

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V2359/RM
APPLICATION TYPE	RESERVED MATTERS
REGISTERED	28.10.2013
PARISH	WATCHFIELD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Simon Howell Elaine Ware
APPLICANT	CCS Developments Ltd
SITE	Cowans Camp Depot High Street Watchfield SN6 8TE
PROPOSAL	Reserved Matters application following Outline permission P12/V2283/O
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	424191/190381
OFFICER	Mark Doodes

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This 9.7 ha site lies on the northern edge of the village of Watchfield and immediately south of the A420 Oxford to Swindon road. It comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land of which about one third is previously developed land in the form of large storage units, workshops and water tanks which were previously owned and operated by the MOD. The south part of the site is a large greenfield area which has been used for informal recreation purposes for a number of years.
- 1.2 The site is currently served by an established access onto High Street, which has public transport links and access can be gained to nearby shops. The existing access is proposed to be replaced as part of this application.
- 1.3 The boundaries of the site on all sides consist of hedgerows of varying heights, maturity and types. A detailed breakdown can be found in the ecology survey. In terms of topography, the site gently slopes downhill from north to south, and the difference in levels is approximately 6m according to surveys. Consequently, the site is not prone to flooding.
- 1.4 The use of the land since before World War II by the MOD has been the cause of soil contamination. This, amongst other reasons, would explain the presence of security fences around the previously developed area of the site.
- 1.5 The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings within or close to the site. The land is not covered by any other special designation, although a local nature reserve exists approximately 100m to the south of the site.
- 1.6 Local facilities comprise a primary school within about 500m of the site, a village hall, post office and a public house 200m to the west. There is also a small supermarket, hairdressers and an additional “family” style public house about 1km to the east of the site.
- 1.7 The site is also the subject of a Village Green (VG) application relating to the greenfield area of the site only. The application has been ongoing for over a year, at the time of writing this report (late Feb 2014) the public inquiry based in Faringdon, was ongoing. This process, which is entirely separate from the Planning system, could conclude that some, all or none of the greenfield site is granted VG status. Such

a non-discrete process, where a spectrum of outcomes could be possible is notably alien from the planning system which produces a consent or not. A decision on the village green matter is due in Spring 2014. If the area of land currently POS conflicts with the VG decision then it may be required to return to the previous condition and use. However, any decision to progress works on contested areas of land is done so entirely at the developers risk and with full awareness of the legal ramifications. The VG application (and legislation) is not a matter that the Vale can become involved in. In this scenario a revised RM application for layout would be required to be submitted.

- 1.8 The S106 legal agreement has been engrossed on the 16th of May 2013, following a Committee resolution in January 2013. A condition required that the Reserved Matters (RM) application be submitted with a period of six months was achieved. The same condition also required that the RM matters are all consented before a year. Given that there is no further legal agreement to enter into at this stage, this deadline is achievable to ensure that the homes, facilities and employment are all delivered in a timely fashion in line with the circumstances of the granting of permission on such an exception site. .
- 1.9 Applications to discharge many conditions are being processed, and some have already been discharged. For the record, no development can commence until the RM matters are approved and the respective conditions are discharged.
- 1.10 Some archaeology, drainage, SUDS ponds and works to translocate certain species have commenced with the relevant consents now in place from organisations such as Natural England. Therefore a number of diggers and other construction equipment has been present on site for some time.
- 1.11 Councillors are also reminded that in the intervening months since granting outline consent, there has been no change in the five year land supply shortfall. The publication of the 2031 Local Plan strategic sites, bears no impact on already consented schemes.
- 1.12 A copy of the site location plan is available **attached** in appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This is a reserved matters application to consider the four outstanding areas which have not previously been agreed at outline, these are; Layout, Scale, Landscaping and Appearance. This report will address each area in turn in the planning considerations section.
- 2.2 Councillors are reminded that the principle of development for 100 new homes, 50 elderly care units and a 17 bed learning disability scheme has been consented, along with the means of access off High Street.
- 2.3 The developer is Barratt Homes Plc, trading under the brand of David Wilson Homes, although the applicant remains the landowners agents Framptons Planning Ltd.
- 2.4 Copies of the plans are **attached** in appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Watchfield Parish Council – Objection. **attached** at appendix 3. In summary the Parish are concerned about the design of the care home, potential use of flooding lighting on the building amongst other concerns.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 5 March 2014

Crime Prevention Design Adviser - No objection, some minor points noted on layout.

Environment Agency (Lesley Tims & Cathy Harrison) – Holding Objection - The developer has applied to discharge the conditions relating to the SUDS scheme, which have been met with the approval. (see officer comments in section 6.2)

Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) – Holding Objection - The developer has applied to discharge the conditions relating to the SUDS scheme, which have been met with the approval. (see officer comments in section 6.2)

Natural England - No objection

Oxfordshire County Council One Voice – Objection to highways matters, which have been satisfied by use of a S278 agreement and other details.

