt, with designated Plotlands to the north and west of the site.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Not located within an AONB.
Essex Coastal Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).	Site is within the Zone of Influence.
Area of Special Development Control	Located on the other side of London Road, along Sugden Avenue.
Within Settlement Envelope	Wickford does not have a settlement envelope, but the site does form part of Wickford's built form.
Conservation Area	Site is not within a Conservation Area.
Heritage Assets	The nearest HA is located circa 160m to the east of the site, and is the Grade II listed Bell Farmhouse.
Flood Zone	Site is located within Flood Zone from fluvial sources, but the northern boundary of the site is situated in an area at risk of surface water flooding.
Environmental Designation	There are no Environmental Designation on or impacting the site.
Neighbourhood Plan Area	Site is located outside of the designated area for the Wickford Neighbourhood Plan.
Public Rights of Way	There are none on or immediately around the site.
Agricultural Land Classification	Land predominantly in urban use.

Table 1: Site Attributes



The Surrounding Area

Wickford is classified as a village within Basildon, meaning that it benefits from a number of services and facilities within the settlement, which are as follows:

- 🌸 Garden Centre
- 🌸 Primary School
- 🌸 Secondary School
- 🌸 Convenience Shops
- 🌸 Public Houses, Cafes and Restaurants
- 🌸 Allotments
- 🌸 Town Centre
- 🌸 Open Spaces
- 🌸 Sports Facilities
- 🌸 Entertainment facilities
- 🌸 Local Businesses

In terms of road connections, the nearest major roads to the site are the A130 and the A127, which are located approximately 4.27km to the east and 1.83km to the south respectively. The nearest bus stop is located circa 80m to the east of the site along London Road and provides services to Chelmsford, Billericay and Wickford. The settlement of Wickford also benefits from a train station, which is about 1.64km to the east of the site and provides connections to Southend and London.



3 Proposed Development

This Planning Application is for the erection of four family homes with associated access, parking and landscaping on land currently utilised as garden land adjacent to 229 London Road, Wickford, Essex, SS12 0LG.

In addition to the below, further details are provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.



Figure 4: Proposed Site Plan

The development will create four new family dwellings on the site, which have been designed in response to the local character. Elements such as massing, height, openings and fenestration have been taken into account with regard to the neighbouring buildings and similar developments in the town.

The new houses have contemporary and flexible layouts to accommodate a variety of living arrangements. On the upper floor each unit has 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms on the ground floor there is a formal reception room, a single bedroom/study and a large family kitchen dining room to the rear. All of the internal spaces are in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards.





