

## Design Statement

### 193489/RM – Land adjacent the Clovers, Bishopstone, Herefordshire HR4 7RX

This Design Statement is produced in support of the Reserved Matters submission dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019 on the advice of the Case Officer following the receipt of objections from the Parish Council and two neighbours. The Statement is structured to first introduce the application and the relevant Development Plan policies and material considerations. The objections received are then summarised, with specific emphasis on those questioning the approach to appearance and scale, and the Statement then concludes by assessing the merits of the application against the aforementioned policies.

#### 1. Background

Outline planning permission (OPP) was granted for the erection of a single dwelling on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017. All matters were reserved, meaning access, layout, landscaping, appearance and scale were all for future determination via the Reserved Matters submission – now submitted.

At the time of the decision the Bishopstone NDP was not at a stage whereby it could attract material weight for decision making. Although subsequently made and in full force, the principle of development set out in the OPP is established and not capable of being revisited. We accept that policies of the NDP that are relevant to design e.g. G1, must be taken into account when determining the Reserved Matters submission, but not those that relate to where housing should be directed.

Condition 5 of the OPP, referred to by the Parish Council, required development to be carried out in strict accordance with the amended plan, but this condition is in our view unlawful – if the Council wanted to determine layout it should have sought additional detail pursuant to article 5(2) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Moreover, the Case Officer's analysis of the application made clear that it was not the intention of condition 5 to somehow fix the footprint of the building. This is made clear in the extract of the delegated report that is quoted in the Parish Council response, including:

*“The detailed design **and layout** should reflect the size, role and function of Bishopstone, demonstrate that the landscape has positively influenced the design and scale, be designed to maintain local distinctiveness and should make a positive contribution to architectural diversity and the character of the area in accordance with CS policies RA2, LD1 and SD1.” (Our emphasis).*

#### Site context

The application site is set back from the C1097 village road on the edge of a traditional orchard. 1 & 2 The Clovers, a pair of traditional semi-detached brick/rendered cottages, lie perpendicular to the carriageway to the south of the application site. Greenwalls is a brick bungalow set back significantly from the carriageway to the immediate east of the application site.

Many residential properties in Bishopstone village are post-war, bungalows constructed in brick and interspersed with fewer older, more traditional properties such as Forge Cottage, which lies some distance to the west of the application site. Objective assessment indicates that the post-war stock tends to prevail and in the immediate context of the application site, manifests itself via Canon Rise, a small cul-de-sac development off Bishon Lane and individual properties in linear settlement pattern extending westwards as far as the driveway to Bishon Farm.

Throughout the village and off the surrounding lanes there are examples of properties, both traditional and modern, that exhibit a mixture of facing materials, such that it is difficult to pinpoint a specific rural vernacular. Forge Cottage, introduced above, exhibits elements of timber framing with brick infill and weatherboarding. There are also older properties constructed principally in brick.

The proposal is for a 2-storey dwelling of render and timber-cladding under a natural slate roof with attached integral garage incorporated in a single store element also housing cycle storage.

## **2. Relevant Development Plan Policies**

The Development Plan consists of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy 2011-2031 (CS) and the Bishopstone Group NDP 2019-2031.

For the purpose of this Statement, which is concerned primarily with the design of the dwelling (or in RM parlance, appearance and layout), the relevant policies of the CS are RA2, LD1 and SD1.

The relevant policy of the NDP is G1.

### **Core Strategy Policies**

**Policy RA2** – Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns, exists principally to guide residential development to those settlements listed at Figures 4.14 and 4.15. It accepts that Neighbourhood Development Plans will allocate land for new housing or otherwise demonstrate delivery to provide levels of housing to meet the various targets, by indicating levels of suitable and available capacity.

