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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared to assist Thame Town Councillors in their consideration of two planning applications submitted by Rectory Home Limited:
- Application Ref. P14/S2176/FUL in relation to Land at The Elms, Upper High Street for *'The erection of 45 dwellings and creation of new public open space; provision of new vehicle access from Elms Road and a new pedestrian / cycle link on to Upper High Street with associated infrastructure works and landscaping.'*
 - Application Ref. P14/S2310/O in relation to Elms Park, Park Street for *'Landscaping and improvement works to Elms Park including the provision of new paths, play facilities, the removal of the multi-use games area and provision of a new multi-use games area or replacement play space, the erection of a musical or arts performance stage and landscape planting.'*
- 1.2 An application for Listed Building Consent (Ref. P14/S2395/LB) has also been submitted for works to a boundary wall on Elms Road to facilitate vehicular access, along with repairs and refurbishment of the existing stone ha-ha. In comparison to the other applications, this is minor in nature and is not considered in this Report.
- 1.3 This Report sets out the planning policy context within which these planning applications must be considered, and provides an assessment of the proposals against the relevant policies. The Report concludes with specific recommendations whilst also identifying, in Appendix A, a range of matters that require further clarification and consideration.
- 1.4 This Report is structured as follows:
- Land at The Elms: The Site and Surrounding Area
 - Land at The Elms: The Proposals
 - Elms Park: The Site
 - Elms Park: The Proposals
 - Development Plan Policy Context
 - Land at The Elms: Key Planning Considerations
 - Elms Park: Key Planning Considerations
 - Recommendations

2. LAND AT THE ELMS: THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 Figure 1 shows the site for the detailed application for the development of 45 dwellings, public open space, new vehicle access from Elms Road and new pedestrian/cycle link on to Upper High Street with associated infrastructure works and landscaping at Land at The Elms.
- 2.2 The site area is 2.94 hectares in total and is a broadly rectangular site immediately to the south of The Elms and The Barn, Upper High Street, and properties on Park Street. It is situated to the west of Elms Park Recreation ground, to the north of Elms Road and to the east of properties on Nelson Street. The site does not include The Elms itself nor The Barn to the west of The Elms, which shares an entrance gate and part of the drive with it. The application site does include the entrance gates and the shared part of the drive, along with a strip of land running north to south between the two properties.