Figure 5: Proposed Elevations – House Type 1

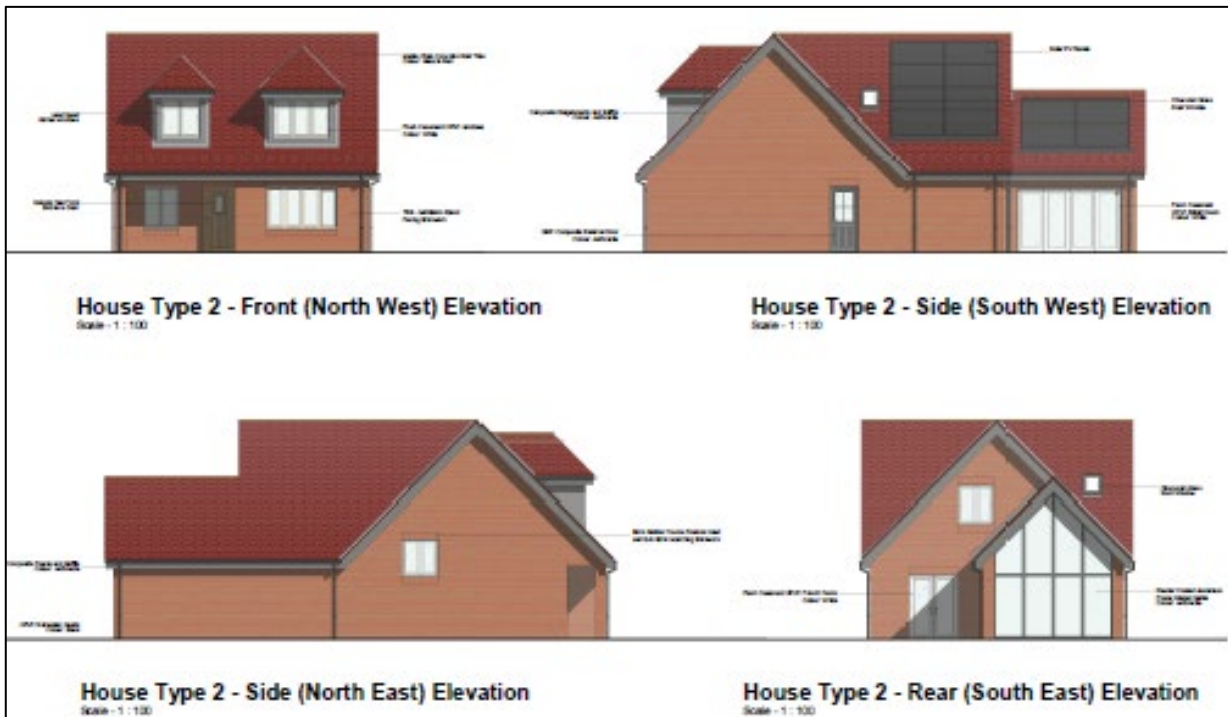


Figure 6: Proposed Elevations – House Type 2

The simple material selection and traditional architectural style will create a high standard modern residential development that sits well within the locality and will be comparable to a number of new residential developments in Wickford. These are set out in greater detail within the Design and Access Statement.



The accommodation schedule for the proposed development is as follows:

Plot	Bedroom	Bathroom	Built Form	Amenity	Parking
1	3/4	2.5	150sqm	440sqm	2
2	3/4	2.5	150sqm	406sqm	2
3	3/4	2.5	150sqm	367sqm	2
4	3/4	2.5	150sqm	300sqm	2

Each of the proposed dwellings will have private garden space and two parking spaces, with at least one on each of the plots being an electric charging point. In addition they will each have a timber cycle and refuse store in the garden.

A new access of London Road is proposed on the northern boundary of the site, with the single access, providing access to all four of the dwellings, and enable waste and emergency vehicles onto the site.

Landscaping is also proposed as part of the scheme and will enhance the appearance of the site whilst retaining the existing vegetation where possible.

Energy efficiency has also been considered and this will include the following:

- ✿ The buildings will be insulated to high level to meet or exceed current Part L requirements.
- ✿ Double glazing to all windows
- ✿ Low energy LED lighting will be used throughout
- ✿ Low energy appliances will be fitted
- ✿ Efficient Gas boilers
- ✿ Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery
- ✿ Inclusion of PV panels

Furthermore, water saving features are also included, which are:

- ✿ Aerated fittings will be used throughout
- ✿ Dual flush toilets
- ✿ Showers to all bathrooms
- ✿ Rainwater harvesting features, such as water butts



4 Planning Policy Context

The planning policy context relating to the application site is formed through:

- ✿ National Planning Policy
- ✿ Local Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan material for this proposal comprises:

- ✿ Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007

Other material considerations are:

- ✿ Housing Land Supply & Housing Delivery Test
- ✿ Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)
- ✿ Planning Obligations Strategy
- ✿ Parking Standards
- ✿ Emerging Local Plan
- ✿ South Essex Joint Strategic Planning

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing, and other development can be produced.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

At the heart of the Framework is a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". Therefore, where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of-date, planning permission should be granted unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.



Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date.

Paragraph 60 sets out that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

Paragraph 70 notes that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly.

Paragraph 79 necessitates that to maintain the supply of housing, local planning authorities should monitor progress in building out sites which have permission. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below the local planning authority's housing requirement over the previous three years, the following policy consequences should apply:

- ✿ where delivery falls below 95% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years;
- ✿ where delivery falls below 85% of the requirement over the previous three years, the authority should include a buffer of 20% to their identified supply of specific deliverable sites as set out in paragraph 77 of this framework, in addition to the requirement for an action plan.
- ✿ where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, as set out in footnote 8 of this Framework, in addition to the requirements for an action plan and 20% buffer.

Paragraph 115 requires that 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.

Chapter 11 sets out that development should make effective use of the land as part of applications brought forward.

Chapter 12 requires the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.

Paragraph 152 sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.



Paragraph 154 sets out that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- ✿ buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- ✿ the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- ✿ the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- ✿ the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- ✿ limited infilling in villages;
- ✿ limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- ✿ limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority

Paragraph 200 requires that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007

Policy GB1 – Definition of the Green Belt

The boundaries of the Green Belt are drawn with reference to the foreseen long term expansion of the built up areas acceptable in the context of the stated purposes of the Green Belt and to the provisions specified in this Plan. The boundaries are shown on the Proposals Maps.



