

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND BETWEEN GOSMORE ROAD AND THE SEVEN STARS PH, CLEHONGER

1. DESCRIPTION

The land extends to 2.4 hectares immediately adjoining the north-eastern boundary of Clehonger. It adjoins the eastern boundary of the Playing Field and lies between the Gosmore Road and the Seven Stars Public House. The land was considered as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and comprises all of SHLAA ref. 082/001.

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All of the site is identified as being suitable for residential development with low/minor constraints. At a standard density of 30 dwellings per hectare it has a capacity for 72 dwellings.

The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers the impact of the proposed development on the landscape and concludes

‘The proposed residential development will cover 2.4 hectares of principally agricultural land. The site is located on the edge of Clehonger with the Village Hall and Playing field to the West and the residential area along Gosmore Road to the South. The Theoretical zone of visual influence for the proposal site covers the immediate locality within 500m of the Site boundary, there are limited long distance viewpoints. This is due to the existing built form and topography restricting medium and longer distance views from the West and East. Views from the North and South are restricted by existing hedges and tree planting.

Visual impacts of substantial adverse significance have been predicted from areas in the immediate vicinity of the housing site. The magnitude and therefore the significance of impacts are reduced from viewpoints over 500m from the site.

Although it is not possible to completely mitigate the visual impact particularly those relating to obstruction of views, the proposed ‘Development Framework plan’ does address these impacts. Retention and protection of the existing hedgerows on the site boundary and a Landscape scheme within the housing area will strengthen and improve existing landscape features. Planting will also reduce the impact of the housing by screening and softening the views to the development. ‘

2. PLANNING POLICY

Clelonger is a Main Village within the current Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan with a defined settlement boundary. This site abuts the current defined settlement boundary and is included within the 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Clelonger is defined as one of the 122 villages to be the main focus of proportionate housing development in Herefordshire's rural areas within the Herefordshire Local Plan draft Core Strategy 2011-3031. The aim is that these 122 villages will provide around 5,300 new dwellings in this period, with a target growth that is proportionate to each village. In the case of Clelonger it falls within the Hereford Housing Market Area where the housing target growth is 18% of current dwellings within the main village envelopes. Clelonger currently has 448 dwellings giving a target growth of 81 houses in the period to 2031. The Core Strategy states that 'The target provides individual communities with an objective they can aim to meet or potentially exceed over the plan period depending on their own aspirations and environmental constraints, in particular flood risk and/or landscape sensitivity.'

In conclusion this site lies in a sustainable location for residential development and given the current lack of demonstrable 5 year housing supply the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF should be given considerable weight. Pre-Planning Advice has been provided by the Principal Planning Officer confirming that this is a sustainable location for new housing and supporting the principle of housing development on this site.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

As a sustainable settlement Clelonger is capable of accommodating modest housing growth and this site has been assessed as both suitable and achievable. The proposed development on this site is for up to 80 houses, of which 35% will be affordable homes to help satisfy local housing need.

A single point of access is proposed from the north directly off the B4549, adjacent to the Seven Stars PH. An area of structural landscaping is proposed to the east of the public footpath that runs from the Seven Stars PH south-east across the site to the Gosmore Road. The remainder of the site is proposed as housing, but retaining the boundary hedges. The site adjoins the existing Playing Field to the west, and the proposal is for an off-site contribution towards this facility (the community are currently fund-raising for improved equipment and facilities on the Playing Field) rather than an isolated on-site provision.

4. PRINCIPAL OF DEVELOPMENT

Herefordshire Council acknowledges that it cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. The most recent Annual Monitoring Report 2011-2013 (published by Herefordshire Council in April 2014) gives the current housing land supply as between 2.09 years and 2.61 years.

In response to the acknowledged deficit the Council introduced an interim protocol in July 2012. This recognised that in order to boost the supply of housing in the manner required it would be necessary to consider the development of sites outside existing settlement boundaries. The protocol introduced a sequential test, with priority given to the release of sites immediately adjoining settlements with town or main village status within the UDP.

On this basis, for the purposes of housing delivery, the relevant policies of the UDP can be considered out of date. As such, and in accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF the Council should grant permission for *sustainable* housing development unless:-

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

The Government's position on this locally has also been confirmed by a recent appeal decision for 35 dwellings at Kingstone. The appointed Inspector made it clear that in the context of a housing land supply deficit there can be no legitimate objection to the principle of development outside the UDP defined development boundary; UDP Policy H4 being out of date. There remains a requirement for the development to accord with other relevant UDP policies and NPPF guidance; paragraph 14 makes it clear that the balance between adverse impacts and benefits should be assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. However, in terms of principle, if the development is acceptable in all other respects, officers consider that the conflict with UDP policy H7 is not a reason for refusal that could be sustained on appeal.

As well as consideration of the principle of developing a green-field site the proposal raises a number of material considerations requiring assessment against saved UDP policies and guidance laid down in the NPPF. Firstly there is the assessment as to whether the development would represent sustainable development. The NPPF refers to the social, environmental and economic dimensions of 'sustainable development', but does not define the term. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF indicates that:-

'Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.'

In this case the site is considered to represent a sustainable location for development, the village of Clehonger providing a range of services considered necessary to sustain a typical household. With consideration to the Council's housing development land shortfall and the services provided in Clehonger, (which are within walking distances of the site), and the fact that the application site is located immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, the site is considered sustainable in terms of its location.

Therefore in terms of the principle of the development and sustainability issues the development is considered to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy S1 of the UDP.

5. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A well-attended Planning Exhibition was held on 25th July 2014 and a full discussion entered into regarding the merits of the proposed location and the details of the proposed development.

Feedback from this consultation was broadly supportive of the principle of housing development on this site. The consultations have resulted in amendments to the scheme including amendments to proposed pedestrian and cycle access, proposals for structural landscaping, and off-site financial contributions to the Playing Field.

6. CONCLUSION

As a sustainable settlement Clehonger is capable of accommodating modest housing growth and this site has been assessed as both suitable and achievable. The proposed development comprises up to 80 houses of which 35% will be affordable homes for the local community in the form of both low-cost rental and discounted market affordable homes. There is a recognised need for affordable housing to meet local needs and this proposal seeks to address that need.

As detailed above, this proposal accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in paragraph 14 of the NPPF, other relevant policies within the Framework, and other relevant policies in the UDP relating to landscape impact, ecology and highway access/connectivity. This Statement and the accompanying reports demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts of approving this proposal for housing that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, to justify refusal of this planning application.

James Spreckley MRICS FAAV
Brinsop House
Brinsop
Hereford HR4 7AS
01432 761777
james.spreckley@virgin.net
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