

Planning and Design & Access Statement

In support of a planning application for

**The construction of two semi-detached three bedroom dwellings and
associated parking**

at

**Land North East of 3 Stonelake Cottages, Camp Hill, Chiddingstone Causeway,
Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8LB**

On behalf of

Redleaf Trust

March 2017

1. Context

- 1.1. This Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the construction of two semi-detached three bedroom dwellings and associated parking and should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans.
- 1.2. The application site presently forms part of the garden to 3 Stonelake Cottages, a property owned by the applicant.
- 1.3. The site is located within the village of Chiddingstone Causeway. The village benefits from some local amenities in the form of a local shop with post office and public house. The village is connected by public transport with bus services and Penshurst mainline train station.
- 1.4. There is no relevant planning history for the application site. Pre-application advice has been sought from Sevenoaks District Council. Advice was initially provided under reference PA/15/00853. The suggested alterations and recommendations were actioned and a secondary pre-application advice application submitted under reference PA/16/00726.

2. The Proposal – Design & Access

Use

- 2.1. The application seeks to develop the site for the construction of two semi-detached dwellings with associated amenity space, landscaping and parking facilities, as shown on the submitted plans. The proposed residential use of the application site would be in keeping with the surrounding uses. The site is directly adjacent to and surrounded by residential development.

Amount

2.2. The proposed development will provide two three bedroom semi-detached dwellings. There will be car parking provisions to the rear of the properties, accessed from Dukes Meadow.

2.3. Both dwellings will benefit from a private garden to the front and rear of the properties.

Layout

2.4. The accommodation for each dwelling will comprise:

2.4.1. **Ground Floor:** Front door leads to the entrance hall with stairs to first floor and through to sitting room and kitchen. Then through to utility/boot room with cloakroom off and leading to back door.

2.4.2. **First Floor:** Stairs to first floor lead to the landing with doors off to three bedrooms and family bathroom.

2.5. The proposed dwellings will each have a floor area of 105.9 square metres excluding porch overhangs.

Appearance

2.6. The design and scale of the two neighbouring residential developments, Stonelake Cottages and Camphill Cottages, are reflected in the proposed design. A gap of 6 metres between the proposed development and 3 Stonelake Cottages is proposed to ensure continuity with the gapping between the existing dwellings on Camphill.

2.7. The ground floor elevations would comprise a local brick with vertical clay tile hanging to the upper elevations all under a pitched timber roof with clay tile covering.

2.8. The site boundary treatments will comprise the retained hedge on the north western boundary with new hedging on the north eastern boundary. A close board fence will be erected between the proposed dwellings and to define the boundary between the proposed dwellings and 3 Stonelake Cottages.

2.9. The parking area to the south side of the dwellings will have a tarmacadam finish.

Access

2.10. The proposed dwellings will be accessed directly from Dukes Meadow. Pedestrian access to both dwellings will be available from Richard's Close.

Parking

2.11. The proposed development will result in the provision of two off road parking spaces per dwelling, to the rear of the property.

3. Local Planning Policy

3.1. Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework says due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. Variable weight can therefore be attributed to the following policies dependent on their consistency with the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework;

Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy

3.2. **Policy LO 7** confirms that new development within all settlements should be of a “*scale and nature appropriate to the village concerned*” and **Policy SP 1** states that all new development should be “*designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated*”. As laid out in this statement and identified on the elevation drawings and plans enclosed with this application, the scale, nature and design of the proposed development is consistent with the surrounding residential dwellings, a matter acknowledged in the pre application advice response.

Sevenoaks District Council Allocations and Development Management Plan Adopted February 2015

3.3. **Policy EN 1** relates to Design Quality and says development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria:

- a) form should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area;
- b) layout should respect the topography and character of the site and the surrounding area and sensitively incorporate natural features;

- c) proposal's should not result in the loss of buildings, open spaces or green infrastructure that would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area;
 - d) proposal's should ensure satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and provide adequate parking and refuse facilities;
 - e) proposal's that affect a site's existing biodiversity and Green Infrastructure should be designed in a way that avoids or mitigates any potential harm;
 - f) design of new buildings and the layout of spaces, including footways, car and cycle parking areas, should be permeable and provide connectivity with neighbouring areas;
 - g) new development should be inclusive;
 - h) design of new developments should result in the creation of a safe and secure environment;
- 3.4. The proposed development is of a high quality design and demonstrates a positive response to the above listed design criteria. It is therefore submitted that the proposed use of this site for the provision of two semi-detached dwellings would be entirely acceptable on these grounds.
- 3.5. **Policy EN 2** states that amenity protection proposals will be permitted where they provide adequate *“residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development and would safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties by ensuring that development does not result in, and is not located in areas where occupiers of the development would be subject to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicle movements, overlooking or visual intrusion and where the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties”*.
- 3.6. It is submitted that the proposed design allows for the amenity of future occupiers, and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, to be protected. The locality is entirely in residential use providing minimal impact in terms of excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution.