Policy BE12 – Development Control

Planning permission for new residential development, and for the alteration and extension of existing dwellings, will be refused if it causes material harm in any of the following ways:

- ✿ Harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene;
- ✿ Overlooking;
- ✿ Noise or disturbance to the occupants of neighbouring dwellings;
- ✿ Overshadowing or over-dominance; and
- ✿ Traffic danger or congestion.

Policy BE24 – Crime Prevention

The Council will expect the design and layout of new development to include consideration of crime prevention. The Local Planning Authority will consult the Police in respect of relevant applications and make the best possible efforts to improve street lighting.

Other Material Considerations

Green Belt Infill Policy Topic Paper

In 2017 the Council published a topic paper on the characteristics and principles of infill developments.

It states:

“In accordance with the definition of infill, as discussed above, infill development should only be located between existing dwellings on an existing road frontage, or on a corner plot. The development however should not face onto the strategic road network. Infill should not be at the end of a row of continuous development as this has the effect of projecting the development into an open area which would undermine the openness of the Green Belt.”

The infill plot should have a frontage which measures a reasonable width. The infill plot, especially if subdivided, should be of a similar average width as surrounding residential development so the character of the area is not affected. An assessment on the number of potential infill properties across the Borough identified that the minimum frontage width available was 12m and the maximum (after subdivisions) was 66m, the average plot width was 30m.

The dwelling(s) must be low in height, such as bungalows and chalets, which harmonise with the building heights predominant in the area. The dwelling(s) must be set within the site, and circulation space around the dwelling must be comparable to adjoining properties.



The dwelling(s) must reflect the materials, design features and architectural style predominant in the area, these are standard residential design requirements. Whilst many properties vary in design, where possible their features should be replicated to remain in keeping with the character of the area.

Housing Land Supply

As per the June 2023 Housing Land Supply Statement, the Council is only able to demonstrate a land supply of 1.85 years.

Housing Delivery Test

The latest published figure on housing delivery test for Basildon is 40%, which as per Paragraph 79 of the NPPF means that they are obliged to prepare an Action Plan to improve the figure, along with apply a 20% buffer to their identified supply of specific deliverable sites and having a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

Due to the site being situated within the zone of influence, a financial contribution of £156.76 per dwelling (for the financial year 2023/24) will be required and the applicant will arrange payment of this once the application is given a draft recommendation for approval.

Planning Obligations Strategy

The scheme has been prepared in accordance with this SPD, with the relevant matters discussed in the below Analysis Section.

Parking Standards

The parking provision on the site has been prepared in compliance with the Parking Standards, with this set out in the Design & Access Statement and Transport Statement accompanying this application.

Emerging Local Plan

The applicant notes that the latest Local Development Scheme, shows the timescale for the adoption of the emerging Local Plan is Summer 2026, with the next consultation (Regulation 18) due to take place in Winter 2024. Given the timescales, and that the emerging Local Plan has not been consulted or examined, it can be afforded no weight in the determination of this application. However, the Secretary of State has stepped in to advance the production of the Plan.



South Essex Joint Strategic Planning

The South Essex councils of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-On-Sea and Thurrock and Essex County Council are working together. However, at this stage there has been no confirmation on a Joint Strategic Plan being brought forward, with the emphasis still being on the Councils individually bringing forward their own Local Plans.



5 Heritage Statement

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and most recently revised in December 2023. The NPPF has the core principle that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes the environmental objective 'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'.

Section 16 provides guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 194 states that applicants should 'describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting' in order that the planning authority can determine the application. It further states that 'the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'. Local authorities are required to 'assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset)' (paragraph 195).

Heritage assets are defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest. They include designated heritage assets identified by the local planning authority and archaeological sites which hold or potentially could hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation.

The NPPF, therefore, aims to protect nationally important designated Heritage Assets (which include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas); protects the settings of such designations; and requires that adequate information (from desk-based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) be obtained to inform decisions and provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit in-situ preservation.

