



Phase 2

Planning Statement

Erection of 4 detached dwellings with associated parking, garaging, servicing, access, open space, landscape, drainage and utilities.

Land West Of 4 Spruce Drive Hawkwell Essex

On Behalf of

Milenna Homes

November 2023

Our Ref: C22054

Phase 2 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

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Quality Assurance

Site Name: Land West Of 4 Spruce Drive Hawkwell Essex

Client Name: Milenna Homes

Type of Report: Planning Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Phase 2 Planning and Development Ltd on behalf of Milenna Homes, hereafter referred to as the applicant, in support of a full planning application to construct 4 detached dwellings on land to the north of Rectory Road/west of 4 Spruce Drive, Hawkwell. A full description of the development can be found in Section 4.

Purpose and Structure of this Report

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to draw together the main planning issues relevant to the determination of the proposed development.

Planning Application Documents

- 1.3 The application comprises a suite of detailed application plans relating to the site layout and the design of the four dwellings (along with associated outbuildings), prepared by JCN architects. It also includes a landscape strategy for the site prepared by Matt Lee Landscape Architecture. Details of the proposed means of vehicular access to the site from Rectory Road are provided by Cannon Consulting Engineers.
- 1.4 In addition to the suite of drawings detailing the proposed design and layout of the site, the application is accompanied by the following explanatory supporting documents:
- Design and Access Statement (JCN)
 - Landscape Strategy (Matt lee Landsacpe)
 - This Planning Statement (P2P)
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (SES)
 - Ecological Impact Assessment (SES)
 - Utilities Statement (NIC)
 - Heritage Impact Assessment (RPS)
 - Drainage Technical Statement, Drainage Strategy and Maintenance (SPD)
 - Highway Technical Statement (Cannon Consulting)

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The site the subject to this planning application extends to around 0.7 ha, and forms one of three former ‘paddocks’ falling within an area of land allocated for residential development in the 2014 Site Allocations Plan, following the grant of planning permission on Appeal for a development of 176 homes, in August 2012.
- 2.2 The site is privately owned, fenced off, and provides no useable open space for the benefit of the wider development. It is not being used as paddocks. The site is currently subdivided into two parcels via an east-west hedgerow, the area closest to Rectory Road being essentially scrub, and the area closest to Spruce Drive being more regularly cut.
- 2.3 As described in the separate Arboricultural Impact Assessment, the northern part of the site is subject to a Woodland Tree Preservation Order, but that part of the site actually contains only a limited number of individual trees, all of which are proposed to be retained.
- 2.4 The southern part of the site adjacent to Rectory Road also contains two TPO’s trees as part of the hedgeline to Rectory Road, and again these are to be retained.
- 2.5 The Site Allocations Policy relevant to the land describes Rectory Road as having a “semi-rural” character as this point. The separate Landscape Strategy Report contains a more detailed analysis of the character of the surrounding area, within this context. The Design and Access Statement also contains an analysis of the density of residential development along this stretch of Rectory Road. We return to consider the issue of ‘semi-rural character’ further in Section 6 of this Statement.
- 2.6 The site is located within the defined boundaries of the settlement of Hawkwell, within walking and cycling distance of the centre of Hockley (around 1.5km to the north-west), close to the Hillside Avenue/Hawkwell Local Centre and Co-op (with around 650m), close to Clements Hall Leisure Centre and other facilities, and on a local bus route. The site is therefore within a sustainable location with access to the wider area and local facilities by means other than the car.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Following an initial refusal of permission at Appeal for 330 new homes in 2010, Full Planning Permission for the development of the site for 176 new homes (net 175 as the proposals included demolition of an existing unit) was granted on Appeal in August 2012, under application reference 11/00259/FUL.
- 3.2 A concurrent application under reference 12/00381/FUL for the same form of development was granted by the Council two months later, in October 2012. This latter application has been implemented (subject to some subsequently approved variations to the design) and the approved 176 homes completed and occupied.
- 3.3 It is relevant to note that at the point of these decisions, there were two important contextual factors that were pertinent to decision making at that time, but which are not relevant today, which are:
- (1) Firstly, at that time, the site was still within the Green Belt, as the Site Allocations document was still at consultation draft stage. Therefore, the decision in both cases was based on the need to show ‘very special circumstances’ to justify the development, taking in to account the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriate development.
 - (2) Secondly, at that time, the Council had very recently adopted its Core Strategy, which identified South Hawkwell as a location for 175 new homes, but just as importantly, also identified how, with the development of other Green Belt sites, the Council would be able to meet its housing requirement as it existed at that time.
- 3.4 In relation to the second point above, the fact that the Core Strategy had been recently adopted effectively removed the need for any more than 175 new homes on the wider site, because sufficient land had been identified elsewhere to meet all of the Council’s need for new homes. As we discuss further in Section 5 of this Statement, the Core Strategy is now substantially out of date, as there is a known requirement for significant additional housing above and beyond the Core Strategy. Meeting that additional need will require best use to be made of land outside of the Green Belt, if the Council is to continue to protect Green Belt land where possible in accordance with national policy, and still provide much needed housing.
- 3.5 In relation to the first point above, the fact that the site was in the Green Belt at that time is crucial to the understanding of the Inspector’s reasoning in the Appeal decision letter. This is because the determination of the original application required the benefits of the scheme to be weighed against the harm to the Green Belt. For example, at paragraph 10, the Inspector comments as follows, when comparing the 176 unit scheme to the failings of the previous 330 units scheme:

“Those failings have been overcome in the present scheme with the depth of paddock and planting along Rectory Road, which would retain its semi-rural character ... As a result it is concluded that there is limited harm to the Green Belt and its character and appearance, in addition to the harm by reason of inappropriate development.”

3.6 The above comments in relation to the value of the paddocks is therefore made specifically in respect of the assessment of harm to the Green Belt, a designation that no longer applies.

3.7 In the case of the proposed scheme for 4 units, the semi-rural character of Rectory Road is retained in any event, but it is important to bear in mind that the reason why the Inspector highlighted this characteristic was specifically in the context of assessing the relative harm to the Green Belt, not because the retention of a semi-rural character to Rectory Road was of essential importance, in and of itself.

3.8 Similarly, in considering application 12/00381/FUL, the Officer’s Report notes at paragraph 4.5 that:

“In allowing the appeal, the inspector concluded that the scheme before him would not have the appearance of unrestricted sprawl due to the buffer zones of paddocks and planting and that the trees and open space to the centre of the layout would prevent the two parts of the site joining.”

3.9 Again, the relevance of the paddocks in this context is specifically in relation to the assessment of the harm to the Green Belt. As we describe in the following section, the proposed scheme has been designed in any event so that a substantial ‘green buffer’ would still be maintained between the eastern and western parts of the larger site, but it is important nevertheless to recognise that the context has now changed, both because the site is no longer in the Green Belt, and because a need for additional housing exists.

3.10 The final point to make in respect of the previous planning history relates to the s106 Agreement entered in to with Rochford District Council. Under that Agreement, there is a requirement under clause 3.2.3 that the paddocks (which include the site the subject of this enquiry) shall only be used for open uses such as agriculture or grazing etc. Alongside the submission of this application, a variation to the original s106 is being sought to dispense with this clause. If the application is acceptable on its planning merits, there would be no reason not to agree a Deed of Variation to the original s106 to remove this requirement. Therefore, this provision of the 2012 s106 Agreement is not relevant to the Council’s determination of the application and does not present an impediment to the site being delivered.

3.11 In summary therefore:

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- The previous planning history has some relevance, but the context for decision making today is materially different to the situation that existed at the time of the original permission in 2012, and at the time that the Site Allocations policy was written.
 - The provisions of the s106 in respect of the paddocks are not relevant to the planning merits of the application, and can be addressed through a Deed of Variation.

