



CHORLTON PLANNING LTD

Town Planning & Development Consultants

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION
(REVISION OF PREVIOUS APPLICATION REF: 69051)

PROPOSED DETACHED DWELLING

LAND TO THE NORTH OF 2 HOLLINS CLOSE,
UNSWORTH, BURY, BL9 8AY

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT

Prepared by Chorlton Planning Ltd

on behalf of

The Cornell Group

A:2408

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0.0 PREAMBLE

0.1 Outline planning application – reference number 69051 - for a detached dwelling to the north of 2 Hollins Close, Unsworth was submitted to the Council in November 2022.

0.2 Discussions with the planning case officer have led to the application being withdrawn until further information can be provided.

0.3 The additional information is now available and a new outline application has been submitted.

0.4 The application is in outline only with only access to be considered at this stage.

0.5 This statement is provided in support of the application and demonstrates how the proposals comply with planning and environmental policy.

0.5 As Hollins Close is a private highway the occupiers of the existing 6 houses have been formally notified with the service of a Notice No. 1.

1.0 THE SITE

1.1 The application site comprises a corner plot of open land at the junction of Hollins Close with Hollins Lane within the village of Unsworth.

1.2 The site is to the north of No. 2 Hollins Close and to the west of No.1 Hollins Lane.

1.3 There are currently six two storey detached dwellings that form Hollins Close within a rectangular plot.

1.4 The area to the north, east and south of the site is predominantly residential in character. Bury Golf Course lies to the west.

1.5 A photograph is attached at Document No. 4. A Google Image is attached at Document No.2. A site plan is included with the architect's plans.

2.0 THE PROPOSALS

2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a detached two storey dwelling on the site. A new vehicular access will be created from Hollins Close and will lead onto a permeable surfaced driveway with parking for four cars. The remainder of the site will be soft landscaped to provide private amenity space.

2.2 The application includes improvements to the highway and the footways to both Hollins Close and Hollins Lane, as requested by the Council's Highway Engineer.

2.3 The application is in outline but with approval of means of access to the site sought with all other matters reserved for future consideration. An indicative layout drawing is included but this is not part of the application.

2.4 The house will be bespoke designed for the occupier but its shape, height and massing will respect the defining characteristics of the surrounding built development.

2.5 Plans and layouts are provided by Evolve Architectural Design Ltd.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Planning applications within Bury are assessed against National, sub regional and local planning and environmental policies. The principal documents are:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the Government's planning policy for England. It was updated in December 2023. All other planning policy documents need to be in conformity with this Framework and it takes precedence over out-of-date policies contained within local and other plans. The newly elected government is likely to update the NPPF within the near future. A draft NPPF is out for consultation at present.
- The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan (PFE). This Plan covers the nine participating local authorities in Greater Manchester, including Bury. It was adopted on 21st March 2024. Revisions to the NPPF may affect the PFE policies and strategic development sites.
- The Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP). This was adopted in August 1997. Following the adoption of the PFE, Bury Council is working on The Bury Local Plan which will replace the UDP. In the meantime, the UDP will continue to be used in considering planning applications

4.2 The relevant planning policies contained within the above documents are addressed under the following subject headings which are set out in separate chapters;

5. Sustainability and Site Allocation
6. Housing
7. Built Environment
8. Natural Environment
9. Design
10. Transport and Accessibility

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY AND SITE ALLOCATION

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (PFE) Chapter 2 states:

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system’s three overarching objectives, which are inter-dependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right place and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities, health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) An environmental objective – to protect and enhance a natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

5.2 The application site is not allocated as a strategic development site in the PFE but key policies in the Plan are relevant to this application.

5.3 The site is located within the Green Belt on the Bury UDP Proposals Map used in conjunction with the ‘saved’ policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The land to the north, west and south is unallocated on the Proposals Map

Bury UDP Policy EN4/2

3.37 This policy seeks to secure energy efficiency in development through:-

- *the promotion of energy efficient modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *seeking the location of new development in areas easily accessible to public transport and local facilities;*

- *promoting the efficient use of energy in the design and layout of development”.*

3.38 In compliance with local and national advice, the site is in a sustainable location. A bus service is in operation along Hollins Lane and walking and cycling are feasible modes of transport. The site has access to local needs shops, schools, eating and drinking establishments and places of employment within the village and areas beyond.

3.39 A fabric first approach will be taken in the construction of the proposed dwelling to ensure maximum energy efficiency.