Guidance and standards

Historic England's *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (2015) provides information on the significance of heritage assets. Significance is defined as: the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The idea of 'significance' lies at the core of *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (English Heritage 2008), which sets out a method for thinking systematically and consistently about the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place. People value historic places in many different ways; Conservation Principles show how they can be grouped into four categories (Table 3):



Heritage values

Significance	Material
Evidential value	the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity
Historical value	the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative
Aesthetic value	the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place
Communal value	the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory

Table 3: Heritage Values

The value of historic environment assets may be ascribed according to the following criteria (not all of which are applicable in the present instance; Table 2):

Heritage asset value

Level	Description
Very High	Internationally important assets, e.g. World Heritage Sites
High	Nationally important heritage assets, e.g. Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, and non-designated assets of equivalent significance
Medium	Nationally or regionally important heritage assets, e.g. Grade II Listed Buildings, Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens, undesignated assets of regional and national importance including archaeological remains which relate to regional research objectives or can otherwise provide important information relating to the region
Low	Assets of interest at a local level for their contribution to the local historic environment e.g. non-designated heritage assets including locally listed buildings, non-designated archaeological sites, non-designated historic parks and gardens
Negligible	Elements of historic environment of insufficient significance or historic interest to merit consideration in planning decisions
Unknown	Importance of asset not ascertained

Table 4: Heritage Asset Values



The scale of change may be assessed according to the following criteria (Table 3):

Scale of change

Impact	Description
Substantial harm	Substantial harm to, or loss of, an asset's significance as a result of changes to its physical form or setting, eg demolition or removal of attributes critical to its significance, archaeological interest or setting in a way that fundamentally compromises its ability to be understood
Less than substantial harm	Less than substantial harm, eg alterations which remove some elements of significance or alterations to its setting that compromises understanding or appreciation
Less than substantial harm (lower end)	Limited harm to significance, eg physical changes to some elements of the asset or its setting which do not noticeably alter its overall significance
Negligible harm	Very minor changes to form or setting which are scarcely noticeable
No harm	
Minor beneficial	Slight improvement to an asset's significance, eg by revealing some elements of significance or small-scale alterations to its setting which enhance the ability to understand or appreciate it
Moderate beneficial	Notable enhancement of an asset's significance consequent upon changes to its physical form or setting, eg conservation/restoration of elements of significance or enhancements to its setting which increase understanding or appreciation
Major beneficial	Substantial enhancement of an asset's significance consequent upon changes to its physical form or setting, eg conservation/restoration of elements of high significance or enhancements to its setting, which substantially increase understanding or appreciation

Table 5: Scales of Change



As is noted in Section 2 (The Site and Surrounding Area) the application site is located approximately 160m from a Grade II listed heritage asset. Noting the distance between the site and asset, noting that there is also significant built form located between the two sites, in accordance with Paragraph 200 of the NPPF, the impact of development can only be considered as negligible or none.

This reflects the severely limited intervisibility between the heritage assets and the proposed development site. This will also be supplemented by additional landscaping and planting on the eastern boundary, along with a sensitive design which both further restrict any perceived harm. Therefore, the setting of the Bell Farmhouse will not be affected by the proposals.

In alignment with Paragraph 203 of the Framework, it is considered that the currently proposed design of the new dwellings and ancillary structures is suitably sensitive and subservient, including the use of sympathetic materials.

As already mentioned, additional tree-planting is proposed around the perimeter of the site which will also reinforce its character.



6 Analysis

An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken against the relevant planning policy framework for the site, and other material considerations in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. The Assessment considers the following matters:

- ✿ Principle of Development
- ✿ Green Belt
- ✿ Essex Coastal Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).
- ✿ Design
- ✿ Landscape
- ✿ Ecology
- ✿ Arboriculture
- ✿ Highways
- ✿ Drainage
- ✿ Sustainability

Principle of Development

The proposal comprises a scheme for four new family dwellings in the village of Wickford. Whilst the adopted Development Plan does not set out a settlement hierarchy, it can be noted that Wickford forms one of the larger settlements within the jurisdiction of the Council and can therefore be considered to have good range of services and facilities available to its residents. This was confirmed in the application/appeal at Newhouse Avenue, Wickford (21/00762/FULL), where the Inspector set out that Wickford should be considered a village with a suitable provision of services and facilities available. Wickford can then be considered as a suitable location within Basildon for residential development.

Furthermore, in order for a scheme to be considered a sustainable form of development, it must adhere to the three objectives set out in Paragraph 8 of the Framework. In terms of meeting the economic objective, the development would make an effective use of an underutilised site, which also accords with Chapter 11 of the NPPF.

