



Town & Country Planning Ltd

Pinnock Yard

The Pinnock

Pluckley

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Erection of 4 x dwelling houses, car barns and associated  
landscaping

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Planning Statement

August 2019

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We have been appointed by Portfolio Homes Ltd to prepare this planning statement for the erection of 4 x 3 bed dwellings, car barn parking and associated landscaping.
- 1.2. The application follows extant consent for 4 x 2/3 bed dwellings pursuant to 17/00837/AS. Upon consideration of the approved scheme for construction, there were discrepancies in the topographical and drainage information which would prejudice the retention of existing trees within the site.
- 1.3. Accordingly, a revised scheme has been prepared to bring the built form a sufficient distance from the protected trees whilst also providing generous small family accommodation.
- 1.4. This statement should be read in conjunction with:
  - Chartwell Arboricultural Report
  - Phase 1 Ecology Report – Brindle Green

## 2. SITE APPRAISAL

- 2.1. The site lies to the North West of Smarden Bell Road (The Pinnock), within the hamlet of Pluckley Thorne to the south of Pluckley Village



- 2.2. The site has historically been used for commercial purposes with the majority of the central and south western end occupied by hardstanding. The site has two entrance points, with secure commercial fencing. The southern boundary with Smarden Bell Road is well defined by established trees (a number of which are protected). The remaining boundaries have good levels of landscaping and screening and the site is visually well enclosed.
- 2.3. The site has been allocated for housing development within the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan 2016 for approximately 4 residential units within adopted policy H1.
- 2.4. The site is not intensively overlooked, being a peripheral site on the fringe of the village. To the north east are a range of other dwellings, a terrace of cottages, converted Public House, new build detached dwelling and more planned estate development further east. There is variety in the type and scale of development, although it generally possesses a local vernacular in terms of traditional pitched roofs, brick and tile hanging.

### 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. 17/00837/AS- Erection of a row of 4 terrace of 2 x 3 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom houses with parking, together with 3 allotments- Approved

3.2. Pre-application discussion 19/00129/INF- Accepted the principle of development and encouraged the provision of 4/5 units would be acceptable.

- Consider size of respective garden sizes having regard to HOU12 of the Ashford Local Plan.
- Break up expanse of parking area
- Removal of any dormer windows
- Vehicle and Cycle parking in accordance with adopted policy TRA3a
- Required Tree and Drainage surveys/details

#### 4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1. The development comprises the erection of two pairs of 3-bedroom dwellings with designated car barns and associated landscaping.
- 4.2. The units would be set opposite each other within a central shared courtyard. Units 1 and 3 are provided with attached car barns, with a shared car barn positioned on the western boundary for units 2 and 4.
- 4.3. The existing northern access point would be retained with garden areas running north/south for each property.
- 4.4. The accommodation has been set over three floors to provide modern and spacious small family accommodation, with open plan living spaces to the ground floor, generous bedroom accommodation to the first floor and a multipurpose room to the second floor.

## 5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.1. Planning law (section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. In July 2018 the Government issued an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which continues to contain a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.3. The presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision taking means approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay; or where relevant development plan policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole.

### Making efficient use of land

- 5.4. To support the governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.
- 5.5. In identifying land suitable for homes, Local Authorities should give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. The NPPF is clear that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes. Decisions should also promote the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing, where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively (Para 118).
- 5.6. Ashford's Local Plan supports this approach with Policy SP1 Strategic Objectives outlining;
  - *To focus development at accessible and sustainable locations which utilise existing infrastructure, facilities and services wherever possible and makes best use of suitable brownfield opportunities;*

- *To provide a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the changing housing needs of the Borough's population including affordable homes, self build and custom build properties, specialist housing for older and disabled people, spacious, quality family housing and for newly forming and downsizing households*

## Design

- 5.7. The NPPF places emphasis on high quality inclusive good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, and that it can contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 5.8. Planning decisions should ensure that developments;
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
  - are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not discouraging appropriate innovation (Para 127).
  - Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

## Development Plan

### 5.9. **Ashford Local Plan 2030**

SP1: Strategic Objectives

SP2: The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery

SP6: Promoting High Quality Design

HOU5: Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside

HOU12: Residential Space Standards

HOU15- Private External Open Space

EMP6- Promotion of Fibre to the Premises.