4. The Proposed Development

4.1 This planning application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 4 detached dwellings, with all associated facilities, landscaping and open space.

4.2 The full description of development reads as follows:

“Erection of 4 detached dwellings with associated parking, garaging, servicing, access, open space, landscape, drainage and utilities.”

4.3 As described in the Design and Access Statement, each property is uniquely designed, and each is orientated differently and set within their own grounds, so that no two properties are alike either architecturally or in terms of their relationship to each other. This approach helps to respect the organic manner in which other properties along this stretch of Rectory Road have evolved and been developed over time.

4.4 Access to the properties is either direct from Rectory Road using the existing access (Plot 1), or is via a private drive (Plots 2-4) which meanders through a landscaped approach, thereby avoiding the need for an estate road and ensuring that the means of access is equally in keeping with the mixture of driveways and direct accesses which characterise this stretch of Rectory Road.

4.5 The area of remaining ‘paddock’¹ within the site to the west and north of the proposed dwellings will be used to provide additional open space to the proposed dwellings, will contribute to providing a semi-rural setting for the development, and will allow for new tree planting and creation of new habitat. This area will include the requisite surface water attenuation which will not only ensure no increased risk of flooding to other properties, but which can also provide an amenity and ecological benefit in its own right.

4.6 The proposal retains all existing protected trees, and supplements them with new tree planting, as shown in the submitted landscape strategy, and as described in the arboricultural assessment.

4.7 As noted in the previous section, at the time of the original permission, when the impact of the development on the Green Belt was still a relevant consideration, the separation of the eastern and western parts of the development by a green corridor was cited as a relevant consideration.

¹ The site has not been used for grazing of horses for many years.

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- 4.8 Notwithstanding the fact that the planning policy context has now changed, the retained area of 'paddock' described above will nevertheless continue to perform the role of separating the eastern and western parts of the original scheme, and providing a north-south 'green corridor' from Spencer's Park to Rectory Road.
- 4.9 The concentration of the new built form on the eastern half of the site, and the retention of the majority of the northern part of the former paddock, is compatible therefore with maintaining the original design intention, even though the original rationale for this (Green Belt policy) no longer applies.



Sketch showing broad extent of development area and retained separation between eastern and western parcels.

- 4.10 Following on from the above, a significant benefit of the scheme is that it creates additional useable open space for the benefit of local residents, and it creates a new route between the existing development and Rectory Road, making access to the local bus network more convenient as the new pedestrian route would access Rectory Road in the vicinity of the existing bus stops.