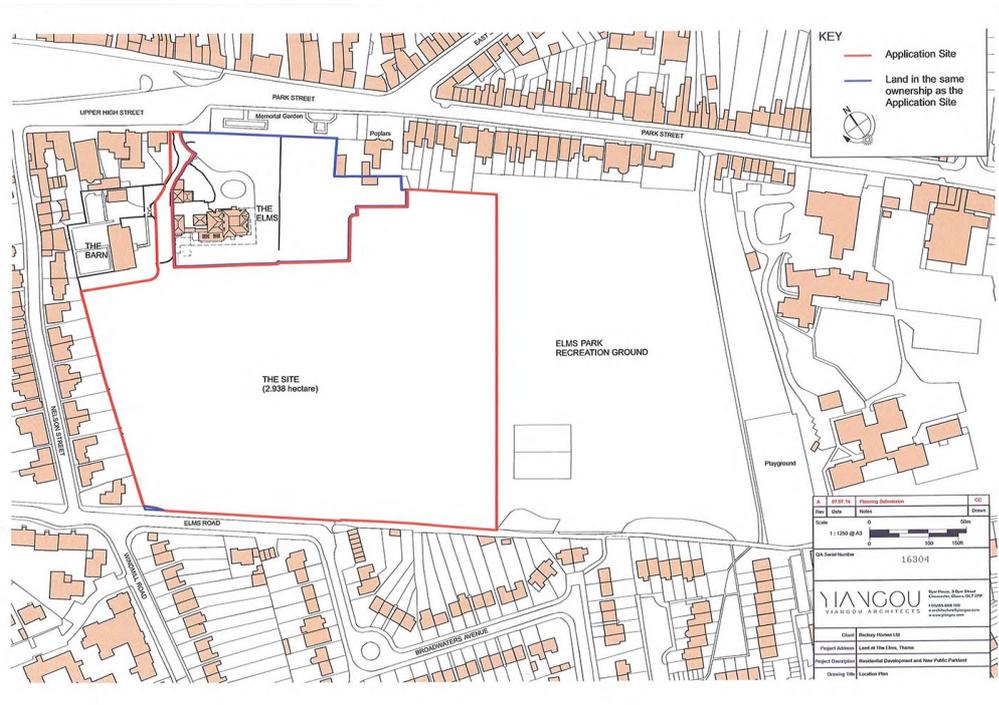


Figure 1: Land at The Elms application site plan

- 2.3 The Elms is a Grade II Listed Building, with Elms Cottage and attached wall and stable block being included in the list entry. The Barn, Gallup Poll Garfield on Upper High Street and The Poplars on Park Street are also Grade II Listed, as is the War Memorial on Park Street. The whole site, together with The Elms and other properties on Upper High Street and Park Street and Elm Park, is within the Thame Conservation Area. These are shown on Figure 2.
- 2.4 Land at The Elms is allocated for housing development in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP), as shown in Figure 2.

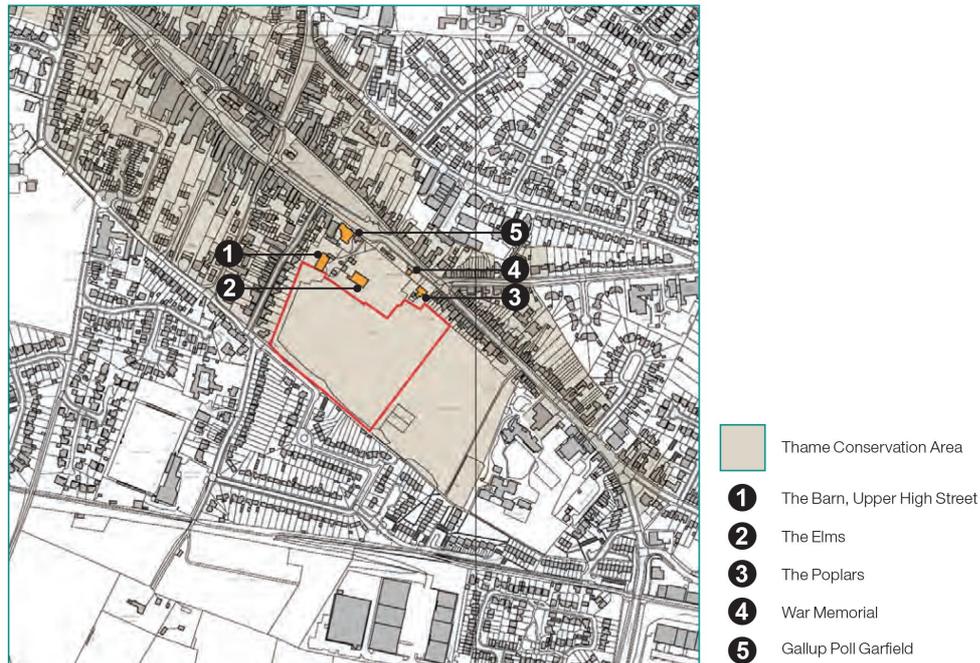


Figure 2: Extract from TNP showing Land at The Elms

- 2.5 The application site is an open area of privately owned parkland with mature trees, which slopes gently downwards towards the south, and is set slightly below the level of land at The Elms itself.
- 2.6 Its southern and western boundaries are formed by a brick built wall lined with large mature trees, which completely enclose it from public views from the south and west. Its eastern boundary to Elms Park is a chain link with a line of semi-mature trees that provide some screening between the two areas. Its northern boundary is made up of the rear boundary walls and fences of properties on Park Street and a boundary with The Elms itself. The boundary with The Elms and The Barn is defined by:
- to the east, a coniferous hedge encloses The Elms' garden area;
 - a ha-ha, directly south of The Elms and its lawned garden, with estate fencing on the north side of the ditch; and
 - a new stone boundary wall to the south of The Barn.
- 2.7 Between the last two of these the strip of land running north-south between The Elms and The Barn has no boundary treatment.
- 2.8 Within these boundaries, the land is generally open grassland, with a number of mature parkland trees of various species within the area. In the north west of the site, there is an old orchard.
- 2.9 The application site is in the centre of Thame, at the southern end of the High Street. Access to the site is currently via the entrance gates and drive of The Elms and then on foot, with a narrow footbridge across the ha-ha. There is a vehicular right of access into the application site via The Poplars.
- 2.10 A Listed Building Consent application has been submitted for alterations to the southern boundary wall to create a new access. This suggests that the application site is considered to be part of the 'curtilage' of the Listed Building (The Elms).