TRA3a- Parking Standards for Residential Development

TRA6- Provision for Cycling

ENV1- Biodiversity

ENV3a- Landscape Character and Design

ENV4- Light Pollution and promoting Dark Skies



ENV5- Protecting Important Rural Features

ENV7- Water Efficiency

ENV8- Water Quality, Supply and Treatment

ENV9- Sustainable Drainage

**Supplementary Planning Document(s):**

Residential Parking Standards SPD

Sustainable Drainage SuDs SPD

Residential Space and Layout SPD

## 6. REASONING

6.1. The main issues for consideration, taking into account the previous extant consent and pre-application advice are;

- Principle of development
- Design, including space standards
- Landscape Character
- Residential Amenity
- Parking and Cycling provision
- Other matters
  - Drainage
  - Biodiversity
  - Trees and Landscaping

### Principle of Development

6.2. The application site benefits from extant consent for a 4-unit scheme of 2 and 3 bedroomed dwellings. The Strategic Housing Objectives outlined within Policies SP1 and SP2 of the Local Plan support the provision of new housing, targeted to Brownfield sites to provide a mix of housing types, including spacious family accommodation.

6.3. Local Plan Policy HOU5 further re-enforces the acceptable principle of residential development on the edge of identified settlements. Pluckley is identified as a village which can accommodate development adjoining the existing built up confines subject to local characteristics.

6.4. The site has also been allocated within the adopted Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan under policy H1. This identifies that the site can accommodate 4 affordable 2- or 3-bedroom homes to be suitable for young people.

6.5. The proposal has been re-designed to take account of inconsistencies within the extant scheme which would have resulted in the removal of additional trees and also would have required prohibitive drainage systems.

6.6. The proposal includes two pairs of semi-detached 3 bed dwellings which account for the residents wishes, (Consultation responses of the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan) that the site provides 4 units suitable for young families.

The 3-bed accommodation also provides an additional multipurpose space or 4<sup>th</sup> bedroom to the second floor which many modern families desire.

- 6.7. The principle of the site to accommodate 4 x 3 bedrooled family dwellings is consistent with the requirements of the above housing policies and the requirements of the NPPF to make an effective and efficient use of brownfield land.

### Design

- 6.8. Local Plan Policy SP6 requires developments to be of high-quality design and demonstrate consideration of local character and sense of place. The Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan identifies that developments should have regard to;

a) *typical building form*

b) *roof lines*

c) *materials. Preference will be given to the use of durable, attractive and locally available or reclaimed materials used in the distinctive Pluckley style, using red and buff stock brick, Kentish ragstone, white or cream painted brickwork and slate roof tiles.*

d) *ensuring that openings and boundary treatments reflect their context when viewed from the street, open spaces or the countryside. Developers and owners are encouraged to plant screens of trees and hedgerows to soften impact on the roadside frontage.*

- 6.9. The proposed scheme is a modification of that previously approved, following a traditional Kentish Cottage appearance, picking up on the building form and traditionally prominent roof form and pitches of the locality.



Thorne View fronting Smarden Road to the north of the application site.



Thorne Lodge- to the east of the application site



Thorne House- to the south of the application site

- 6.10. The proposed dwellings would utilise a traditional red brick stock and tile hanging palette, with feature chimney stacks and individual porch detailing. The subservient car barns will have exposed timber posts with brick plinth detailing under a mono pitched tiled roof.
- 6.11. The height, scale, traditional form and detailing respond positively to the local character of the village and complies with the requirements of Local Plan Policy SP6 and design guidance within the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Space Standards

- 6.12. Local Plan Policies HOU12 and HOU14 set space standards for internal accommodation and external private amenity areas. The proposed dwellings exceed the internal space standards. The external private amenity areas outlined within

HOU14 indicate the width of the dwelling x 10m is the starting point for adequate private amenity space. This space should not be directly overlooked for the first 5m and should provide enough space for an area of sitting out, clothesline, small shed and an area for play. The proposal based on the width of dwellings would require a garden area of approximately 68sqm for each plot. The proposals exceed this requirement.

### Landscape Character

6.13. The NPPF is clear that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside alongside remediation and mitigation despoiled, degraded, derelict or contaminated land.

6.14. Local Policies ENV3a, ENV4 and ENV5 support these principles and require that;

- All proposals for development in the borough shall demonstrate particular regard to the following landscape characteristics, proportionately, according to the landscape significance of the site:

*a) Landform, topography and natural patterns of drainage;*

*b) The pattern and composition of trees and woodlands;*

*c) The type and composition of wildlife habitats;*

*d) The pattern and composition of field boundaries;*

*e) The pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths;*

*f) The presence and pattern of historic landscape features;*

*g) The setting, scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings and other traditional man made features;*

*h) Any relevant guidance given in the Landscape Character SPD;*

*i) Existing features that are important to and contribute to the definition of the local landscape character shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development; and,*

*j) Any non-designated, locally-identified, significant landscape features justified in a Parish Plan or equivalent document.*

6.15. Any proposed lighting scheme can be conditioned for full details to be submitted to accord with the requirements of Local Plan Policy ENV4.