6.0 HOUSING POLICIES

NPPF

6.1 The following NPPF paragraphs are relevant

“Para 63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes

Places for Everyone (PFE)

6.2 The following PFE extracts are considered relevant;

6.3 Boosting Northern Competitiveness

4.44 Over recent years, the northern areas of Greater Manchester, namely Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside, Wigan, and west Salford, have seen relatively low levels of growth overall compared to other parts of the city region, and this is forecast to continue. These northern areas have many strengths, such as their distinctive landscapes, proud communities, a strong manufacturing base and the opportunity for links to areas of economic prosperity beyond Greater Manchester, but their potential is not currently being fully realised. If current trends continue then disparities between the northern and southern areas will increase, and this will be harmful not only to the prospects for the north but also to those of Greater Manchester.

6.4 Policy JP-Strat6: Northern Areas

A significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas will be sought. There will be a strong focus on making as much use as possible of suitable previously-developed (brownfield) land through urban regeneration, enhancing the role of the

town centres and diversifying the residential offer. Thiswill help to boost economic opportunities and diversify housing provision.

.....The construction of new housing is also an important part of the economy, providing large numbers of jobs and often securing the redevelopment of derelict and underused sites

6.5 Housing Land Supply

7.8 There is a strong focus in this Plan on directing new housing towards previously-developed sites within the existing urban area. This will help to address existing dereliction and poorly used sites, as well as reducing the need to release greenfield and Green Belt land for development.

7.10 A further source of housing land supply will be small sites, which are typically not identified comprehensively in brownfield registers and strategic housing land availability assessments. It has been assumed that the supply of new dwellings on small sites will continue at the same rate in each district as has been seen over the last five years.

6.6 Distribution of New Housing

7.15 In order to help address these issues, higher levels of housing growth will be focused in the central and northern districts of Greater Manchester.... Supporting higher levels of new housing in the northern districts will assist in achieving a more balanced pattern of growth across Greater Manchester and a better distribution of skilled workers to support local economies, helping to reduce disparities.....

Bury UDP

6.7 Policies contained within the Bury UDP are to a certain extent superseded by those contained within the PFE and the updated NPPF. Nonetheless the main thrust of Bury's approach to housing policy is included within this document.

6.8 UDP Policy H1/2 addresses proposals for housing development outside allocated areas. The policy encourages new housing development to be located within accessible urban areas with existing infrastructure. As with other policies, the impact of new residential development on the amenity of surrounding land uses is a key consideration.

6.9 UDP Policy H2/1 seeks to ensure that new residential development makes a positive contribution to the area in which it is situated. The policy states:-

“Factors to be considered when assessing proposals will include:

- *the height and roof type of adjacent buildings;*
- *the impact of developments on residential amenity;*
- *the density and character of the surrounding area;*
- *the position and proximity of neighbouring properties;*
- *the materials to be used in proposed developments, especially their colour and texture”.*

6.10 UDP Policy H2/2 takes into account the layout of new residential development including car parking provision, access, density, space around dwellings, landscaping, open space and design for safety and security.

POLICY COMPLIANCE.

6.11 As anticipated the stepped housing requirements were included in the adopted PFE and are now part of Bury Council’s housing policy. It would appear that there is no longer a shortfall of available housing land in Bury. However, the change to the method of calculating housing land requirements proposed in the draft 2024 NPPF may require an increase in the numbers of homes needed per annum which in turn may require more land to be identified for housing.

6.12 The application site is within an existing residential sub-urban area. Paragraph 7.10 of the PFE refers to land not included within the current SHLAA, ie. windfall sites. These will add to those sites already identified as available in the SHLAA.

6.13 These sites provide an opportunity for good quality, individually designed schemes, in accessible locations that will fit in well and provide accommodation within existing built-up areas where services and infrastructure are already available.

6.14 Both the NPPF and the PFE advocate that development should seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes including self-build and community led project to meet local needs. There is a demand for such sites especially within sub-urban and more rural areas.

6.15 The dwelling proposed will be attractive as a self-build project due to its location and its overlooking the open land of Bury Golf Club.

6.16 The proposed development will be of a density commensurate with that of the surrounding area in line with PFE and Bury UDP policies.

6.17 The proposal is classed as a minor development that will not require an affordable housing contribution.

6.18 Being located adjacent to existing residential development within the village of Unsworth means that a new dwelling on the land would meet the requirements of this local, and national, planning policy. The proposal is wholly compatible with the surrounding land uses and will provide a logical extension to the existing Hollins Close development without prejudice to the

recreational use to the west. The future detailed design of the proposed dwelling will address the safeguarding of privacy for both existing and future occupants of the dwellings.