4. National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1. Paragraphs 13 and 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework make it clear that this national guidance constitutes a material consideration in determining applications.
- 4.2. Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is reflected by the Ministerial Foreword to the National Planning Policy Framework, which says “*development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay – a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision*”. Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework recognises that there is need to significantly boost the supply of housing and paragraph 49 says “*housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development*”.
- 4.3. It is recognised that when considering what constitutes sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the policies in paragraphs 18 to 219 of the NPPF need to be taken into consideration as a whole. The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would *significantly and demonstrably* outweigh the benefits of the application.
- 4.4. When considering each of the three dimensions of sustainable development individually, the proposal is demonstrably sustainable. Moreover, it could not be said that there are any adverse impacts which would *significantly and demonstrably* outweigh the benefits of the application and so should be considered to represent a sustainable development.
- 4.5. It is acknowledged that this application relates to a rural location and a site located in the Green Belt however with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development laid out at paragraph 7, the social and economic benefits are clear. It is further submitted that the proposed environmental mitigation measures are such that there would not be a negative impact on the environment. Thus, the overall scheme should be considered a sustainable form of development in every respect.

- 4.6. With regard to the specific paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 53 says Local Planning Authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area. This proposal relates to a development within an area recognised as constituting residential curtilage but, for reasons identified within this Statement, the proposal would not represent inappropriate development as it would not have any material visual impact upon the character of the area and would not give rise to any precedent or pressure for further housing development in the locality.
- 4.7. Paragraph 87 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in “*very special circumstances*”. Paragraph 89 sets out exceptions where development is appropriate, which includes “*limited infilling in villages*”. It is submitted that the proposed development is therefore appropriate.
- 4.8. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework clearly emphasises a positive approach to sustainable development, it also recognises the requirement that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5. Material Considerations

Supplementary Planning Document's

- 5.1. The Supplementary Planning Document “*Development in the Green Belt*”, adopted in February 2015, provides detailed guidance on the implications of applying for planning permission for development located within the Green Belt. Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that an exception to the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt being inappropriate is limited infilling in a village.

- 5.2. The District Council defines limited infill development as “the completion of an otherwise substantially built up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap normally capable of taking one or two dwellings only”. The District Council defines a substantially built up frontage as “an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene”. It is submitted that the area surrounding the proposed development meets the definition of “limited infill” and the application site is within a “substantially built up frontage”. A situation acknowledged in the pre application advice response.

Design and Visual Impact

- 5.3. The District Council’s Core Strategy states that the proposed development should be of a scale and nature appropriate to the village concerned, designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area. It is submitted that the proposed construction of two semi-detached dwelling on the application site meets this stipulation. The proposed dwellings are consistent with the scale of neighbouring residential dwellings. The proposed design is consistent and using a local brick and tile hung elevations is in keeping with the distinctive local character of Chiddingstone Causeway. Overall the proposed development would have a minimal impact on the surrounding countryside and landscape area.

Highways

- 5.4. The proposed use would not amount to any material increase in traffic numbers. The development would not therefore generate any significant amounts of movement and so there would not be a requirement for this application to be accompanied by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment, in accordance with Paragraph 32 of the NPPF.
- 5.5. The proposal would not give rise to any adverse transport impacts or the safety and convenience of the nearby highway, in accordance with Section 4 of the NPPF; Promoting Sustainable Transport.

Land Contamination

- 5.6. The Government's website clarifies that 'contaminated land' is used in general terms to describe land polluted by heavy metals, oils and tars, chemical substances, gases, asbestos or radioactive substances. It also clarifies that the legal definition of contaminated land includes substances that could cause significant harm to people or protected species, and/or significant pollution of surface waters or groundwater.
- 5.7. The application site presently forms part of the residential curtilage to 3 Stonelake Cottages and is used as a garden. It is therefore submitted that there are no reasons why the site should be contaminated.

