

Design Access and Planning Statement

**Post Box Cottage, Longtown,
Herefordshire HR2 0LS :**

Proposed Residential Development

Prepared on behalf of Mr P Milton

June 2023



hookmasonplanning

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Site location, surroundings and context**
- 3.0 Proposed development**
- 4.0 Planning policy overview**
- 5.0 Principal planning considerations**
- 6.0 Conclusions and recommendations**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.01 This statement is prepared by Hook Mason Architects in support of a planning application by Blackhill Homes Ltd relating to a proposed residential development of two dwellings on land within the property curtilage of Post Box Cottage Longtown HR2 0LS. Alterations to the existing dwelling are additionally proposed, which comprise removal of the single storey extension facing the public highway, which previously formed the post office trading premises.

A site location plan, proposed site layout, dwelling house type designs, site topographical survey and measured building survey of the existing dwelling, Heritage Statement, archaeological WSI and site evaluation, Landscape Visual Assessment / Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement, Ecological Appraisal, Transportation Junction Advice Note With ATC survey data and drainage design Surface Water Management Plan / Foul Drainage Strategy form part of this planning application submission.

- 1.02 This statement provides a description of the site within its context of the Longtown settlement, together with a summary of the key applicable planning policy considerations relevant to this planning application proposal.

2.0 Site location, surroundings and context

- 2.01 The site which extends to 0.38 acres (0.15ha) is located immediately adjacent the C1203 public highway towards the south eastern end of the Longtown village settlement boundary as it is defined within the Longtown Group Neighbourhood Development Plan. The site is broadly level although the adjacent highway levels reduce along the length of the site with resulting increasing level differential between the application site and public highway towards the south east. The River Monnow runs broadly parallel with the long axis of the site some 200m approximately to the north east at its closest point. Environment Agency mapping details that the application site lies entirely within flood zone 1.

The village settlement is not designated as a Conservation Area, however Longtown castle and town scheduled monument (list entry 1021347) is located immediately adjacent the south east property boundary and overlaps marginally with the application site. Additionally two other designated heritage assets are located in relative proximity to the application site:

- The Old Greyhound- list entry 1078156 Grade 2
- Milestone on west side of C1203 – list entry 1078155 Grade 2

The south western site boundary (to C1203) is presently defined by a tall hedgerow predominantly comprising conifers. Two public rights of way (PROW) Longtown footpath 62 & 63 pass relatively close to the site to the south west and north east respectively. The north eastern site boundary is defined by a combination of shrub planting and fencing. Ground levels diminish gradually beyond this boundary towards the north east and River Monnow valley.

- 2.02 Longtown is identified within Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) Policy RA2 as being within the Golden Valley HMA and categorised as being one of the 119 larger settlements to provide the main focus of proportionate housing development during the plan period to 2031.

The village is served by a variety of facilities / services and is located in relative proximity to A465, which on a more strategic level provides access to all of the services and facilities of both Hereford and Abergavenny. The settlement is served by public transport with access to Hereford and Abergavenny, with wider public transport connectivity beyond

As such the site is demonstrably a sustainable location for residential development. CS Policy RA2 1 specifies that design and layout should reflect the size, role and function of each settlement and be located within or adjacent to the main built up area.

- 2.03 The site is located entirely within the Longtown settlement boundary as defined on the Longtown Village Policies Map within the Longtown Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (LGP) which was made in March 2020.
- 2.04 Existing housing surrounds the application site on two sides, (NW and SW) and as such is well related to the built form of the settlement. This site presents a highly sustainable and deliverable development opportunity, which is available now to meet the housing needs of the area.

The Longtown Group NDP at Policies LGPC 2 and LGPC 3 allocates two sites within the settlement boundary as new housing sites. The allocated site at Policy LGPC 2 of 0.6ha

to the SE of Greyhound Close is located directly opposite the application site. The second allocation being located at the NW end of the village settlement.

3.0 Proposed development

- 3.01 These planning application proposals seeks to develop land forming part of the property curtilage of the Old Post Office as high quality residential development of two dwellings, together with alterations to the existing dwelling to remove the flat roofed single storey former post office premises extension constructed adjacent the roadside façade of the existing house.

These proposals represent relatively low density development, in accepted development density terms, however the low density proposed reflects the general pattern of existing development in this part of the settlement, into which these proposals seek to integrate and additionally accord with LGPC Policy 1 requirements b) c) e) and f) , in addition to the proximity of the adjacent Scheduled Monument detailed above.