- 6.16. The proposed development would take opportunities to enhance the landscape significance of the site. As identified by the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan, the site is an eyesore, a disused commercial site with significant areas of hardstanding, lacking maintenance and unfettered outside storage potential.
- 6.17. The proposed layout of the site takes into account maintaining protected trees to the southern boundary and presenting the narrow end of the built form to the open countryside to the south and west.
- 6.18. The layout of the plots provides ample provision for further soft landscaping in the form of hedgerows and specimen trees to further soften the appearance of the development within the landscape and settlement boundaries of Pluckley.
- 6.19. The use of the existing access point; vernacular design of the proposed buildings; retention of important landscape features in the form of protected trees and remediation of derelict and unsightly commercial land weigh in favour of the proposal in landscape terms. Full details of materials and landscape detailing can be conditioned for future approval.
- 6.20. The proposal would safeguard the intrinsic character of the Countryside and enhance the landscape characteristics of the plot through the removal of the storage use.

#### Residential Amenity

- 6.21. Local Plan Policy HOU5 sets out that new housing development must ensure development does not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents.
- 6.22. The nearest dwellings are Thorne Cottages to the east. These are separated by the two access points, to the development site and to the rear of these cottages for their occupants. The orientation of Thorne Cottages is such that the upper floor rear windows would look over the central access and turning area between the two pairs of dwellings, there may be some oblique angled views over the rear garden space of Unit 3, however this is over a distance of approximately 28m and sufficient to ensure there would not be an intrusive level of overlooking.
- 6.23. There are now flank elevation windows proposed to plot 3, which could also be controlled by condition. This ensures there would be no detrimental impact on the existing amenities of occupants of Thorne Cottages.

### Parking and Cycling Provision

- 6.24. Local Plan Policy TR3a sets out that for 3 bed dwellings 2 off street parking spaces will be required. The proposal meets these requirements in the form of designated car barns. Whilst not formally laid out, the central shared courtyard does provide additional space for ad hoc visitor overflow.
- 6.25. Each property has sufficient space within the garden areas to accommodate secure cycle storage provision, with separate side access.

### Other matters

#### Biodiversity

- 6.26. The application is accompanied by a full Phase 1 Ecology Survey which concludes there is limited ecological potential on the site, given its commercial history and the extent of hardstanding. The proposals afford the ability to reintroduce soft landscaping, hedgerows and shrubs to enhance the biodiversity. The proposal will take account of all mitigation and recommendation measures outlined within the report. This is fully compliant with Core Strategy Policy ENV1.

#### Trees

- 6.27. Policy ENV3A of the Core Strategy sets out that existing features that are important to and contribute to the definition of the local landscape character shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development. This is further re-enforced by Core Strategy ENV5 which supports the protection of semi-natural woodland and landscape features that help to distinguish the character of the local area.
- 6.28. The submitted arboricultural report concludes that the proposed units would not result in any loss o protected trees currently on site, which would safeguard their retention and contribution to the wider rural landscape.
- 6.29. It should be noted the previous approval mis plotted the position of the proposed units and their footprints, such that if these were constructed, they would have resulted in serious damage to these trees.
- 6.30. The site is firmly allocated for residential development of 4 units, the proposed scheme has achieved this allocation whilst adjusting he size of the footprints to ensure the retention of the proposed trees is achieved.
- 6.31. This accords with the requirements of policies ENV3a and ENV5.

## Drainage

- 6.32. Core Strategy Policy ENV9 requires all development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality, and to mimic the drainage from the pre-developed site.
- 6.33. The previous extant approval requested, via condition, full details of surface water drainage, with the Council's Drainage Engineer confirming this was a low risk site suitable for being managed through conditions. There have been no material changes in policy since the imposition of the condition. Surface water run off can be suitably controlled via condition given the rural location and low risk to surface water flooding.



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The site lies adjacent to the village of Pluckley Thorne and is allocated for residential redevelopment within the Adopted Neighbourhood Plan under policy H1. The allocation promotes 4 units, suitable for young families. The proposal would fully accord with this policy and the re-development for residential purposes should be encouraged.
- 7.2. The design of the development has been adjusted taking account of earlier issues with the extant scheme in respect of plot layout, relationship to protected trees and prohibitive servicing costs. The form of the dwellings reflects the rural context and the prevailing vernacular detailing of other buildings within the village.
- 7.3. The layout of the plots exceeds space standard requirements respect of plot size, amenity space, internal space standards and would provide parking and servicing layouts to meet adopted guidelines.
- 7.4. The proposals would not give rise to any material harm to neighbouring amenities and subject to necessary conditions can be secured in perpetuity.
- 7.5. Details relating to tree protection methods, biodiversity enhancements, landscape proposals and drainage details can all be secured by way of condition.
- 7.6. The proposals fully accord with Ashford's up to date Development Plan and accordingly, we respectfully request this appeal should be allowed.