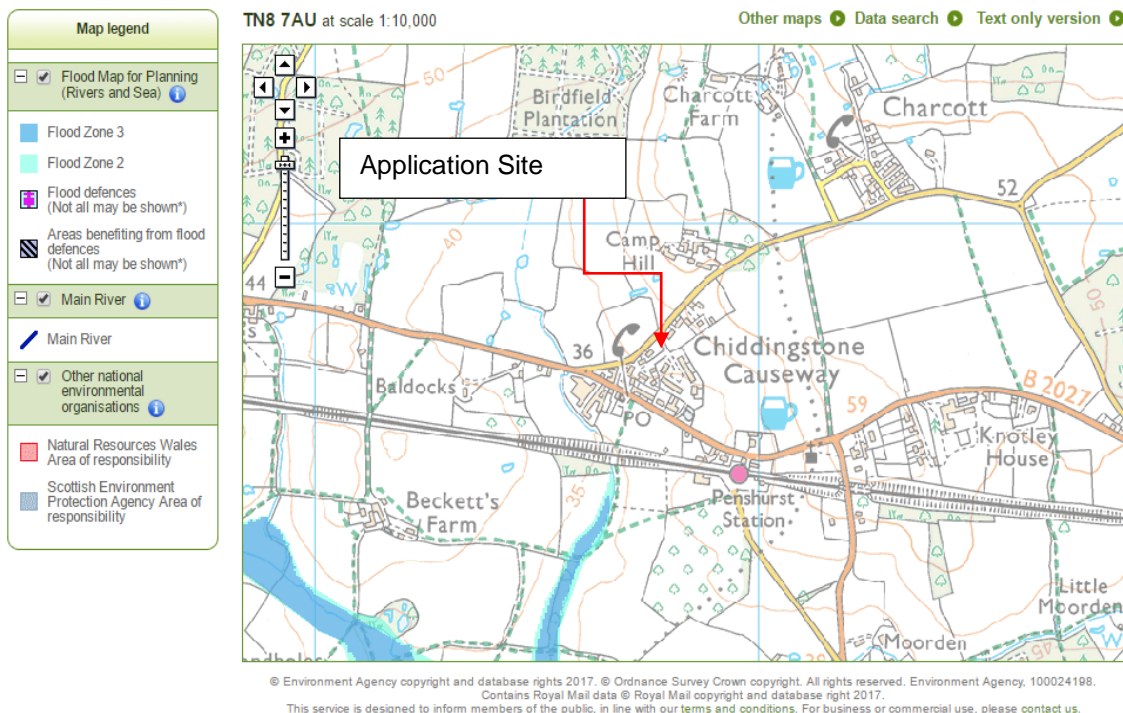
Ecology

- 5.8. An Ecological scoping survey was carried out by Katia Bresso of KB Ecology on 26th August 2016. The results of the surveys are summarised below and the full report accompanies the application.
- 5.9. With regard to amphibians, no ponds are located on the application site and the nearest pond is located over 105 metres to the north. Great Crested Newts disperse from breeding ponds via suitable terrestrial habitat, activity usually concentrated within 100 metres. KB Ecology concludes that it is highly unlikely that any Great Crested Newts would be present on the application site.
- 5.10. With regard to reptiles, one large female slow worm was observed during the site visit and the occupier of 3 Stonelake Cottages confirmed that slow worms are regularly sited. The proposal will, therefore, entail the loss of some reptile habitat. KB Ecology recommends capturing and translocating the reptiles to a suitable receptor site.
- 5.11. The Chiddingstone Nature Reserve, located 0.5 mile to the west of the application site, has been identified as a suitable receptor site and is under the ownership of the applicant.

5.12. With regard to Birds, it is considered that the site has high potential to support breeding birds within the boundary hedge and it is therefore not deemed necessary to carry out a breeding bird survey. KB Ecology recommends that works should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (March – August). If the works cannot be carried out outside of the bird breeding season, an inspection by a qualified ecologist must be completed 48 hours before works commence. If during the inspection a nest is discovered, works must be delayed until the young have fledged. The proposed design includes the creation of additional hedging to support breeding birds.

5.13. It is considered that the site has potential to support hedgehogs. It is recommended that any areas where mammals could be sheltering should be hand searched prior to disturbance. An enhancement for the site will include the provision of 12cm square gaps under the new fences to allow hedgehog's access to all garden areas.

Flooding



Environment Agency Flood Risk Map

5.14. The above image taken from the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map shows that the application site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3.

6. Summary

- 6.1. It is submitted that the proposed development is in accordance with relevant local planning policies. It is also submitted that the proposal would represent a sustainable development that accords with the general thrust of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.2. The area surrounding the proposed site is “*sufficiently built up to be considered as a case for infill development*”, as set out by Paul Dadswell, Case Officer, in the pre-application advice response. It is therefore consistent with both the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council’s Supplementary Planning Document “*Development in the Green Belt*”.
- 6.3. The pre-application advice response concludes that subject to the design of the side and rear elevations and the consideration of any amenity, highways and ecological impacts the proposal is “*likely to be acceptable*”. As set out in this statement, the design, scale and appearance of the proposed dwellings is consistent with neighbouring residential properties and the proposal would provide an adequate level of amenity for future occupants. Furthermore, an appropriate strategy for mitigating the ecological impacts has been agreed, the proposal would not give rise to any adverse transport impacts or the safety and convenience of the nearby highway and there are no issues concerning land contamination or flooding.
- 6.4. In light of the above, we would therefore respectfully ask that this proposal is approved.