- 3.03 A total of two additional dwellings is proposed, with the proposed size and mix of dwellings informed by Herefordshire Council's Housing Market Area Needs Assessment July 2021. Published data relating to market housing needs within the Golden Valley HMA, concludes that around two thirds of additional market housing should comprise family 3 and 4+ bedroom accommodation houses.
- 3.04 A formal pre planning application consultation process was undertaken with both Herefordshire Council and Historic England during 2021, subsequent to which detailed archaeological site evaluation was undertaken, the conclusions of which were accepted and endorsed both by the Council's archaeological advisor and Historic England.
- 3.05 The following sections summarise the key considerations and constraints which have influenced and informed these planning application proposals.

Heritage impacts

- 3.06 A heritage impact assessment prepared by CJR Heritage states that the site and the positioning of the proposed dwellings constitutes a discreet addition to the built form of Longtown which will not intrude into the setting of non designated heritage assets, listed buildings or the scheduled Longtown Castle much further up the village. In fact,

with its position on the lower approaches to the village centre and the meandering of the road it is totally obscured from view. Similarly, it cannot be seen from the Old Greyhound.

The assessment concludes that these application proposals represents a well conceived means of providing additional village homes in Longtown whilst safeguarding recognised character and the setting of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site. In terms of the NPPF criteria the development will inevitably incur change and thus some "harm" to the established character of Post Box Cottage. However, because of the traditional character of the proposal and the discreet positioning of the building on the site it is considered that the impact of the scheme will incur less than substantial harm to interests of acknowledged importance. This must also be judged against the benefits of maintaining a thriving community in the historic settlement of Longtown which underpins the continued relevance of residential occupation of historic properties in the Herefordshire Countryside.

Landscape impacts

- 3.07 It is considered that a sensitively designed residential development infilling within the settlement boundary will have neutral impact on the setting of the adjacent designated heritage assets.

Whilst the aspect of the site towards the NE is open with relatively far reaching views beyond, the application site will be viewed against a backdrop of other existing development within the settlement. The site is relatively contained visually from the SE approach and partially screened by existing tree planting from the adjacent C1203.

Whilst some of the existing conifers to the C1205 will need to be removed to facilitate the highways visibility splays, the specific trees involved are not considered to be of significance and will be replaced with appropriate indigenous species. Additionally new tree and appropriate landscape enhancements are incorporated into the proposals as detailed on the mitigation & enhancement layout proposal prepared by Peter Quinn Associates, which forms part of this application submission.

The Landscape & Visual Appraisal prepared by Peter Quinn Associates which supports this planning application concludes that the development proposals as described would be likely to:

- Conform with the majority of relevant policy
- Have a neutral-minor adverse effect on landscape character
- Result in only a slight adverse effect on views.

Access

3.08 Vehicular access serving the existing dwelling is currently provided via a junction with C1203 located immediately to the side of Post Box Cottage. A new splayed junction access is proposed approximately mid way along the property curtilage frontage in what is considered to be the optimum location to facilitate the requisite highways visibility splays in both directions. The proposed new vehicle access location is informed by transportation guidance provided by DTA Transportation, based on ATC survey data. A copy of their access junction note forms part of this planning application submission.

A shared private drive access serves the proposed two dwellings each of which include provision for two on plot car parking spaces for each dwelling, one car & cycle space within the integral garage, together with appropriate vehicle manoeuvring space. The proposed layout accords with the Council's refuse and recycling collection standards.

Flood risk and drainage

- 3.09 A detailed SWMP/FDS has been prepared by Townsend Water consulting which forms part of this planning application submission.
- 3.10 The report confirms that the application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency. As such the land will have a very low probability of fluvial flooding.
- 3.11 On site infiltration testing were undertaken to establish specific ground conditions and inform proposals for a sustainable surface water drainage system. Additionally a pre planning developer enquiry was submitted to Welsh Water to establish availability of potable water supplies and public foul sewer treatment plant capacity.

Longtown is located outside of the blue /red zones detailed in the Council's River Lugg Catchment Area Position Statement and as such not subject the current restrictions in respect of surface water management and foul drainage disposal.

- 3.12 The submitted report details that foul water will be discharged to DCWW's below ground mains drainage infrastructure and that the ground infiltration tests demonstrate that ground conditions within the application site are suitable to facilitate a sustainable drainage system for disposal of surface water within the application site.