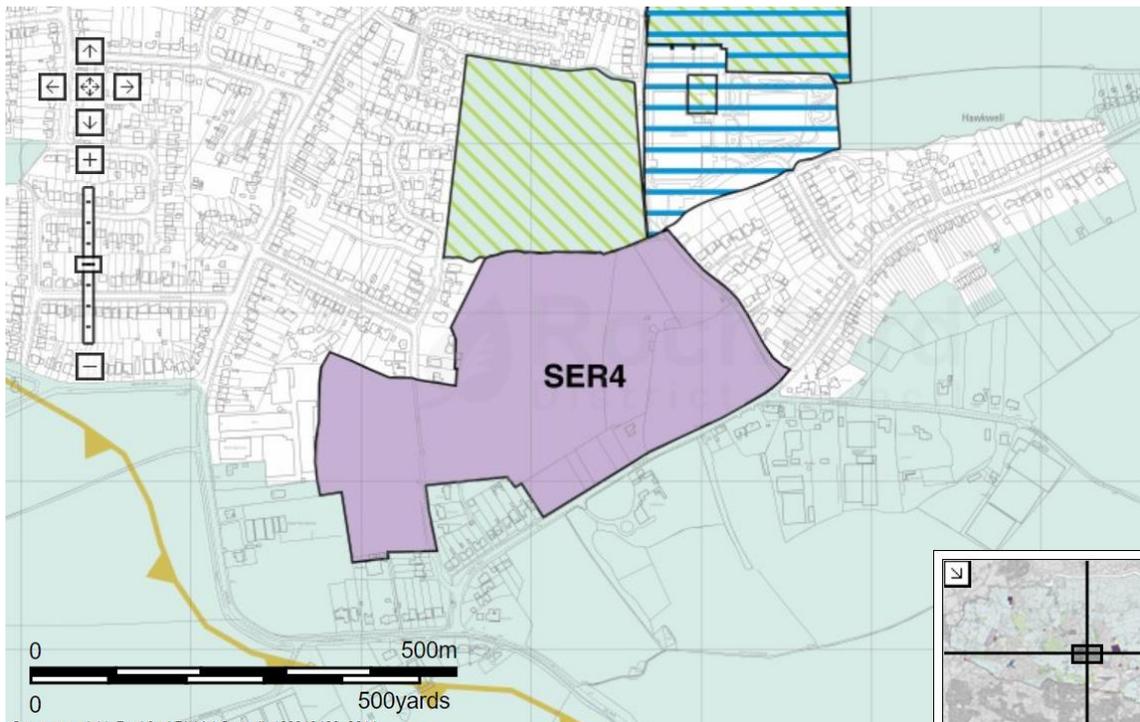
5. Planning Policy

The weigh to be attributed to the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Policies

- 5.1 The starting point for the determination of any planning application is, of course, s38(6) and the provisions of the Development Plan.
- 5.2 However, the Council have themselves acknowledged (in the Statement of Common Ground signed in respect of the Bloor Homes appeal for site SER8) that key elements of the Core Strategy in respect of housing supply, and the various Site Allocation policies, are out-of-date, as they relate to housing need figures that are over 13 years old and do not reflect current local housing need.
- 5.3 This position was accepted by the Inspector, who went on to explain that this does not mean that no weight should be attributed to the relevant Core Strategy policies or Site Allocations policies, but that the weight to be given to them would be dependent upon their continued consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.4 The NPPF, of course, includes objectives both to significantly boost the supply of housing (paragraph 60) and to make efficient use of land (paragraph 124), both noted by the Inspector as relevant considerations in the Bloor Homes appeal. Therefore where the Core Strategy and Site Allocations policies act against these NPPF objectives, the weight to be attributed to them would be limited because of the clear conflict.
- 5.5 Therefore, in examining the issue of compliance with the Development Plan, regard needs to be had to the limited weight that can now be placed on those parts of the Plan that deal with the quantum of the development.

The adopted Development Plan – policies relating to the principle of development

- 5.6 As per the extract from the Council's on-line Policies Map overleaf, the application site falls within an area allocated for residential development under the 2014 Site Allocations Plan, specifically site SER4 for South Hawkwell.
- 5.7 There can be no doubt therefore that the main land-use designation set by the adopted Development Plan is residential development, and this designation is not affected by the age of the allocation. The proposal for 4 additional homes would comply with that primary designation.



Extract from Site Allocations Policies Map

- 5.8 Policy H1 of the Core Strategy relates to the efficient use of land for housing, and was originally drafted in the context of the East of England housing requirement, and the priority that should be given to delivering homes within the existing urban areas in advance of the release of land for Green Belt.
- 5.9 Whilst aspects of this policy are now out of date (the East of England Plan having been revoked), key parts of the objectives of this policy remain very much in accordance with national planning policy, specifically the need to locate housing in sustainable locations (paragraph 105 of the NPPF), the need to protect the Green Belt and maximise opportunities outside of the Green Belt first (paragraph 141 of the NPPF), and the need to make efficient use of land (paragraph 124 of the NPPF).
- 5.10 In allowing an uplift of homes over and above the Site Allocations document at SER1 at Rayleigh, these principles were quoted in the Officers Report which stated that additional homes “... would make the best and most efficient use of this allocated site which would accord with the clear requirement that this be achieved in the NPPF.”
- 5.11 Policy H2 of the adopted Core Strategy sets out the housing sites that are to be built in order to deliver the minimum requirement of 3,790 new homes up to 2021 (as required by the now revoked East of England Plan). It provides that South Hawkwell should deliver approximately 175 new homes by 2021. The note under the table explains that the actual number of new homes at each site would be set out under the Site Allocations Plan.