7.0 BUILT ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

7.1 PFE Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places states;

We aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the following key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate, should be consistent with:

1. Distinctive, with a clear identity that:

- A. Conserves and enhances the natural environment, landscape features, historic environment and local history and culture;*
- B. Enables a clear understanding of how the place has developed; and*
- C. Respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used*

7.2 Bury UDP Policy OL3/1 seeks to protect land within the urban area that holds visual amenity and wildlife value, forms an important outlet for recreation, provides a buffer between incompatible uses or a link between other areas of open land.

POLICY COMPLIANCE

7.3 The site is within a well-established residential area and will provide a quality living environment for future occupants. The dwelling will have ample private garden space and car parking provision.

7.4 The layout and detailed design of the dwelling will respect the recommended privacy distances between these and the existing dwellings around the site.

7.5 As stated above the land is within private ownership and is enclosed by a fence and therefore does not provide usable amenity or recreational space or serve as a physical link to open space. The land appears to be left over from the housing development of Hollins Close which occupies the remainder of the rectangular plot. Also, the land does not serve any purpose in connection with the adjacent golf course, nor does it act as a buffer between incompatible uses.

8.0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

8.1 NPPF paragraph 180 states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by

- a. Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).*
- b. Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and eco system services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland”.*

8.2 NPPF paragraph 189 deals with ground conditions and pollution. It states that;

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:

- a. A site is suitable for its proposed use taking into account ground conditions and any risk arising from land instability and contamination...*

Adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments...

PFE Chapter 8 in paragraph 8.2 states that;

This plan supports the important role of our natural assets by:

- Valuing the special qualities and key sensitivities of our landscapes (recognising importance of an area's appearance to the sense of place held by those who live in and visit it).*
- Seeking to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure (the wider network of green and blue) features which make a huge contribution to quality of life, promote good mental and physical health, create liveable places and support economic growth.*
- Seeking an overall enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity the living organisms and ground beneath our feet which underpin the value of the natural environment and its ability to provide a wide range of important benefits, including supporting human health and quality of life).*
- Seeking to maintain a Green Belt which plays an important role in restricting unplanned development in a conurbation with a complex urban form, ensuring that its cities, towns and smaller settlements retain their identity.*

8.3 The Chapter goes on to address landscape character and the constraints and opportunities that development within these areas brings.

8.4 It reaffirms the commitment to protecting, enhancing and restoring natural habitats, including BNG requirements.

8.5 Bury UDP Policy EN1/5 relates to new development and flooding

POLICY COMPLIANCE

8.6 A Preliminary Ecology Survey has been prepared by Tyrer Ecological Consultants. It is submitted with the application.

8.7 The report makes several recommendations relating to the eradication of invasive plant species, a robust lighting scheme to facilitate bat movements and the protection of birds during the construction phase. The report is currently being updated and a further report will be submitted within the next week or so.

8.8 An Arboricultural Report and Arboricultural Assessment has been prepared by JCA, Arboricultural and Ecological Consultants. It is submitted with the application.

8.9 The application is for a custom build house and as such is exempt from BNG requirements. However, it is expected that bio-diversity enhances required by the NPPF will be the subject of a planning condition and these will be incorporated into the landscaping proposals.

8.10 With regard to ground conditions a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment has been carried out by Geo Environmental Engineering. The report is submitted with the application. The report concluded;

- The site is currently considered to pose a low geotechnical risk (proposed structures).
- The site is currently considered to pose a very low risk to the proposed end users from ground contamination.
- The site is currently considered to pose a negligible risk to adjacent sites, surrounding environment and controlled waters with respect to potential ground/ground water contamination.
- A very low risk is currently considered present of ground gas, with negligible risk of radon.

8.11 With regard to flood risk the site does not fall within an area that has been identified by the Council as being at risk from water courses or surface water flooding. A sustainable drainage system will be incorporated to ensure that the development will not lead to an increased risk of flooding elsewhere.

9.0 DESIGN POLICIES

9.1 The National Design Guide – Planning Practice Guidance for Beautiful, Enduring and Successful Places - was published by the then Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to supplement the guidance in the NPPF.