The four criteria include:

*1. Their 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. In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.15 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned; &*

*3. They result in the development of high quality, sustainable schemes which are appropriate to their context and make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and its landscape setting.*

**Policy LD1** – Landscape and townscape, requires *inter alia* that development proposals should demonstrate that character of the landscape and townscape has positively influenced the design, scale, nature and site selection, protection and enhancement of the setting of settlements and designated areas. They should also conserve and enhance the natural, historic and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area's character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management and incorporate new landscape schemes and their management to ensure development integrates appropriately into its surroundings.

**Policy SD1** – Sustainable design and energy efficiency, is a criteria-based policy. Of specific relevance to this Statement are the following: -

- new buildings should be designed to maintain local distinctiveness through incorporating local architectural detailing and materials and respecting scale, height, proportions and massing of

surrounding development. while making a positive contribution to the architectural diversity and character of the area including, where appropriate, through innovative design;

- safeguard residential amenity for existing and proposed residents;
- utilise physical sustainability measures that include, in particular, orientation of buildings, the provision of water conservation measures, storage for bicycles and waste including provision for recycling, and enabling renewable energy and energy conservation infrastructure;
- utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials;

All planning applications including material changes of use, will be expected to demonstrate how the above design and energy efficiency considerations have been factored into the proposal from the outset.

### **The NDP – Policy G1**

Policy G1 Housing development sites and design is a broad ranging policy governing the assessment of housing design in the group parish.

It is a pre-requisite that all new development must be designed to a high quality; with criteria identified as the means through which proposals will be assessed:

- a. The orientation, siting, scale, proportions, massing, rooflines, materials and detailing of the design*
- b. Planning and architectural integrity of the design and the way it fits in with the surrounding buildings and landscape*
- c. Construction design and materials should reflect the dwellings in the immediate area*
- d. Sustainable construction and design that uses recycled materials and renewable energy wherever possible*
- e. Preserving and enhancing the local built, natural and historic environment*
- f. Impact on existing environmental features and wider landscape*
- g. Impact on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings*
- h. Highway safety and access including adequate off-road parking*
- i. Impact on local flood risk; and*
- j Impact of existing development on future residential occupants.*

Policy G1 also requires new development to have due regard for the importance of the creation and retention of green infrastructure and where appropriate should include measures for protection of priority habitat (including hedgerows and orchards) and inclusion of biodiversity enhancements such as bat boxes, bird boxes and native planting

All proposals for new development should identify and address any environmental or contamination issues specific to the site particularly with reference to the River Wye SAC.

## Material considerations

### National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF declares itself an important material consideration relevant to the determination of planning applications. A Chapter of the NPPF is dedicated to the pursuit of good design, which is considered indivisible from the pursuit of sustainable development.

### 3. Summary of objections

The Parish Council and local residents' objections are summarised as follows:

1. The site is outside the settlement boundary designated by the NDP
2. The scheme has not paid sufficient regard to flood risk to the south
3. The application is not in accordance with OPP condition 5 in that it is for a larger dwelling and different footprint to that shown on the indicative layout
4. The scheme conflicts with G1 and is of a form, massing and scale that is incompatible with the surrounding buildings and is "of a fairly standard and suburban appearance [which does not]... demonstrate that the landscape has positively influenced the design and scale; does not maintain local distinctiveness and does not make a positive contribution to architectural diversity and the character of the area."

Further points are made in respect of flood risk and HRA, but these matters were addressed at the outline stage and not revisited here.

### 4. Assessment of the scheme relative to the aforementioned policies

The NDP post-dates the CS by several years and thus we use Policy G1, as the most recently adopted design policy as the focus for this assessment, noting a high degree of consistency between criteria of this policy and CS policies RA2, LD1 and SD1.

We do not agree with the accusation that the proposal does not maintain local distinctiveness and fails to make a positive contribution to architectural diversity and the character of the area. Firstly, these could be argued to be competing objectives; maintenance of local distinctives inferring that the proposal should adhere to existing characteristics, whilst a contribution to architectural *diversity* suggests that there is no prevailing character; or if there is, it is not one that should be rigidly adhered to. In our view, the proposed design represents an approach in respect of appearance and scale that causes no harm to the characteristics of the local environment and explain this more fully in our assessment against the relevant criteria of G1 below.