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- 5.12 As the Core Strategy is not specific as to the number of new homes to be provided, no conflict arises with Policy H2 even if the number of homes provided within the allocation exceeds 175. Irrespective of the fact that the Council has agreed that little weight can now be attributed to the figure of 175 because of the age of the Plan, the proposals are in any event compliant in principle with Policy H2 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.13 Turning then to the Site Allocation Plan and the Concept Statement for SER4, paragraph 3.112 notes that development at the site should not exceed 175 new homes unless there is a shortfall in 5 Year land supply and a shortfall in the local area.
- 5.14 The existence or otherwise of a 5 Year land supply is arguable, but what is clear, and what the Council has already accepted in its evidence to the Bloor appeal, is that the quantum figures given for each of the site allocations are now out of date, because they were based on the revoked East of England Plan and there is now a need for additional housing. As noted by the Inspector in the Bloor Appeal, the Council's emerging Local Plan has identified a requirement for 7,200 new homes by 2040, against which the Council can only identify a planned supply of 4,300. Recent evidence in the form of the emerging South Essex Housing Needs Assessment suggests that even this level of provision (which assumes 360 homes per annum as per the standard methodology, compared to the 250 in the adopted Plan), may be too low.
- 5.15 In that context, there is no longer any justification *in principle* for restricting delivery from SER4 to 175 units, and any conflict with Policy SER4 in this regard should be afforded no weight, as this aspect of the Plan is acknowledged to be out of date.

The SER4 Concept Statement

- 5.16 The SER4 Concept Statement sets out the principles that determine how the allocated site should be developed. There is no doubt that the Concept Statement was heavily influenced by the fact that, at the point of writing, planning permission had already been granted, and therefore it is a moot point as to whether the Policy informed the development or the development informed the Policy. Nevertheless, the Concept Statement forms part of the adopted Plan, and therefore, in so far as its provisions remain consistent with the NPPF and do not act against the principles of the NPPF, it remains relevant for the determination of the proposed development in this case.
- 5.17 The main paragraph within the SER4 Concept Statement which relates to the former paddocks is paragraph 3.116, which states:

“There is a Woodland Tree Preservation Order area towards the central area of the site and other trees subject to Preservation Orders on site which should be retained. The paddocks along Rectory Road and other existing trees along the boundary of the site should also be retained to preserve the setting of Rectory Road in this location. The loss of any trees on site

or in the vicinity of the site should be appropriately mitigated against, with the provision of replacement trees on a like-for-like basis.”

- 5.18 Dealing with the first sentence initially, the existing Woodland Tree Preservation Order covers an extensive area, much of which is actually devoid of any tree cover (and always has been). The proposed development provides for the retention of all existing trees within the Woodland TPO area (and incorporates new tree planting within that zone). Therefore, whilst the proposed development would fall within the zone covered by the Woodland TPO, there is no loss of TPO'd trees within that area, and in fact there would be a gain. There is therefore no conflict between the proposed development and the first sentence of Paragraph 3.116.
- 5.19 Moving on to the second sentence, this seeks to retain the paddocks along Rectory Road and existing trees, for the specific purpose of preserving the setting of Rectory Road. The proposed development does retain existing trees to Rectory Road, and as explained further in Section 6, does preserve the setting of Rectory Road in this location. Retaining the semi-rural character of Rectory Road can be achieved without retaining all of the paddock land free of development, and the proposals in this case show how a semi-rural character can be achieved even with the partial development of the site.
- 5.20 As the requirement under SER4 is to retain the paddocks is only related to preserving the setting of Rectory Road (as opposed to retaining the paddocks for any other purpose), and as this can be achieved with the partial development of the paddock land, there is no conflict with SER4 in this regard.
- 5.21 In relation to the last sentence of paragraph 3.116, there is no need to mitigate for the loss of existing trees by new tree planting, but new tree planting is included within the scheme anyway.
- 5.22 Although paragraph 3.116 is the only part of the Concept Statement that considers the paddocks specifically, there are other development principles set out which are worthy of comment in terms of the proposed scheme, as follows:

“Trees and hedges should be developed in garden areas along the boundaries of the site to create a green buffer in perpetuity between new and existing development, whilst promoting integration.” (Paragraph 3.117)

The proposals include for new tree planting, including to the boundaries of the site, which will help to separate the proposed development from existing residential properties.

“Whilst being sensitive to the character and setting of the surrounding area, the development should not be of an overly uniform design but should be of high quality.” (Paragraph 3.118)

As noted previously and explained in the Design and Access Statement, each property is individually designed (and would be of high quality, in accordance with Essex Design guide principles).

“Amenity greenspace/appropriate landscaping should be provided on-site. Conditions will be attached to ensure that any greenspace provided has ecological value.” (Paragraph 3.118).

The proposals include for the provision of on-site amenity greenspace and landscaping, to be laid out and designed to provide new habitats and to be of ecological benefit.

“Links and enhancements to the local pedestrian/cycling and bridleway network should ... be provided.” (Paragraph 3.125).

The proposal includes for linkages both to the north into the wider development site, and to the south to Rectory Road.

“The potential impact on a nearby grade II Listed Building (‘The Old Rectory, Rectory Road, Hawkwell’) would need to be taken into consideration at the planning applications stage. The detailed design and layout of development must ensure there is no adverse impact on the setting of this listed building.” (Paragraph 3.130).

As per the separate Heritage Assessment provided with the application, the proposed development does not create any adverse impact on the setting of the Old Rectory.

- 5.23 In all the above ways, the proposed development is able to demonstrate compliance with the Concept Statement that forms part of Policy SER4, whether taken as individual statements, or when considering the objectives of the Site Allocation as a whole.

Summary

- 5.23 In terms of the key policies that relate to the proposed development, we would summarise the position as being:
- Compliance with the primary land-use designation for the site (residential development on a residential allocation);
 - Compliance with Policy H1 of the Core Strategy in terms of making efficient use of land allocated for residential development;
 - Compliance with Policy H2 of the Core Strategy in terms of residential development at South Hawkwell;

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- No conflict with the Concept Statement for SER4 in relation to the figure of 175 homes, as the Council has accepted that this provision is out-of-date due to the changing context of housing need, and therefore this provision should carry no weight;
 - No conflict in principle with the Concept Statement for SER4 in relation to tree loss;
 - No conflict with the provisions of the Concept Statement for SER4 as regards retention of the paddocks, on the basis that the objective of the policy in terms of retaining the semi-rural character of Rectory Road is still achieved;
 - Compliance with other specific provisions of the Concept Statement, such that whether taken individually or as a whole, the proposed scheme can be seen to be in accordance with the key objectives of the policy.

For these reasons, it is submitted that the proposed development accords with the Development Plan, so far as the Development Plan remains up-to-date.

Moreover, and as briefly touched on above, the proposals are also very much in accordance with national policy, which supports development in sustainable locations, supports the optimisation of land allocated for development, and supports making full use of land outside of the Green Belt.

Finally, as discussed in the following section, the proposed development is capable of compliance with the Council's normal Development Management Policies.

6. Consideration of the Main Issues

6.1. Based upon the preceding analysis and dialogue with the Council at pre-application stage, it is considered that there are four principal considerations in the determination of this application, being:

1. The principle of residential development on the site;
2. The impact of the proposed development on the semi-rural character of Rectory Road;
3. Compliance with the Council's normal Development Management Policies; and
4. Other technical/environmental considerations.