9.2 The purpose of the National Design Guide is stated as:

“Places affect us all – they are where we live, work and spend our leisure time. Well-designed places influence the quality of our experience as we spend time in them and move around them. We enjoy them, as occupants or users but also as passers by and visitors. They can lift our spirits by making us feel at home, giving us a buzz of excitement or creating a sense of delight. They have been shown to affect our health and well-being, and feelings of safety, security, inclusion and belonging, and our sense of community cohesion.

They function well, accommodating businesses, homes and a range of other uses and activities that support our everyday lives. Well designed places can last for many years.”

9.3 NPPF CHAPTER 12 Achieving Well Designed Places, states;

Para 131. “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps makes development acceptable to communities....

Para 135.. Planning Policies and Designs that planning decisions should 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 density);*
- (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangements 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 users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community, cohesion and resilience.*

Para 139. Development that is not well-designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes and/or*
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*

9.4 Bury UDP Policy EN1/1 seeks to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of an area, in particular where sites are within or close to the Green Belt, Special Landscape Areas or the river valleys

9.5 Bury UDP Policy EN1/2 seeks to ensure that new development relates well to the local context and makes a positive contribution to the townscape of villages and towns.

9.6 Bury UDP Policy EN1/3 requires the incorporation of high-quality landscaping into developments. The policy highlights the importance of the retention of trees, hedges and other ecological features within development sites and encourages the planting of native species.

POLICY COMPLIANCE

9.7 The detailed design and layout of the proposed development will be addressed at reserved matters stage. However, an indicative layout has been prepared to demonstrate that a new dwelling can sit comfortably within the site whilst providing ample landscaped amenity space and parking provision and safeguarding the amenity of the closest neighbours.

9.8 The site is visually important in the street scene being at the entrance to Hollins Close. This will be the starting point for the design concept. The defining characteristics of the area are detached houses within medium density groupings, set in gardens with tree, hedge and bush cover.

9.9 The design concept is to position a single house of similar shape and massing in line with the flow of houses on Hollins Close.

9.10 The external materials to be used will reflect those of the surrounding area and the existing houses.

9.11 The design will be of high quality and respect its contexts, the local distinctiveness and as such will maintain and enhance the appearance and character of the immediate area.

10.0 TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES

10.1 NPPF Chapter 9 deals with promoting sustainable transport.

10.2 Paragraph 114 states:

“In assessing sites that maybe allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a. appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location.*
- b. safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.....”*

10.3 Bury UDP Policy HT2/4 deals with car parking and new development

POLICY COMPLIANCE

10.4 Adequate parking spaces will be provided within the site. As a result, there will be no adverse impact on the highway or existing parking provision as a result of the proposed development.

10.5 The existing access from Hollins Close onto Hollins Road is substandard. It was the best that could be achieved for the existing development due to restricted land ownership. The development of the application plot will allow the junction to be re-modelled so that Hollins Close meets Hollins Lane at a right angle. This will produce a wider carriageway with better visibility splays. The pedestrian footway will also be improved resulting in easier and safer pedestrian movements.

10.6 The improvements to the footpath and visibility splays to both Hollins Close and Hollins Lane will benefit existing users of the highways as well as the occupants of the new development.

10.7 The site is within a well-established residential area with access to public transport and within easy reach on foot and by bicycle to a range of services.

11. GREEN BELT

NPPF

11.1 The NPPF seeks to safeguard the Green Belt against inappropriate forms of development which may undermine the five main purposes of including land within it.

11.2 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states:-

“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.

11.3 Paragraph 143 sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:-

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

11.4 Paragraph 154 states;

A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- (b) 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;*
- (c) 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;*
- (d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- (e) limited infilling in villages;*
- (f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- (g) 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.*

11.5 Paragraphs 152 and 153 of the NPPF state:-

“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

.... ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”.

11.6 Saved Bury UDP Policies OL1, OL1/2 and OL1/3 address Green Belt policy and largely follow the NPPF.

11.7 The PFE Green Belt policies also follow the NPPF.

COMPLIANCE

11.9 The Green Belt boundary runs along the north, east and western boundaries of the application site and then turns at a right angle to run along the rear garden boundaries of Nos 2, 4 and 6 Hollins Close. The site is surrounded by built development and the construction of a well-designed dwelling on the site would form a logical extension of Hollins Close and would not appear at odds with the character and appearance of the area.

11.10 The site comprises a relatively small parcel of Green Belt land that projects awkwardly away from the open golf course land. Its size and location do not make a significant contribution to the character and openness of the Green Belt and its development for residential purposes will therefore not prejudice the visual amenity of this part of the Borough’s Green Belt.