The future residents would be economically active, and the construction phase would also bring considerable economic benefits. Using the Home Builders Federation multiplier of each new equating to 3.1 jobs per new home, the development as proposed would result in 13 new jobs. Helping to deliver a significant boost to the local economy through 'first occupation' expenditure. This is expenditure on new furniture and other household goods that residents spend as 'one-offs' when moving into a new home. Generating a further significant economic boost from residents moving into the Borough's existing housing stock which were vacated so



that the owners could move into the proposed new homes. This is a result of the spending on renovations, household goods, removals, surveys, estate and legal fees that are associated with the purchase of existing rather than new homes within the Borough's housing stock. In terms of household expenditure, data from ONS Family Expenditure Survey 2021-2022 shows that the 'average UK household spend' is £528.80 per week (or £27,497.60 per year). Given the current economic challenges facing the UK these are significant economic benefits.

Thus, making the site viable as a residential development which enables growth in the right place at the right time. In the review of the social objectives, development of the site will bring the land into formal use and prevent the site from gradually deteriorating over time as the current use does not optimally utilise the land available. The future residents will help support and contribute to other local services in the village. The proposed dwellings will also include sustainable and energy saving measures as set out in the Design and Access Statement.

In regard to the environmental objective, given the limited environmental merit of the site currently, the proposed redevelopment offers an opportunity to provide a greater level of biodiversity and sustainable measures across the site, whilst making effective use of the site. The proposed dwellings will also include bird and bat boxes which will increase biodiversity opportunities. Therefore, the schemes as submitted meet the three objectives of the Framework and can be considered a sustainable form of development.

Building upon the above, Chapter 5 of the Framework highlights the importance of ensuring a sufficient delivery of new homes on a variety of sites which is allowed to come forward without delay to significantly boost the housing supply as per paragraph 60 of the NPPF. Paragraph 70 highlights the merit of smaller sites, as they are able to make a contribution to meeting housing needs much more quickly than the larger sites as they can be built out relatively quicker, as would be the case with this site. As set out in Paragraph 83, development should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

There is an inherent need to deliver housing in Basildon. The Council are unable to meet the five year housing land supply (1.85 years) and unable to meet the Housing Delivery Test (40%). The proposal will make a contribution to the acute housing need and housing land supply, and so the principle of the development is acceptable. The proposals must be considered a sustainable form of development which can then assist in the Council meeting the targets set out in the Development Plan.

The latest published document available on the Council's website, the authority can only demonstrate a 1.85 year housing land supply, which is below the Government's requirement. Given that this site is available, the development of this site would be readily available to assist in boosting the housing land supply for Basildon, with the proposals swiftly being built out. This was considered in the SHLAA assessment in 2020 where the Council considered the site to be



suitable, available and achievable. Such a windfall site would make an important contribution to housing in Basildon, for which there is an acute need.

The Government also publishes a Housing Delivery Test. With the latest results showing a 40% delivery of homes against Basildon target, which is well below the target, and the NPPF at Paragraph 79 therefore sets out that the Council apply a 20% buffer to their land supply as well as encouraging a presumption in favour of sustainable development, due to such a low delivery rate of homes.

In addition, to the above given that the Basildon Local Plan was originally adopted in 1998, with still compliant policies saved in 2007, it can be assumed that there are limited relevant policies and as such a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied.

Given the above, the principle of development on the site and in this location would appear to be accepted both in local and national planning policy, along with the precedent of other schemes locally.

Green Belt

Paragraph 143 of the Framework sets out the purposes of the Green Belt. Given the limited scale of the development proposed and the location of the development within the settlement of Wickford, which has been established as a suitable location for development.

Inherently Paragraph 152 of the NPPF sets out that typically development in the Green Belt should be deemed as inappropriate. However, Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out situations where the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt can be considered appropriate. As such sub-section e states that limited infilling is acceptable within villages.

Given that the application site is surrounded by residential development on three sides, the site currently forms a gap along London Road.

There are several appeals and a high court decision that provide further detail on infilling in the Green Belt.

Within the *Wood v SSCLG and Gravesham Borough Council* [2015] decision the Court of Appeal held that, in considering the question of limited infilling, a village boundary as defined in a local plan would be a relevant consideration. However, the court also held that this factor is not necessarily determinative, particularly where a defined boundary does not accord with an inspector's assessment of the real extent of a village on the ground.

Wickford has been defined in appeals as a village and the Council have undertaken studies of the area identifying it as having potential for infill.