Ecology

- 3.13 An extended phase 1 habitat survey was carried out at the application site by Ecology Planning on 3.03.2023 to establish the potential presence of any protected species

The ecological assessment report concludes that it is expected that the proposals including the proposed ecological mitigation and enhancements will serve local and national policy requirements. Detailed design and delivery of mitigation and enhancements are expected to be controlled via suitably worded planning conditions.

4.0 Planning policy overview

- 4.01 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that a determination made under the planning Acts must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.02 In that context this means the statutory development plan for Herefordshire, the Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031, including any adopted neighbourhood plan, in this case is the Longtown Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (LGPC). Additionally the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) represents up to date Government planning policy which and is an important material consideration which must be taken into consideration in the determination of any planning application in England.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.03 The National Planning Policy Framework was first published in March 2012 and was subsequently revised in July 2018. A further revision NPPF was published in February 2019, which was subsequently superseded in July 2021 by the current version. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

- 4.04 The policies within the NPPF reinforce the Government's commitment to significantly boost the supply of housing, the achievement of sustainable development and that this application should be determined in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Para 11)

Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031

- 4.05 The adopted development plan for Herefordshire is the Local Plan Core Strategy. The following policies are considered to be of particular relevance to this consultation enquiry, albeit the policies listed are not intended to be exhaustive.

SS1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development – Herefordshire will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within national policy.

SS2 Delivering new homes – This policy sets out the requirement for the delivery of a minimum of 16,500 new homes in Herefordshire within the plan period to 2031, together with the strategic locations that will form the focus for this new development.

SS3 Releasing land for residential development – This policy seeks to identify sufficient land for residential development which can be released to ensure that the Core Strategy housing target can be achieved during the plan period.

SS4 Movement and transport – New development should be designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transport network.

SS7 Addressing climate change – Development will be required to include measures to mitigate impact on climate change.

RA1 Rural housing strategy – This policy details that circa 5,300 new dwellings will be created in Herefordshire's rural areas during the plan period to 2031 to meet the county's anticipated housing needs.

RA2 Herefordshire's villages – This policy supports proportionate growth of the rural settlements identified in Fig 4.14. Longtown is identified as one of the 119 settlements which will provide the main focus of proportionate housing development during the plan

period. Longtown is one of 19 settlements so designated within the Leominster housing market area (HMA).

LD4 Historic environment and heritage assets – This policy supports sympathetic development proposals which positively contribute to the character of designated Conservation Areas and other heritage assets.

SD1 sustainable design and energy efficiency – Development proposals should include high quality sustainable design that creates a safe, accessible, well integrated environment for all members of the community.

MT1 Traffic management, highways safety and promoting active travel - The policy identifies principles covering movement and transportation which should be incorporated into development proposals.

Longtown Neighbourhood Development Plan (LGPC)

- 4.06 The Longtown Group NDP was made on 6th March 2020 and as such carries equal weight to Herefordshire's Local Plan Core Strategy in the determination of this planning application.
- 4.07 Policy LGPC 1 addresses new homes in Longtown village and sets out :
- b) That new housing within the village settlement boundary will be restricted to sensitive infill schemes. New dwellings shall be of a scale, massing, density, building line and layout compatible with the character, size and form of the neighbourhood.
 - c) Development shall not result in the loss of important features such as trees, hedgerows, significant frontage gaps or green spaces that contribute to the character of the village.
 - e) Development shall not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties.
 - f) There should be safe access for vehicles and parking arrangements should be an integral part of the overall design.
- 4.08 Policies LGPC 2 and LGPC 3 specifically allocates two sites within the settlement boundary as new housing sites. The allocated site at Policy LGPC 2 of 0.6ha to the SE of Greyhound Close is located directly opposite the application site. The second allocation of undefined area (although approx. 0.8ha) being located at the NW end of the village settlement.

4.09 The Council's most recent Monitoring Report dated July 2022 details the housing requirements by neighbourhood area for Golden Valley HMA as a whole to have a residual total of 80 dwellings within the plan period to date and Longtown Group a residual total of 27 dwellings. Crucially however the housing requirements targets for HMA's as a whole and individual settlements represent a minimum as opposed to maximum provision and these application proposals should be considered within that context.

Five year housing land supply position

4.10 Herefordshire Council's latest published Annual Position Statement in respect of housing land supply was published in July 2022 and details that the five year housing land supply at 1st April 2022 is 6.19 years. This confirms that Herefordshire Council is currently able to demonstrate the requisite five year housing land supply.