11.11 The development does not conflict with the five purposes of Green Belt. It does not encroach into the countryside. – the site is not countryside- nor is it unrestricted sprawl.

11.12 The dictionary definition of encroachment is:

“a gradual advance beyond usual or acceptable limits”.

11.13 The application plot is part of the built up area of the Hollins Close development. The rear fence line is a continuation of the rear fence lines of Nos. 2, 4 and 6 Hollins Close and whilst at present the site is open land it is not ‘countryside’. It is visually quite distinct from the open character of the golf course land to the west.

11.14 UDP Policy OL1/2 and advice within the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate development with the exception of a small number of types of development. One of the exceptions criteria relates to 'limited infilling within existing villages'.

11.15 UDP Policy OL1/3 goes on to provide further detail and reads:-

"In all named villages which lie within the Green Belt, limited infill development may be permitted, provided that it is in scale with the village and would not adversely affect its character or surroundings."

11.16 The named villages are Shuttleworth, Holcombe Village, Hawkshaw, Summerseat, Nangreaves, Affetside, Ainsworth and Simister.

11.17 NPPF Chapter 13 deals with 'Protecting Green Belt' and paragraph 154 section e refers to the 'limited infilling in villages' exception.

Looking in more detail at the wording of clause e):

11.18 The development is 'limited' in that it is comprised of only one house.

11.19 The term 'village', is not defined in the NPPF.

11.20 Wikipedia defines a village as:

"a clustered human settlement or community, larger than a hamlet but smaller than a town (although the word is often used to describe both hamlets and smaller towns), where the population typically ranges from a few hundred to a few thousand. Although villages are often located in rural areas, the term urban village is also applied to certain urban neighbourhoods....."

"In Great Britain a hamlet earned the right to be called a village when it built a church"

11.21 It is generally accepted that Unsworth is a village . It has a distinct identity and a well-established community.

11.22 An extract from a Wikipedia article is provided at Document No. 1. This looks at the present and historical context of the village of Unsworth in some detail.

11.23 Unsworth is clearly a well-established village with residential areas, schools, eating and drinking establishments, shops and a social club. The application site provides a good opportunity for infill development and will make use of a plot of land that currently has limited beneficial use due to its fenced position at the outer corner of the golf course and there is no reason why this village should be discounted from consideration for infill development.

11.24 Since the previous application we have considered these issues further. A Heritage Statement centred on the history of Unsworth has been undertaken by the Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy. The report concludes:

It has been demonstrated in this report that Unsworth developed during the 19th century from a scattered rural settlement into a clearly-defined linear village which extended northwards along Hollins Lane to adjoin what is now the proposal site. The presence of St George's Church from 1730, to be followed by schools, a post office, public house, club and bowling green, along with a population of 2,000 by the 1870s, all confirm its historic village status. Significant expansion along Hollins Lane adjoining the site occurred in the early 20th century along Sykes Road, followed more recently by Hollins Close. These developments all represent an organic growth of the original community.

Given the above, development of the application site would not be inappropriate as it adjoins established housing at Hollins Close and would appear as a natural continuation of the settlement pattern that emerged from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century.

The proposal for development of the site should therefore be considered favourably in this context.

11.25 The Heritage Statement is submitted with this application.

11.26 With regard to the term infill, there is a strong logical fenced-off boundary to the development where it meets open countryside - the golf course - on only one side with built development on the other 3 sides.

11.27 It is noted that the UDP Proposals Map does not show a village envelope around the site. This, in itself, does not define whether a property is within the village. The issue was examined by The Court of Appeal in the case of Julian Wood vs SSCLG and Gravesham Borough Council (2015)

11.28 Extracts from Court papers stated that:

“before this Court it was common ground that whether or not a proposed development constituted limited infilling in the village for the purposes of Paragraph 89 (of the then NPPF) was a question of planning judgement for the Inspector and the Inspectors answer so that question would depend upon his assessment of the position on the ground. It was also common ground that while a village boundary as defined in a local plan would be a relevant consideration, it would not necessarily be determinative, particularly in circumstances where the boundary as defined did not accord with the Inspector's assessment of the extent of the village on the ground.....”

11.29 A copy of the Court extract is attached at Document No. 5

11.30 I would also draw attention to a recent appeal decision in Kiln Green, Diggle, Oldham under appeal reference number APP/W4223/W/19/3227776 dated 15th of August 2019.