As noted by the Inspector in W/22/3311323, an assessment is made on the ground of how a site relates to adjoining uses. They state “having regard to UDP policies GB2 and GB6 as well as the infill village boundaries set out in UDP Proposal GB7 and the on the ground circumstances, I consider that the appeal site is located within the village of Storeton. The proposed development would be for one dwelling in a small gap in the developed frontage of Lever Causeway and there is residential development opposite. The proposed development would therefore constitute limited infilling.”

In addition, the Lee Valley v Epping Forest District Council judgement explains where the development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, applying the exceptions identified in the Framework, it should not be regarded harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, if the proposal is infill, it is not inappropriate development, as per paragraph 149 e) of the Framework, an assessment on the effect of the proposed development on the openness is not therefore required. Likewise, very special circumstances do not need to be demonstrated in order for the proposal to be considered acceptable.

The proposal is only for four dwellings and the scale of the development can be considered to be limited. The design of the homes reflect adjacent houses, and the proposal is a gap within a continuous frontage.

There are considerable precedents of similar green belt infill developments, many locally are discussed in Chapter 2. There are also several appeals for infill Green Belt schemes that have been accepted and show that a development encompassed on three sides constitutes as limited infilling. These being Land off Minister Court, Radlett Road, Frogmore, St Albans AL2 2NF (APP/B1930/W/19/3225543) which was for a two dwelling scheme, that was allowed at appeal. The other was for a very similar site in Central Bedfordshire which formed a gap along a road, with agricultural land to the rear of the site at Land at Mount Pleasant, Aspley Guise, MK17 8JZ (APP/P0240/W/20/3262804). This was allowed for infill development in a village within the Green Belt and sets a precedent for this type of development to be acceptable and viewed as appropriate.

The proposal as designed meets the criteria as det out in the Green Belt Infill Topic Paper. The site is appropriate for infill with development on three sides, and within a built up frontage. The site fronts on to a road. The width of the plot meets the respective criteria, and the low ridge dwellings meet the style and character of the area, as specified.

Additionally, the proposals will utilise appropriate materials that reflect the surrounding built form. It would also present the opportunity to create a sympathetic development, with the proposals creating a simple, high-quality development in place of an existing area of



hardstanding. The proposal would also assist in meeting the local need for housing as necessitated by the Framework.

As such and in compliance with the above, the proposals constitute an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. In addition, there are considerable benefits arising from the scheme, and these are set out in the conclusion of this report. Overall, the principle of development especially in the context of Green Belt policy is acceptable.

Essex Coastal Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).

Due to the site being situated within the zone of influence, a financial contribution of £156.76 per dwelling (for the financial year 2023/24) will be required and the applicant will arrange payment of this once the application is given a draft recommendation for approval.

Design

The proposed scheme has been developed and evolved in accordance with the Development Plan and also Chapter 12 of the Framework which sets out the requirement for all forms of development to result in the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places, which in turn makes the proposals acceptable to the communities they are integrated with, which this scheme has sought to achieve. In addition, a Design and Access Statement has been prepared and submitted alongside the application to provide further detail and information on the proposals.

As is detailed in the below figures, the architectural styling of the proposed dwellings has taken cues from the surrounding context to ensure that the built form is suitably linked to the local area. This further complies with the relevant policies and the links are explored within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.



Figure 7: 248-250 London Road, Wickford





Figure 8: 264 London Road, Wickford



Figure 9: 256-258 London Road, Wickford

In compliance with Policy BE12, the development will result in a betterment of the environment, with the design of the dwellings prepared to align with the surrounding area and street scene. The proposals will not result in overlooking either existing or proposed residents. The proposed use will assimilate with the existing uses surrounding the site, so there will be no issues in regard to noise, disturbance or overshadowing. There would also be no issues with traffic danger or congestion as a result of the development due to the low number of dwellings being provided, with this justified in the associated Transport Statement.

The scheme has also been developed to ensure that it accords with Policy BE24 which looks at crime prevention measures.

As such, the proposal accords with the necessary design policies relating to the scheme.

Ecology

Hybrid Ecology Ltd has prepared a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to accompany the submission. This found that the site is a large domestic garden on a north-facing slope, which is subject to regular maintenance and is tidy with little ecological interest. Therefore, the site is



assessed as being of low ecological value, containing common, widespread habitats, significant at Site Level only. The development presents an opportunity to enhance the site for local wildlife.

The report has also found that there are no additional surveys required, subject to suitable mitigation being included, which can all form part of the proposals. All retained boundary vegetation will be protected in accordance with arboricultural best practices. Nesting birds are the only on-site species constraint. Tree work and any required vegetation clearance will be undertaken between October-February inclusive or following a negative nest check.

