



CHORLTON PLANNING LTD

Town Planning & Development Consultants

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION
(APPLICATION REF: 71178)

PROPOSED DETACHED DWELLING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
STATEMENT

Prepared by Chorlton Planning Ltd

on behalf of

The Cornell Group

A:2408
February 2025

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The above Planning Application - reference number 711178 - was submitted in September 2024.

1.2 Discussions with the Planning Case Officer centred on whether or not the proposals were in compliance with Green Belt policy.

1.3 Also, as the above was being considered reference was also made to the Density Policy contained within the PFE.

1.4 In addition, although the application is made by a company, the house is to be designed for and custom built by an individual and his family. This was not made clear in the September Statement but is now an issue that needs consideration.

1.5 This report is supplementary to the Planning, Design and Access Statement submitted with the September application and addresses the above issues.

2.0 GREEN BELT

2.1 The justification for the original proposals was made on the basis that the proposals complied with exception criteria e in NPPF Paragraph 154 - limited infill in villages

2.2 The justification was made on:

1. The development is limited in that it is only one dwelling house.
2. Unsworth is a village.
3. The development is infill as it is surrounded on three sides by existing built development.

2.3 Evidence in support of the above is provided in the form of a Heritage Statement that looked into the history and status of Unsworth Village, appeal decision in 2019 and 2024 and the case of Julian Wood -v- SSCLG and Gravesham Borough Council (1915) which examined the definition of a village within the wider planning context. Full details are included in our September 2024 Planning Design and Access Statement

2.4 However, since the application was submitted Green Belt policy has been revised by the 2024 NPPF, in particular the introduction of Grey Belt. In response this Statement examines the changes, in particular the Grey Belt policy. In addition, Very Special Circumstances are identified to justify the development. I will deal with these in turn.

NPPF Grey Belt

2.5 The 2024 NPPF introduces the concept of Grey Belt. This is defined as;

“For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, ‘grey belt’ is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas

or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

2.6 Paragraph 155 states;

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed⁵⁶;

c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to [paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework]; and

d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

2.7 Paragraph 56 states.

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:

a. affordable housing which reflects either:

(i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or

(ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;

b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

c. the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

2.8 Paragraph 158 states;

A development which complies with the Golden Rules should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.

2.9 Paragraph 159 states;

The improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

Policy Compliance

2.10 The definition of Grey Belt refers to land that does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes in categories ‘a’ ‘b’ or ‘d’ in Paragraph 143. Criteria ‘c’ relating to ‘encroachment into the countryside’ is reduced in importance in the Grey Belt definition. Similarly, criteria ‘e’ assisting urban regeneration is also reduced in importance and is not relevant in this case

2.11 The proposed development does not contribute to unrestricted sprawl to a large built-up area; it does not assist in merging neighbour towns; nor does it relate to preserving the setting or special character of historic towns. The proposals due to their small size on the edge of an existing built-up area will not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

2.12 The site would then appear to come within this definition and as such is Grey Belt.

2.13 NPPF Paragraph 155 states that:-

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should not be inappropriate where:

- a. The development will utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan).*
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.*
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location where application, the development proposed meets the golden rules required set out in Paragraph 156 to 157 below.*

2.14 The application site, on Grey Belt land, does not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt, as described above.

2.15 With regard to the Golden Rules set out in paragraph 156, it is not clear at this stage whether or not these apply in full to minor development (less than 10 houses) but in this case given the small scale of the proposals it is doubtful if they do. Clarification on this is likely to appear in the Practice Guidance Note yet to be published.

Very Special Circumstances

2.16 Notwithstanding the above, the following Very Special Circumstances should be taken into account.

1. The site is within the built-up area of Hollins Close and surrounded on three sides by existing development. The inclusion of the site in the Green Belt is historic in that it relates to its previous use by the Golf Club. In view of this the Green Belt boundary is now illogical.
2. Given the above, it is difficult to see what alternative use the site could be put to. Residential development is clearly the only realistic option.
3. The building will be seen as part of the existing cluster of built development in and around Hollins Close. The development is surrounded on three sides by a built development.
4. When viewed from the Golf Course to the west it will be seen against the backcloth of the existing cluster of buildings on Hollins Close and as an integral part of the layout of the close. It will not then be intrusive in the landscape and will have minimal encroachment into the Green Belt, which complies with the revised NPPF.
5. The proposed development is for a self-build/custom-build house for an individual occupant and his family and as such will meet the demonstrable unmet need for this type of accommodation in the Bury area. The site is ideal for an individual bespoke house with its open view over the Golf Course.
6. The above justifies the lowering of the density standards, as described below.
7. The house will fall within the high value category and assist in rebalancing the housing market between north and south of Greater Manchester as referred to in the PFE.
8. It will add to the range, type and stock of housing in the Unsworth and Bury area.

2.17 The Very Special Circumstances set out above outweigh the normal presumption against development in the Green Belt.

3.0 HOUSING POLICIES

NPPF

3.1 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”

Para 70. 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.”