#### NDP Policy G1 – Housing development sites and design

##### *a. The orientation, siting, scale, proportions, massing, rooflines, materials and detailing of the design*

Notwithstanding the contention in respect of OPP condition 5, the orientation and siting on the plot is in essence as per the outline approval. In respect of scale, there was nothing within the OPP that sought to limit the scale of development and the design approach is successful in breaking up the massing through the use of appropriate facing materials and the single-storey garage element.

Likewise, at the rear, the projecting element has a lower ridge height and is inset from the flank elevation.

The use of timber cladding under a natural slate roof in particular is a) considered entirely appropriate in the context and b) the materials have recessive qualities that will help the dwelling assimilate more successfully in the immediate context than a facing brick and plain clay roof tile; materials that would be more typical of a suburban appearance – an accusation that has been levelled unfairly at the proposal.

It would also appear that in assessing the dwelling's footprint at the outline stage, the Parish Council has omitted to take account of the detached garage but has taken account of the garage footprint at the Reserved Matters stage; the garage now being attached to the proposed dwelling. The effect is an under-reporting of the indicative footprint at the outline stage which consequently makes the footprint now proposed seem larger by comparison.

*b. Planning and architectural integrity of the design and the way it fits in with the surrounding buildings and landscape*

The accusation is that the design will not fit in with the surrounding buildings and landscape and that due to the site's elevation relative to the road, it will be prominent and overbearing.

We respectfully disagree. The choice of materials has been clearly and positively influenced by the surrounding buildings and landscape. The appearance of the dwelling has sought to reflect the aspirations of the applicant, but in a manner that is respectful of and responsive to the local environment.

Moreover, whilst the site is elevated above the village road, it is also set back significantly from it and located towards the western edge of the site where it will not be visible in views up the drive. If elements of the roof and first floor are visible to passers-by on the road, then this will be in the context of a residential environment and not incongruous.

*c. Construction design and materials should reflect the dwellings in the immediate area*

As above, it is our view that the dwelling exhibits traits that are entirely characteristic of the rural vernacular within Bishopstone, comprising a mixed palette of traditional materials.

*d. Sustainable construction and design that uses recycled materials and renewable energy wherever possible*

The design will be constructed using the 'fabric first' approach, whereby emphasis is placed on insulation and air tightness such that space heating requirements are substantially reduced and the need for 'bolt on' renewables avoided.

*e. Preserving and enhancing the local built, natural and historic environment*

The proposal incorporates bat tubes within the build. Existing hedgerows are retained, and new hedgerow will be planted along the newly defined northern boundary.

*f. Impact on existing environmental features and wider landscape*

See e. above

<p><i>g. Impact on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings</i></p> <p>The dwelling is located within its plot so as to preserve the living conditions of occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings. This element of the policy is satisfied.</p>
<p><i>h. Highway safety and access including adequate off-road parking</i></p> <p>This element of the policy is satisfied. The application makes suitable provision for parking and turning within the site and the means of access was considered appropriate at the outline stage.</p>
<p><i>i. Impact on local flood risk</i></p> <p>This element of the policy is satisfied</p>
<p><i>j Impact of existing development on future residential occupants</i></p> <p>See g. above.</p>

**This assessment against the criteria of G1 confirms that the proposal is not in conflict with the policy, but in our opinion, scores positively against it when read in the round.**

**The requirement to adhere to prevailing characteristics is one that should be applied with care, particularly when there is such a broad range of architectural periods within the village.**

**We see nothing in G1 that militates against the design approach taken and consider the siting and use of materials in particular, sympathetic to the surrounding environment to greater extent than alternatives and the proposal thus in accordance with NDP G1, CS RA2, LD1 and SD1 and the NPPF as a consequence.**