County Archaeological Services (SODC) - No strong views

Planning Policy – No comments

Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) – Holding Objection lifted, once the holding objection was lifted relating to layout matters and Great Crested Newts.

Landscape officer – No comments

Architects Panel (P18ARC) – Concerns regarding the amount of natural light into the care home, revised drawings were sought to create a horseshoe not an L-shaped building.

Health & Housing - Env. Protection Team - No comments

Health & Housing - Air Quality - No comments

Conservation Officer Vale - No comments

Neighbour Object (4) – Impact on the area, layout concerns, principle of development, parking, traffic, impact on ecology. All matters were previously raised at outline stage.

Neighbour No Strong Views (1)

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [VE12/194](#) - ()

Engineering operations occurring digging up concrete.

[P13/V2160/DIS](#) - Approved (07/10/2013)

Discharge of condition 8 relating to application P12/V2283/O

[P13/V1519/DIS](#) – Part-approved (12/08/2013)

Discharge of conditions 1(part), 3 and 8(part) for planning permission P12/V2283/O.

[P12/V2283/O](#) - Approved (16/05/2013)

Residential development for up to 100 dwellings; provision of Extra Care Housing comprising 50 No. apartments to meet the needs of the elderly (Class C2); provision of two Learning Disability Homes comprising 17 No. bedrooms in total (Class C2);

together with means of access.

[P01/V0787/O](#) - Refused (21/01/2002)

Demolition of existing office and storage buildings for residential development, improved access, associated open space, acoustic screen and landscaping.

[P69/V0179](#) - Approved (12/03/1969)

Siting of a caravan.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012*

Paragraphs 14 & 49 – presumption in favour of sustainable development

Paragraphs 34 & 37 – encourage minimised journey lengths to work, shopping, leisure and education

Paragraph 47 – five year housing land supply requirement

Paragraph 50 – create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities

Paragraph 57, 60 & 61 – promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment

Paragraph 99 – flood risk assessment

Paragraph 109 – contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment

Paragraph 111 – encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed

Paragraph 119 – the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not override protected species and habitats

Paragraph 126-134 – Historic assets and environment

All policies and standards referred to in the Outline consent that apply specifically to the reserved matters.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 Being a reserved matters allocation, only the matters set out in the proposal section are to be discussed.

6.2 Layout - The application varies from the indicative outline landscaping scheme by moving the care home and learning disability units to the High Street (northern) end of the site. This is a result of feedback from various objectors who raised the legitimate concern that elderly and potentially less mobile people will be farthest away from the village facilities and public transport links. Furthermore all visitors, deliveries and staff would have, under the indicative layout, had to drive the length of the site. This new location for the care home and learning disability unit, also frees the lower end of the site for the comparatively lower, softer and less bulky residential units which will in turn set the public open space in a better context. The public open space for the site is around 4Ha, which reflects pre-application discussions with both officers and the parish council which concluded the strong need for quality POS in the village, given the pressure of development in the area. A very large area in the order of 3.5ha will be available for use by the village.

The design of the main care home facility has been modified to be a courtyard style layout rather than the original L-shape building submitted. This is the result of feedback from the architects' panel, and officer concerns that a large dominant building may temper the overall spacious and green layout of the scheme. The new design is lower than the original too, and uses vertical sections of render and brickwork to break-up the otherwise long façade. Opportunities for casual parking are also have been created

along the main road by using a pinch point to slow down traffic to its target speed of 20MPH.

The scheme features a good distribution of affordable units in three areas, none of which are cul-de-sacs. The perimeter footpath will provide a good leisure route for walkers and this is augmented by picnic benches, use of landscaping around the SUDS ponds and the generally green and open atmosphere of the area created. No children's play area will be provided by the developer, since this was not felt to be necessary, however a sum of at least £220k will be provided directly to the parish for POS upkeep as part of a commuted sum. How these monies are spent/invested is a matter for Parish, however a quality play area can be installed for around £25k.

The layout has been criticised by some parties in failing to front Star Lane aside from at the central section. However it should be noted that Star Lane is not a fully tarmaced adopted road and in any event is very narrow. The final layout presented to Councillors is a conscious choice resulting from eliminating less appealing alternatives (such as a large continuous length of inactive rear gardens facing the main circulation road) that were part of the protracted round table discussions between the developer and Vale officers. The resulting layout is considered to be of high quality with generous private gardens, quality public open space and with the Parish adopting the landscape and open space areas the scope for future community use is secured.

Parking is in excess of the OCC standards and some scope for visitor parking by the POS has also been integrated. No concerns remain about the ability of waste management vehicles accessing the properties.