Places for Everyone (PFE)

3.2 The following PFE extracts are considered relevant;

3.3 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.

4.45 The northern areas are diverse, but there are considerable areas of deprivation within most districts..... with relatively high levels through much of Rochdale, Oldham, and Tameside, extending into north Manchester. This north-eastern area is characterised by relatively low incomes, low house prices, low qualifications, low economic activity, low proportions in higher managerial/professional occupations, and poor average health.

4.46 Some significant interventions will be required to address the extensive deprivation and the relatively low levels of growth, economic activity and prosperity. Investment will be required across the northern areas, with the provision of a good supply of high-quality development sites and major transport improvements across all districts to support greater competitiveness. However, it will be vital that this is done in a sensitive way that protects the character and identity of the north, and the quality of key landscapes such as the uplands and river valleys.

4.49 It will be important to increase the attractiveness of the northern areas to a wider range of people. In particular, there is the potential to increase the number of higher income households who choose to live in the north. The influx of more entrepreneurs and skilled workers could help to increase business creation and support local economic activity, as well as reducing pressures in the southern areas which currently have high levels of demand. This Plan allocates a small number of sites in the northern areas specifically to increase attractiveness of the northern areas to highly paid, highly skilled workers, including at such sites as Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletchers) in Oldham (Policy JP Allocation 13 ‘although many other sites have the potential to attract skilled workers and hence boost the competitiveness of the north

3.4 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

3.5 Housing Land Supply

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.

3.6 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.....

3.7 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

7.28 A key aim of this Plan is to boost the supply of well designed, adaptable new homes with appropriate access to private space. In some areas this will help to diversify local housing markets that are often dominated by low-cost housing, bring more money into local economies, and deliver more mixed and inclusive communities. It will also help to increase the options for skilled workers looking to move into or within our area. Focusing a significant proportion of housing growth in the northern areas will assist in this, supported by selectively releasing Green Belt sites to deliver a diverse mix of values and tenures that includes affordable homes as well as some higher value housing, (relative to prevailing values in the local area), within a high quality environment. This will help to achieve a better spread of higher value housing and prosperity across the plan area, whilst also delivering greater diversity within individual areas.

3.8 Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing states;

Development across the plan area should seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes including for self-build and community led building projects to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods. Where appropriate, this should include incorporating specialist housing for older households and vulnerable people.

Residential developments should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes reflecting local plan policies, and having regard to masterplans, guidance and relevant local evidence.

Housing provision to accommodate specific groups, such as students and travelling people, will be addressed through district local plans.

All new dwellings must:

- 1. Comply with the nationally described space standards; and*
- 2. Be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable.*

Innovation in housing development will be supported where it is consistent with the principles of good design and contributes to local distinctiveness, including the use of modern methods of manufacturing that can help to improve the speed of delivery and increase building standards.

3.9 Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing

New housing development should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design. Regard should be had to the minimum densities set out below... ..

The policy states;

Lower densities may be acceptable where they can be clearly justified by:

- 1. Local housing market issues, such as a demonstrable need for a particular type of housing that cannot be delivered at a higher density; or*
- 2. Site-specific issues, such as the design context and any potential impact on the wider landscape or townscape including heritage assets and green infrastructure*

Bury UDP

3.10 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.

3.11 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.

3.12 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”.*

3.13 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

3.14 The application site is within an existing residential sub-urban area. It is in a sustainable location being within an existing built-up area with access to services

3.15 The site is small and is a windfall site. It provides an opportunity for a good quality, individually designed scheme in an accessible location that will fit in well and provide accommodation within an existing built-up area where services and infrastructure are already available. It can be built out quickly.

3.16 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 uses to the west. The future detailed design of the proposed dwelling will address the safeguarding and privacy issues to both existing and future occupants of the dwelling.

3.17 The alterations to Hollins Close at its junction with Hollins Lane will bring significant benefit to the existing occupants of houses on Hollins Close as the junction will become a right-angle junction rather than at an angled one. The improvements to the pavements will also significantly improve pedestrian safety as they will separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic at the junction where danger is most prevalent.

3.18 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.

3.19 There is clearly a demand for such sites especially within sub-urban and more rural areas. There is also a shortage of attractive sites. . This is referred to in the NPPF (par.63) and in the PFE (Policy JP-H3 – Type, Size and Density).

3.20 The dwelling proposed will be attractive as a custom-build project due to its location and overlooking the open land of Bury Golf Club. The house will fall within the high value category

and assist in rebalancing the housing market between north and south of Greater Manchester as referred to in the PFE.

Self Build/Custom Build

3.21 The Government has published a paper entitled ‘Self and Custom Build Action Plan’. It was published on the 24th of April 2021.