5.0 Principal planning considerations

5.01 These outline proposals are fully in accordance with both national and local adopted planning policies in that:

- Longtown is identified within CS policy RA2 as a sustainable settlement for proportionate growth.
- This proposal for two additional dwellings will help to meet ongoing local housing needs and will provide high quality new family homes for the local community.
- The application site is well related to the existing settlement form and is in walking distance of all of the facilities and services of Longtown, with existing dwellings on two sides of its boundaries. The proposal is fully compliant with the CS policy RA2 requirement for proposals to be located within or adjacent the main built up area of the Longtown settlement.
- The site can be safely accessed from the adjacent C1203 public highway and as such compliant with CS Policy MT1.
- In formulating these outline proposals, the significance and setting of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site has been considered, together with the character

of the village settlement. As such these proposals are compliant with CS Policy LD4.

- There are no know technical constraints which would prevent delivery of this site, which is available now to meet the housing needs of Longtown .

5.02 This submission demonstrates that sensitively designed development of this site can be achieved without resulting substantial harm to the significance and setting of identified designated heritage assets. The site is deliverable, available now and capable of being delivered within the next five years, thus contributing to the Council's ongoing five year housing land supply position.

5.03 These outline proposals should be assessed by Herefordshire Council in the context of the adopted development plan as required by S 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.05 In view of the above position in respect of 5 year housing land supply, the presumption at NPPF Paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing.

5.07 The NPPF details at Paragraph 8 that achieving sustainable development is dependent on three overarching objectives which are mutually dependant and which should be jointly and simultaneously achieved:

An economic objective

5.08 The Framework provides clear and unequivocal planning policy direction at Paragraphs 80-84 in respect of the Government's commitment to ensuring that the planning system does everything possible to support sustainable economic growth (Paragraph 19) and to ensure that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places at the right time to support such growth. In that respect this statement demonstrates that the application proposals utilise an entirely appropriate site in a sustainable location within the Longtown village settlement, which will deliver two additional high quality family homes within the next five years.

5.09 *The Economic Footprint of UK House Building Report*, July 2018 states that 3.1 jobs are created for each new home constructed. This development would therefore provide a

tangible economic benefit to the construction industry through the employment generated during the construction of these proposed new homes.

- 5.10 It is also considered that an economic sustainability role can be further enhanced by provision of more aspirational homes to expand the quality and choice of housing, in addition to the social role of providing houses to meet identified need.

A social objective

- 5.12 The Framework highlights that sustainable development involves delivering homes that are accessible to local services to promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities. This site is located within walking distance of all of the services and facilities that Longtown offers. Additionally the village is served by public transport links to Hereford and Abergavenny with their wider public transport network links.
- 5.13 The need to promote healthy and safe communities is addressed within Paragraphs 92-97 of the Framework. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment are addressed at Paragraphs 189-208.

An environmental objective

- 5.14 The challenges of climate change are addressed within Paragraphs 153-169 of the Framework.
- 5.15 The use of the application site for additional new homes provides a complimentary use which relates well with existing residential properties surrounding this land on two sides.
- 5.16 The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 of Environment Agency flood mapping, with correspondingly very low risk of fluvial flooding
- 5.17 A sympathetic design approach has been adopted, informed by and sensitive to the surrounding pattern of development. Biodiversity enhancements are incorporated into these proposals by virtue of new tree and hedgerow planting.

5.18 The foregoing demonstrates that these proposals are wholly compliant with the three dimensions of sustainable development detailed within the Framework when read as a whole and additionally accord with the adopted development plan for the area.

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

6.01 This statement provides a robust policy justification in support of this planning application submission for residential development of two additional dwellings in Longtown on land adjacent C1203, together with alterations to the existing dwelling within the application site.

6.02 The site offers the opportunity to provide a sustainable and deliverable high quality development opportunity considered to be fully in accordance with the adopted development plan and other material considerations. The proposals are well related to the existing built form of Longtown and the site is available now to deliver additional new market family homes for the local community within the Golden Valley HMA.

6.06 In the context of the planning policy position detailed within this statement, a compelling case is made that these application proposals represent sustainable development which accord with an up to date development plan and as such should be approved without delay.

David F Baume BA (Hons), Dip Arch, MRTPI, RIBA

Hook Mason Consulting