Drainage and layout – The SUDS scheme is the subject of a condition for which an application has been made to provide these details. This has prompted a holding objection from Environment Agency and local drainage engineers, that one may inform the other. However, officers are of the view that the likely extent of any variation, if at all, will be de-minimis in nature and not alter the locations of any homes, roads or POS; merely the precise locations of the ponds along the area of the site close to A420 and brook at the south western section of the site. The drainage plans have been distributed to the Vale drainage engineer and EA for comment (as part of the discharge of condition) and members will be updated at the Committee meeting. Nonetheless, the granting of a reserved matters layout that does not satisfy a technical requirement and will prompt a requirement for a revised Reserved Matters application or minor amendment for the drainage/SUDs plans. Again, this is a matter of risk for the applicant, noting the need to fulfil the requirements of the original consent.

- 6.3 Scale – Most of the residential units erected will be two storey with a scattering of three storey units throughout the development to punctuate key vistas and promote a less homogenous urban form. The proposed homes contain no first floor “studies” and are regular house types from Barratt with occasional minor twists on these designs to reflect the findings of a local character context.. Officers are comfortable that all proposed house types meet all relevant standards, and will be built to a minimum of Code level 3, or higher, depending on the date of building control approval.

The care home has had the ridge line reduced to just under 9m. The use of a contrived roof is noted as incongruous however officers initial concerns are tempered by the relocation of the building to the highest part of the site, which will ensure that the building will not be viewed easily from any angle that will betray this architectural requirement which has been driven by the need for a spinal-layout with room on either side of a central corridor. The private courtyard to the rear of the building will provide an area of privacy for residents whilst allowing easy access to the POS. Concerns from the

Parish regarding the use of floodlights are not shared by officers, who have discussed the use of low level lighting which is more common place and is favoured for reasons of economy and ambience. Concerns that the building ought be finished in stone are also not shared by officers, the use of stone over such a large area would be most unusual, save for fortification reasons, instead the use of domestic themed brick and other materials which echo that of the local area is considered to be more fitting and will also serve to break up single facades into smaller sections. Both highways and planning officers are comfortable with the relatively modest supply for parking for the care facility, noting the opportunities for casual parking nearby, which will also serve to slow traffic entering the site. No concerns are raised as regards the designs proposed for the care home and the educational facility.

- 6.4 Landscaping – The inner footpath proposed in the initial outline layout has been removed to allow for a larger continuous area of POS to be available. The undulating and flowing circular footpath, which will be formed of bonded gravel to ensure its long term durability and that it is cycle/wheelchair friendly. No comments were formally made by landscaping officers, however officers were part of the discussions around the new layout and a condition requiring that a precise species plan be submitted and approved prior to occupation of the first unit, and fully implemented prior to the occupation of the 30th residential C3 unit.
- 6.5 Appearance – A schedule of materials was presented at the last committee. Some amended materials are being sought presently and are controlled in any event by a condition on the outline consent. The care home materials will be available at the Committee meeting to be discussed this evening but have been designed to be residential in nature, to ensure that the pallet of materials matches the units opposite and to the south. Officers are satisfied that the scheme is of a very high quality, and will be regarded as a benchmark for future Vale schemes in terms of the flow of pedestrian movement, use of sight lines from the existing village and the public realm offering. The land at the site entrance has been identified as being capable of supporting a piece of public art which will be financed by the developer.
- 6.6 Other matters – It should be noted that species protected by other legislation are not a material consideration unless by means of a condition. In this instance, officers have proactively contacted Natural England who have assured officers that the appropriate consents are in place (in some cases retrospectively) to translocate the newt, bat and other populations which exist on this site.

Sewage – Officers are aware of the capacity shortfall in the sewage network in the area, and this is the subject of a condition on the outline permission, which ensure that all sewage matters are properly scoped and mitigation in place before the *occupation* of any units.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The details provided for the reserved matters meet all relevant standards expected of modern developments, and will provide an excellent environment for prospective residents, with good integration into Watchfield village. The reserved matters efforts have focussed on ensuring a green and open layout. Officers are confident that the scheme recommended for approval herein is also capable of being modified depending upon the outcome of the Village Green application.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Reserved Matters subject to the following conditions;

- 1 : Approved plans *
- 2 : Demolish specified buildings before occupation *
- 3 : Secured By Design standards formally approved.
- 4 : UNIQUE – S278 agreement for off-site works
- 5 : UNIQUE – Target speed of 20MPH on site.
- 6 : UNIQUE - Highways Miscellaneous
7. No garage conversion
8. Landscaping detailed plan approved prior to occupation
9. Landscaping fully implimented by 30th C1 Domestic dwelling.

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