In terms of ecological enhancement measures that are included as part of the proposals:

- ✿ Hedgerow planting/enhancement
- ✿ Tree planting
- ✿ Planting for pollinators
- ✿ Integrated bat roost feature
- ✿ Integrated bird nest boxes
- ✿ Gaps in boundary fences
- ✿ Hedgehog box

As such the development offers an opportunity to provide a net gain in biodiversity on the site, which complies in terms of ecology.

Arboriculture

Sharon Hosegood Associates have prepared an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to accompany the submission. The development will not result in the loss of any category A trees, with any other trees removed being mitigated through the planting of new trees.

The scheme results in the removal of the frontage vegetation (including the low quality scrub on the Highway) to enable access. The western boundary will be cleared to facilitate the nearest plot and to enable new sustainable landscaping. The southern boundary will be retained and protected during construction in accordance with the details in this report. There are no requirements for bespoke arboricultural method statements or site supervision. A concept landscaping scheme accompanies the application to demonstrate new planting on the boundaries, including on the road frontage.

As such the development offers an opportunity to improve the quality of trees on the site, which complies in terms of arboriculture.



Landscape

MHP Design have prepared a Landscape Plan to accompany the application, and this sets out how the scheme will be integrated into the existing context and how the amenity space will be utilised. The approach shows how the scheme will enhance the landscaping elements of the proposals and be brought forward in accordance with the necessary policies.

Highways

Highways consultants EAS have prepared a Transport Statement to be read alongside the application submission.

Wickford Town Centre is located to the east of the site and is around 1.4km, i.e. a 20-minute walk or a 5-minute cycle, away. It has a good range of local shops and businesses that includes the day-to-day requirements that may need to be accessed by local residents.

There are existing bus stops located close to the site, located c. 70m and c. 150m east of the site. From these stops a total of 4 bus services can be boarded, these being the 3, 12, 251, and 625. The area is therefore served by regular hourly local bus services. Wickford Rail Station is located around 2.0km (a c. 27-minute walk or a c. 6-minute cycle) east of the site and forms part of the Shenfield to Southend Rail line, as well as being the western terminus of the Crouch Valley Line, which links this station to Southminster.

The immediate pedestrian environment outside the site is typical of a town edge site with good quality wide footways on the northern side of London Road. A wide verge fronts the area outside the site. The nearest section of the NCN is Route 13 which routes via Billericay, to the west of the site.

There will be secure cycle storage available within each plot for two cycles. Each dwelling will also be allocated two car parking spaces (with an EV Charging Point), with a total of eight spaces proposed in accordance with the Parking Standards. There will be one shared access point for the proposed development. This access is proposed to be located centrally along the site frontage onto London Road. The proposed site access has been tested for both junction visibility and through a swept path analysis exercise.

Residential and recycling waste will both be collected from London Road, in line with the existing arrangements to neighbouring units. The proposals include that deliveries and servicing to the site by rigid servicing vehicles would be made from within the site area.

The overall predicted vehicular traffic numbers are not high with 2 movements (1 arrivals and 1 departures) in both peak hours, and 16 trips (8 arrivals and 8 departures) daily. A couple of daily non-car trips would also be expected to or from the site, which could easily be accommodated



on the existing local sustainable travel networks.

Therefore, the proposed development is compliant with national and local policies, and supports national planning policy to focus residential development where this is needed and desired. The scheme will generate negligible effects on the local highway network, and will support existing local networks and services through increase custom and a higher population density. Therefore there is no highways or transportation reason as to why the proposed development should not be granted planning consent which complies with Paragraph 115 of the NPPF.

Drainage

Drainage consultants EAS have prepared a Flood Risk Assessment and SUDs Strategy, which is submitted alongside the application.

The site lies with FZ1 and is noted to be at very low risk of flooding from all sources. Surface water flood risk is primarily at very low across the site, with an area of high risk along the northern portion of the site. Flood depths are noted to a maximum depth of 300mm. Surface water flooding does not extend to the proposed buildings, although FFLs are to be raised 300mm above surrounding ground levels.

The proposals seek to match the 1:2yr Greenfield Runoff Rate as closely as possible with a discharge rate of 1.0l/s for all Storms up to and including the 1:100yr + 40% Climate Change Event.

Rainwater harvesting shall be provided for the benefit of the site residents.

