

Planning and Development

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Mr M Blythin
DHA Planning
Eclipse House
Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone, Kent
ME14 3EN

Our Ref: 20/00085/PRE
Date: 11 May 2020

Dear Mr Blythin

Location Land south west of 11, Butt Field Road, Singleton, Kent
Proposal Erection of 9 dwellings

I refer to your request for pre application advice that was received on 02 April 2020. Following our virtual Teams meeting last week and having reviewed in detail the site history and proposed indicative layout and supporting information, I have the following advice.

Site History and Proposal

The application site has been subject to an outline planning approval and a subsequent reserved matters application, both of which have now expired. These granted up to 14 and 12 units respectively, the latter, following concerns regarding the overdevelopment and cramped indicative layout provided to Members at outline stage.

This scheme seeks the erection of 9 bungalows rather than 2 storey dwellings which was previously the case under the aforementioned schemes. The proposed development would utilise the same vehicular access as previously proposed. No details have been provided with regards the external appearance of the dwellings.

Principle

The proposed development would be subject to complying with Local Plan policy HOU3a, as we discussed, the site is no longer allocated in the Local Plan, whereas it had been a site allocation under the now superseded Urban Sites DPD. It is, however in a sustainable urban location where the principle of development is generally accepted subject to compliance with HOU3a and there being no overriding planning harm.

Visual Amenity

As outlined in the proposal section above, it is not possible for me to comment on the appearance of the dwellings but the layout and scale of the dwellings would appear largely

similar to that of the previous scheme approved at reserved matters stage, where 12 dwellings were considered acceptable. Whilst this is for a lesser number of units, the proposed dwellings would be bungalows, each with a larger footprint than the two storey dwellings previously approved, but I consider the resultant development would sit comfortably within the site, this is based purely on a desktop analysis of the site, given that a site visit cannot currently be conducted.

The surrounding street scene to the south, north and east is mixed in terms of design and typology of dwellings. Therefore I do not consider that the layout, scale or appearance (when the latter of these is considered at design stage prior to submission of a formal application) would likely give rise to an incongruous form of development detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.

Residential Amenity

The proposed dwellings would all appear to have reasonably well sized gardens but would need demonstrate at formal application stage as to whether they would comply with policy HOU15. This requires gardens to be of a good quality in terms of their size and degree of privacy from neighbouring dwellings, i.e. not overlooked from neighbouring properties with a garden depth of circa 10m and window to window distances between existing dwellings and the proposed dwellings of circa 22m. This is something which would need to be confirmed on site given the proximity of some of the dwellings to the site.

The Council also have a requirement for all new dwellings to comply with HOU12, which are the National Space Standards for internal layout. In the absence of any information in terms of the design and internal layout of the properties, it is not possible for to comment on whether the proposed development would comply with this policy of the Local Plan.

Furthermore, there is a need to ensure compliance with HOU14 of the Plan in respect of compliance with the Building Regulations part M4(2). This states that at least 20 percent of all 'new build' homes shall be built in compliance to this standard as a minimum. It is noted that there is shortage of bungalows within the Borough. I consider this scheme is an opportunity whereby this need can be met with ease and it would represent a positive step to meeting this need.

Highway Safety

As outlined previously, I would draw your attention to the conclusions of the original officer report for this site in respect of vehicular access. I do not consider this is something which would raise any concern, given there is a lesser number of units now proposed.

We did discuss the issue of parking on site. The requirement under policy TRA3a, requires 2 parking spaces per dwelling (up to 3 beds) and for 4 bed units 3 parking spaces, all of which should be off-road. You have noted in your supporting letter that there is a requirement to provide additional parking spaces if these spaces are in tandem, which is correct and would also need to be provided on plot where possible or in visitor parking spaces within the site.

I would also draw your attention to the requirement under the policy to also include 0.2 spaces per dwelling for visitor parking.

It is noted that at present the indicative layout includes visitor parking at the site entrance. These would most likely be used by the owners of plots 1 and 9, given their proximity to these dwellings. These spaces should be more evenly distributed across the site to ensure that this is not the case and they are available to visitors to any of the 9 units proposed. We discussed ways in which this could be achieved through amendments to the layout. This should be done, whilst also taking into account the potential for overlooking, outlined in the preceding section above.

In terms of car barns, for these to count as vehicle parking spaces, I would draw your attention to the Council's Residential Parking SPD in respect of dimensions of spaces. Parking spaces in garages or car barns which are fully enclosed would not count as vehicle parking spaces and would simply be an additional parking resource, which whilst welcome, would not count towards your compliance with TRA3a.

Other issues

As outlined in our meeting, the proposed development would not currently be required to provide affordable housing as it falls below the threshold of 10 units and/or 0.5 hectares in terms of site area.

There would also be the potential for contributions for off-site provision, although as confirmed in our meeting, at present, it is unlikely the LPA would be seeking these on developments of this size contrary to the NPPG threshold, all of which could be subject to change.

If a formal application is submitted, the following information would need to be provided to demonstrate compliance with the relevant Local Plan policies:

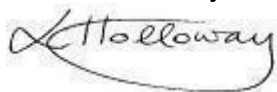
- Ecology survey - Phase 1 any further required as recommended by the ecologist
- Tree survey, although it is noted that had been regular maintenance of the site and this may mean that there are none on site, making the need for this report redundant
- Refuse storage details and swept path demonstrating that an 11.4 metre refuse vehicle can turn on the site
- Parking in accordance with TRA3a (see highway safety/parking section)
- Cycle storage parking in accordance with TRA6
- Confirmation of compliance with HOU14 (Part A)

Given that the application would be below the threshold for Planning Committee, it would be likely to be determined under delegated powers. That is unless there is a request by the Ward Member for the application to be 'called-in'.

Conclusion

In light of the above, it is my informal officer level opinion that a formal submission for 9 units, subject to addressing all of the points raised above, would be something to which I could lend my support.

Yours sincerely



Development Management Manager

Notes for your information:

1. When you make an application please ensure that it meets the requirements of the council's validation advice note and that a validation checklist appropriate for the type of application is completed and submitted with it.
2. The advice note and relevant checklist can be accessed via the "Applying for planning permission" pages of the council's website (www.ashford.gov.uk) on the "Is in my application valid" page.

3. The advice given by Council Officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regards to any future planning application. Any views or opinions are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application.
4. The final decision on any application can only be taken after the Council has consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested parties.
5. A final decision on an application will be made by senior officers or by the council's Planning Committee and will be based on all the information available at that time.
6. This advice will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on any resulting applications; subject to the proviso that the circumstances and information may change or come to light that could alter the position. It should be noted that the weight given to pre-application advice will decline over time.
7. It should be noted that if the planning application is delayed for a significant period then any pre-application advice may be overtaken by changes in national, regional or local policy and guidance.