6.2. The paragraphs below briefly set out the applicant's position in respect of each of these main issues.

The principle of residential development on the site

6.3. As noted in the preceding section, the application site is for residential development on a site allocated in an adopted Development Plan for residential development. The principle of residential development should therefore be acceptable. Our understanding from pre-application discussion with the Council is that this is agreed, subject to compliance with the SER4 Concept Statement in terms of protecting the character of Rectory Road.

6.4. As noted in Section 5 above, although the Council's new Local Plan is still at a relatively early stage, it is clear that there remains a need for additional housing within Rochford district to meet local housing needs. Although this scheme is for a relatively small number of additional properties, every new house built within the existing settlement boundaries is one less house that will need to be built within the Green Belt.

6.5. Making efficient use of land within settlement boundaries for housing has been recognised by the Council as being consistent with national policy and consistent with its own locally adopted policies when considering other applications for additional homes on allocated sites.

Impact of the proposed development on the character of Rectory Road

6.6. The second main issue is the impact on Rectory Road. In this location, Rectory Road has a semi-rural character. It is not a rural area, devoid of residential use and large expanses of countryside, but a semi-rural area, where residential uses are in fact quite prominent on both the north and south sides of Rectory Road. The semi-rural character derives not from an

absence of residential use, but from the way in which those residential properties are integrated into a framework of mature landscaping, the non-estate layout of residential properties and the fact that they date from different periods and are of different characteristics, and the variety in materials used, both on buildings and in terms of hard landscaping.

- 6.7. The character of Rectory Road is clearly more suburban immediately to the west of the site, and then also further to the east beyond the junction with Clements Hall Way. But as shown in the sketch below, in between these points, the character of Rectory Road is different – it is still characterised by residential properties to both north and south, but properties are generally set in more substantive plots, are individual, and the road frontage is characterised by vegetation.



 Suburban stretch – mainly direct frontage and access, tighter urban form.

 Semi-rural stretch – boundary vegetation, less direct access, looser urban form.

- 6.8. Density provides a useful and objective measure by which different forms of development can be assessed. Urban development (including for example terraced housing and apartments) can typically reach densities of 50+ dwellings per hectare. Sub-urban developments of semi-detached or detached housing can typically be in the region of 30 dwellings per hectare. In this case, the Design and Access Statement contains an analysis of the density of existing housing along the semi-rural stretch of Rectory Road shown above. The development south of Christmas Tree Crescent equates to 10 dwellings per hectare, comprising a relatively sub-urban parcel set within extensive greenspace. The two properties immediately east of the Application Site equate to 5 dwellings per hectare.

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- 6.9. The 4 dwellings on the Application Site also equate to 5 dwellings per hectare. The density of the proposed development is therefore very much ‘in character’ with the existing forms of residential use along this stretch of Rectory Road, when assessed in terms of the density of development.
- 6.10. At this density, the proposed development is able to ensure that existing trees are retained, that properties are set on substantial plots and separated from each other, and that open space is retained – all very much in accordance with the semi-rural character of the area.
- 6.11. As noted previously, part of the semi-rural character comes from the fact that properties have been developed at different times and in different styles. Whilst it is not possible to construct a development such as this over decades, it is possible to ensure that the layout of the site has an ‘organic’ feel – for example, serving Plot 1 by a separate access from Rectory Road helps to separate it physically from the rest of the scheme, and so create the impression that it could have been built at any time. Designing Plots 3 and 4 to face to the north in common with the more modern estate helps to relate these two properties to that development (whilst still retaining an element of separation).
- 6.12. As previously described, and as set out further in the Design and Access Statement, each property is uniquely designed, with the architectural style and choice of materials being reflective of the semi-rural character.
- 6.13. Finally, as set out in the Landscape Strategy Report, there are a number of characteristics displayed by existing residential uses that can be used within the scheme to help reinforce the semi-rural character of the area and to ensure that the new scheme respects the existing context. The use of paving such as can be found at the entrance to the Old Rectory, for example, or the use of timber gates and white fencing, and the use of hedgerows to mark driveway boundaries, are all examples of ways in which the proposed development responds to the semi-rural character of the area.