11.31 The Appeal Inspector states in her decision letter:

Para. 11. "As to whether the development proposal would amount to 'limited infilling', the Council consider this requirement is not met, because the proposal does not amount to the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built up frontage, or the small scale development of existing properties within such a frontage. The appellants suggest that a wider interpretation, of buildings within the confines of a group of buildings, is appropriate.

Para. 12 "There is no definition in the Framework of what constitutes 'limited infilling' and no definition that might be found in local planning policies has been suggested here. The appeal site is surrounded by buildings, albeit in a very loose arrangement and, as described by the previous Council Report, it is in an urbanised area. Immediately to the north lies a field separating it from the next house to the northeast by around 30 metres. The Diggle Hotel lies further away to the north. A pair of semi-detached dwellings lie to the southwest, separated by a field from further dwellings in Kiln Green. Another dwelling lies opposite to the west".

Para. 13 "Whereas 'infilling' suggests a development of land that is surrounded by existing development on at least 2 sides within reasonable proximity, the requirement for such infilling to be 'limited' requires consideration of both the development site and the scale and form of the proposed development. The proposed development would extend the house by a little more than 5 metres to its northeastern side, largely below ground level. On this issue I conclude that although there is some distance across the field to the frontage of the next dwelling, to Diggle, to the northeast, the spacious nature of this part of Diggle with its loose arrangement of buildings, combined with a small scale and form of the development proposed, would amount to limiting infilling within a village for the purpose of the Framework....

11.32 A copy of the Inspectors Reports is appended at Document No.3

11.33 It is clear from the Diggle Appeal that what constitutes a village and what constitutes infill development is dependent on the circumstances on the ground. The circumstances of the Julian Wood/Gravesham case and those of the Diggle case are different to those at Hollins Close. However, the principle that infill development is not merely filling in a small gap between buildings, is clearly demonstrated in the Inspector's Report as is the consideration of a village not being limited to those identified in a Local Plan.

11.34 Given the above it is argued that the proposed development is limited infill development within a village and that, as such, it is in compliance with NPPF Paragraph 154.

12.0 DESIGN

Amount/Size/Use

12.1 The proposed development will provide 1 No. four bedroomed detached dwelling.

Layout

12.2 The proposed layout is left for the reserved matter stage but an indicative layout plan is provided to show how a dwelling can be comfortably accommodated on the site whilst ensuring a good level of soft landscaping to create ample attractive private amenity space which is in keeping with that of the existing dwellings on Hollins Close. It also shows how adequate access and parking spaces can be incorporated.

Scale, Landscaping and Appearance

12.3 Details of the scale, massing and design of the proposed dwelling will be considered at reserved matters stage. However, the scheme will be in proportion with the neighbouring dwellings and of appropriate materials to ensure continuity of the street scene.

12.4 The space around the proposed dwelling will be attractively landscaped.

13.0 ACCESS

13.1 The access proposals in this application are different to those in the previous one. It is proposed to re-align Hollins Close so that it makes a right angle with Hollins Lane. This will increase the width Hollins Lane at the junction. A new section of footway will be provided both along Hollins Road and Hollins Lane. The proposals will improve visibility for drivers and improve highway safety for pedestrians to the benefit of all residents and visitors to Hollins Close.

13.2 The site is accessible by public transport and is well located in terms of access to local shops and services.

13.3 The development will be carried out in accordance with current building regulation standards ensuring that people of all levels of mobility can access the site safely and conveniently.

14.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

14.1 The site is within a well-established residential area where recent development has been allowed. It relates to the existing housing rather than the adjacent golf course.

14.2 The layout, scale and design of the proposed development will respect the defining characteristics and topography of the surrounding area.

14.3 The proposals are well designed and the plot will create an attractive living environment for the future occupants. Privacy distances between existing and proposed houses are respected.

14.4 The development is compliant with Green Belt Policy as it meets the requirements of exception clause e) of paragraph 154 of the 2023 NPPF. This wording is unchanged in the draft 2024 NPPF.

14.5 The Heritage Statement demonstrates that Unsworth is a village and that the application site is within the village.

14.6 The Julian Wood v Gravesham Borough Council Court of Appeal judgement illustrates that for planning purposes the definition of a village is not limited to those identified in the Local Plan.

14.7 The proposals will bring about significant highway safety improvements that will be of benefit to all residents and visitors to Hollins Close.

14.8 The proposals are compliant with national, regional and local planning and environmental policies and follow good and proper town planning principles.

14.9 Further information can be provided as necessary.

Chorlton Planning

September 2024