3.22 The paper draws attention to the need to boost self and custom build homes. It states;

“the housing market is dominated by a small number of volume builders and to reach the ambition of delivering 300,000 additional homes per year we must maximise delivery across new and existing sub-sectors, catalysing new tenures and giving consumers greater choice over housing products.

Self and custom build housing harnesses the power and initiative of individuals to instigate building projects giving them control over the look and feel of their home. Often utilising small sites of little interest to major builders, the sector brings forward housing projects delivered through SME’s and specialist builders, helping to build a more diverse and resilient house building sector, and improving the design and quality of homes as they are built by the people who will live in them.

The self and custom build sector is underdeveloped in the UK. In Europe and North America, the sector delivers a much higher proportion of housing output. Only 7% of homes in the UK are built via self and custom build, delivering an estimated 13,000 units in 2018. Nonetheless, even at this underdeveloped scale, this level of output is enough to make the sector the equivalent of UK’s fourth largest house builder. There is capacity to expand and if we increase to levels similar to the Netherlands, we could see 30 to 40,000 self and custom build homes built annually.

The Government is committed to increasing the number of self and custom build homes in this country and to establish it as a mainstream option for people to choose to get on the housing ladder or when moving home. The Government has previously brought forward initiatives to tackle the barrier to the growth of the sector, and now we are bringing these initiatives and new ones together under one, self and custom build action plan”.

3.23 Under existing legislation Councils are required to keep a register of demand for self and custom build in their area to meet the demand within a 3 year period.

3.24 The Government is keen to scale up the self-build market. The paper states:

“beyond the policy interventions noted above, the Government recognises the opportunity to do more to scale up the delivery of new homes through the self and custom build sector. Coronavirus has highlighted the importance of our home and that homes should maximise our creativity, our effectiveness and the quality of our lives.

The Prime Minister has therefore commissioned Richard Bacon MP to undertake a review to establish a plan to scale up self and custom build homes to boost capacity and overall housing supply and provide recommendations to the Government”.

3.25 It is clear from the above that the self and custom build sector is underperforming, but yet there is keen interest from individuals, and groups, to follow custom or self-build opportunities. There is clearly a demand for this type of development in the Bury area, but there does not appear to be enough sites available to meet this demand.

3.26 The proposed dwelling at Hollins Close covers all the points listed in the Government Paper.

Density

3.27 With regard to density, PFE Policy JP-H4: Density New Housing sets out recommendations for each site depending on their location in relation to their distance from town and district centres and public transport hubs. A table lists the recommended densities for each case. From the table the recommended density for the application site is 35 dwelling per hectare.

3.28 This would result in two dwelling units being recommended for the application site.

3.29 However, the policy is not prescriptive. It states that density should be appropriate to the location and that only “regard should be had to the minimum densities” listed in the table.

3.30 The policy also lists exceptions and these are:

1. Local housing market issues, such as demonstrable need for a particular type of housing that cannot be delivered at a higher density; or
2. Sites-specific issues, such as the design context and any potential impact on the wider landscape or townscape including heritage assets and green infrastructure.

3.31 The following justification for the site to be for a single bespoke dwelling is outlined as follows;

1. The buildable part of the plot is limited due to various site issues. These are listed in my email of 23rd January 2025 - attached to this Statement.
2. The proposal is for a self-build/custom-build house that is demonstrably needed in the area. (Further information on Self and Custom build houses is provided above) This type of accommodation will normally require a larger site due to the type and design of individual house proposed. In this case the site is particularly attractive overlooking the golf course and is ideally suited to self-build/custom-build.
3. It is inevitable that individual self-build houses will be higher value developments that are likely to require larger plots at lower densities.
4. The reduced density on this single plot is unlikely to have a significant effect on the overall housing numbers required for Bury

5. In addition, the single house on the site is appropriate to Hollins Close as it will fit in with the general distribution and type of houses. They are all individually detached houses with modest sized gardens in the higher value category. In addition, the increase in traffic produced by two units is of concern to existing residents. They are already concerned about increased traffic movement on Hollins Close generated by the single house. Two dwelling units will further exacerbate the situation.
6. The house is to be designed and custom built for an individual and his family

4.0 SUMMARY

4.1 The proposed development will be of a density commensurate with that of the surrounding area and respect the defining characteristics of the area – a key tenet of good town planning and included in the NPPF, PFE Local Plan policies and the National Design Guide.

4.2 The proposals meets the requirements of Green Belt policy in that it is limited development in Unsworth village; it is Grey Belt and as such does not have a significant impact on the Green Belt as a whole and very special circumstances outweigh the normal presumption against inappropriate development on the Green Belt.

4.3 The proposed development meets the exceptions to PFE density policy in the it is for a specific need within the local housing market – custom built housing – identified in the PFE and NPPF.

The defining characteristics of the site, including its high value location, point towards a single house being appropriate.

4.4 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 in Hollins Close.

4.5 In view of the above the proposed development is compliant with local, and national, planning policy and in the interests of good and proper town planning.

Chorlton Planning Ltd
February 2025