Compliance with the Council’s Development Management Policies

- 6.14. With regard to the Council’s various DM policies, we provide the following observations on relevant elements:

Policy DM1 – Generally speaking, the proposed development is considered to be compatible with local area and local vernacular, as described in the Design and Access Statement. In terms of specific criteria:

- The proposals are in a sustainable location, next to an existing bus route, and the scheme is provided with appropriate cycle and pedestrian access (part i).

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- The scheme contains significant boundary treatment and potential for new planting (part iii), whilst retaining existing trees (part iv).
 - The scheme is provided with sufficient parking (part v).
 - The lower density nature of the scheme is compatible with the Council's stated objective at pre-application stage of protecting the character of Rectory Road (part vi);
 - The scheme provides more than sufficient open space for the additional residents (part vii);
 - Impact on ecology and heritage is addressed in the supporting documentation (part viii);
 - There are no issues of overlooking/loss of privacy, as explained in the Design and Access Statement (part ix) and the scheme provides a positive relationship with existing properties (part x);
 - As explained in Section 5, the scheme is compatible with the SER4 Concept Statement (part xii).

Policy DM2 - This policy generally requires development to achieve 30 dwellings per hectare, but in this case the scheme is lower than that, because of the semi-rural character of Rectory Road. Notwithstanding, the core objective of DM2 is that efficient use is made of land, and this policy is therefore supportive of the general principle of the proposed development, which is seeking to make better use of land already allocated for residential development. As noted previously, Officers have recognised that both national and local planning policy is supportive of making the best use of land when accepting increased housing on allocated sites elsewhere.

Policy DM4 – The proposed development meets and exceeds the Council's space standards for new residential properties.

Policy DM25 – The proposed development provides for the retention of existing trees, as well as new tree planting.

Policy DM30 - The proposed development meets the requisite parking standards, as shown in the Design and Access Statement.

Other technical/environmental considerations

- 6.15. The proposed development has been designed to accord with all other relevant technical and environmental requirements, including, but not limited to the following:
- Access from Rectory Road designed to the visibility and technical requirements of the Highway Authority (following pre-application consultation with ECC Highways);
 - Incorporation of sustainable urban drainage to manage surface water arising from the development on-site, in accordance with the requirements of the Lead Local Flood Authority;
 - Retention of all Preserved Trees;
 - Assessment and appropriate mitigation for impacts on biodiversity, including the potential for delivering on-site Biodiversity Net Gain;
 - Development located away from existing pipeline;
 - No impact on the setting of the Old Rectory.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This proposal is for residential development on a site allocated for residential development in the adopted Development Plan. In accordance with national and local policies, the addition of 4 dwellings on residentially allocated land is a benefit of the scheme, as it helps to ensure best use is made of land in sustainable locations, and minimises the need to develop additional land for housing.
- 7.2 The key issue arising from pre-application discussion is the impact of the scheme on the semi-rural character of Rectory Road. Residential development is not out of keeping in this semi-rural area – in fact, residential uses contribute to the semi-rural character. On an objective analysis, the density of the scheme is entirely in keeping, and allows for a spacious layout that retains vegetation to the Rectory Road frontage, and provides opportunities for new planting. The architectural approach is compatible with the range of styles evident at existing properties, and the detailing in terms of planting, boundaries, and hard surfacing has taken its cues from existing features that contribute to that semi-rural character.
- 7.3 The proposed development complies with all of the Council’s relevant Development Management Policies in terms of design, amenity, space, and impacts. It also includes benefits such as the provision of additional public space and a new connection between the existing estate and Rectory Road, as well as the inherent benefit of providing additional new homes in an area where new housing need remains high.



Phase 2

PLANNING &
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