For the management of surface water runoff, Permeable Paving and Attenuation Storage shall provide the required storage volumes for storms up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 40% Climate Change Event.

It is therefore proposed to discharge to the Anglian Water foul sewer under London Road, with flows restricted via a 20mm orifice plate.

Lined Permeable Paving, covering an area of 444m² shall have a minimum subbase of 550mm. The Attenuation Tank is sized at 0.99m deep with an area of 57.6m². The results show a maximum storage volume of 47.3m³ in the Permeable Paving and a maximum storage volume of 54.2m³ in the Attenuation Tank. The maximum outfall rate for the 1:100yr + 40% Climate Change Event is 1.0 l/s.

It is assumed that all elements of the proposed drainage system will remain private and the responsibility for maintenance will remain with a maintenance company set up by the developer. Maintenance tasks associated with permeable paving and an attenuation storage as



set out by CIRIA have been detailed.

The site is at low risk of flooding and the proposals do not increase flood risk onsite or elsewhere. The proposed SuDS strategy effectively manages the surface water runoff associated with the proposed impermeable areas. In conclusion, the proposals have been shown to be policy compliant on flood risk and SuDS grounds.

Sustainability

As part of the design element of the scheme, energy efficiency and sustainability have been fully considered with the following elements being included:

Energy efficiency:

- ✿ The buildings will be insulated to high level to meet or exceed current Part L requirements.
- ✿ Double glazing to all windows
- ✿ Low energy LED lighting will be used throughout
- ✿ Low energy appliances will be fitted
- ✿ Efficient Gas boilers
- ✿ Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery
- ✿ Inclusion of PV panels

Water saving features:

- ✿ Aerated fittings will be used throughout
- ✿ Dual flush toilets
- ✿ Showers to all bathrooms
- ✿ Rainwater harvesting features, such as water butts

As such given that the above features are to be included as part of the proposals it is considered that the development will include suitable features to be considered sustainable with energy and water efficiency.



7 Conclusion

Warner Planning submits this Planning Application on behalf of CBS Developments Limited for the erection of four family homes with associated access, parking and landscaping on land currently utilised as a garden adjacent to 229 London Road, Wickford, Essex, SS12 0LG.

This application has been prepared in accordance with the necessary local and national planning policies, whilst also utilising the available technical reports that have been prepared as part of the application being developed.

The scheme is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, constituting as limited infill, on a gap in the built form along London Road, with precedent to demonstrate its acceptability in being brought forward.

It is considered that there are compelling grounds to support the proposed development, including:

- ✿ Provide homes that can be delivered immediately.
- ✿ Appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.
- ✿ Sympathetic design in regard to heritage assets.
- ✿ Bring into use an under-utilised site, that has been deemed acceptable in the SHLAA.
- ✿ Create a high quality design.
- ✿ Provide homes at a time when the Council are unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, and has also failed the housing delivery test.
- ✿ Additional residential units to further add to the mix of housing types.
- ✿ Development being located in the sustainable settlement of Wickford.
- ✿ The proposal is well related to the adjoining buildings and complements the area's character.
- ✿ Clear precedent locally and nationally of similar schemes being allowed.
- ✿ New landscaping with a biodiversity net increase.
- ✿ New biodiversity opportunities – especially bird and bat boxes.
- ✿ Safe and suitable access onto the site.
- ✿ The site is located in a sustainable location, close to facilities.
- ✿ Sustainability measures integrated into the development.
- ✿ Residents will deliver economic benefits by supporting local businesses.
- ✿ Economic benefits during the construction phase and post-construction, the occupiers of the dwelling will support the local economy by paying taxes and visiting local facilities and businesses.



The application site is located within the built form of Wickford, where the principle of this form of residential development is acceptable and the settlement is noted as having a range of services and facilities. The proposal seeks to optimise the site in accordance with the surrounding uses.

Given the Council's current position in terms of land supply, housing delivery and the status of the adopted/emerging Development Plan, this sustainable development poses an opportunity to permit a portion of housing that will contribute to improving the current housing situation in Basildon.

As demonstrated within this Statement and the supporting documents the proposal is policy compliant with local policies and is aligned with the aims of the Framework. It is fundamentally sound.

The applicant is committed to working with the Council and is happy to meet the Council to discuss the application, consider any amendments where appropriate and liaise over potential conditions.

In view of the above information contained within this report, and the supporting plans and statements, we respectfully invite the Council to approve this application.