3. LAND AT THE ELMS: THE PROPOSALS

3.1 As set out in Section 1 this detailed planning application seeks planning permission for a residential development of 45 homes; creation of a new public open space; provision of a new vehicle access from Elms Road; and a new pedestrian/ cycle link on to Upper High Street, with associated infrastructure works and landscaping.

3.2 Appendix B lists the documents and material accompanying the application.

3.3 A mix of 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom homes is proposed as follows:

- 13 x 4 bed houses, all market housing;
- 15 x 3 bed houses, 14 to be market housing, and 1 intermediate;
- 2 x 2 bed houses and 4 x 2 bed apartments, all intermediate; and
- 11 x 1 bed apartments, all intermediate.

There is a discrepancy between the application form and Planning Statement where it states that 15 x 1 and 2 bed apartments will be social rented housing for the over 55s.

3.4 The application includes detailed proposals for a new vehicular and pedestrian access to the public highway on Elms Road and new public roads within the site. It also includes details of a new pedestrian access to the site, and a new public right of way within the site. Details of soft and hard landscape design are also provided as part of the application material.

The proposed development is focussed in the east and south-east part of the application site, with a small parcel of built development in the south-west of the site. The tree belts around the south and west edges of the site are largely proposed to be retained, with an opening created to form a new access from the south. A number of the mature parkland and orchard trees will be retained in proposed open spaces. Existing trees along the western boundary with Elms Park will be removed.

3.5 The design concept for the development is shown in figure 3 below and explained in the Design and Access Statement. It aims to address the differing characters of The Elms and Elm Park with different building layouts and arrangements. In response to The Elms, The Crescent - arranged around a central circular open space - is proposed to be positioned directly to the south of the ha-ha and the listed building. In response to Elm Park, a linear Park Edge terrace is proposed along its western boundary. Between these two built edges, the access route to serve the proposed development is envisaged as a mews street.

3.6 The Crescent is broken up into 3 smaller crescents of 3-storey town houses sited to the east and south-west of the central open space. These houses are described as dual fronted, with a small front garden and dining/ family rooms opening directly onto the circular open space, and a bedroom opening onto the private garden on the street side. The front door and entrance hall is reached from the mews street, via the private garden. They have 4 bedrooms, and also a home office/ studio above the garage.



Figure 3: Land at The Elms application site layout

- 3.7 The Park Edge is made up of 2 terraces of 3-storey town houses, with 3 bedrooms and a garage/ home office. These houses will be dual fronted, with a small front garden directly onto Elms Park serving dining/ family rooms, and a family room opening onto the private garden on the street side. The front entrance is reached from the mews street, via the private garden.
- 3.8 A new vehicular and pedestrian access from Elms Road will serve the development, via a new entrance through the existing brick boundary wall.
- 3.9 Between The Crescent and the Park Edge, a mews street is proposed to serve the development, with 2-storey garages and home office/ studios, other parking and incidental open spaces along it. This street is designed to adoptable standards. The crescent of houses in the south-west part of the site will be served by a private drive. In this area between The Crescent and the Park Edge there is:
- A short 2-storey terrace of 2 and 3 bed houses in the north of the site, with parking at the front and private gardens to the rear, proposed to be affordable housing; and
 - A 3-storey block of 1 bedroom apartments, proposed to be affordable housing for the elderly, in the south of the site, with a parking area to the front and communal garden to the west.
- 3.10 From the private drive in the south of the site, a new footpath/ cycleway will cross the circular open space to link into Upper High Street via the strip of land between The Elms and The Barn. The proposed circular open space is also linked to Elms Park by an east-west open space, with a footpath between the two open spaces that also links Elm Park into the north south footpath/ cycleway across the site.

4. ELMS PARK: THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 4.1 Figure 4 shows the site for the Elms Park outline application for landscape and improvements including new paths, play facilities, removal of multi-use games area and provision of new multi-use games area or replacement play space, music/ arts performance stage and landscape planting.
- 4.2 Elms Park has a site area of 2.68 hectares. It is a broadly rectangular open space just to the west of the Land at The Elms application site. It is south of properties on Park Street, west of John Hampden School and north of properties on Broadwaters Avenue and Van Dieman's Road, with a public footpath from Elms Road to Chowns Road on the south side of the park.

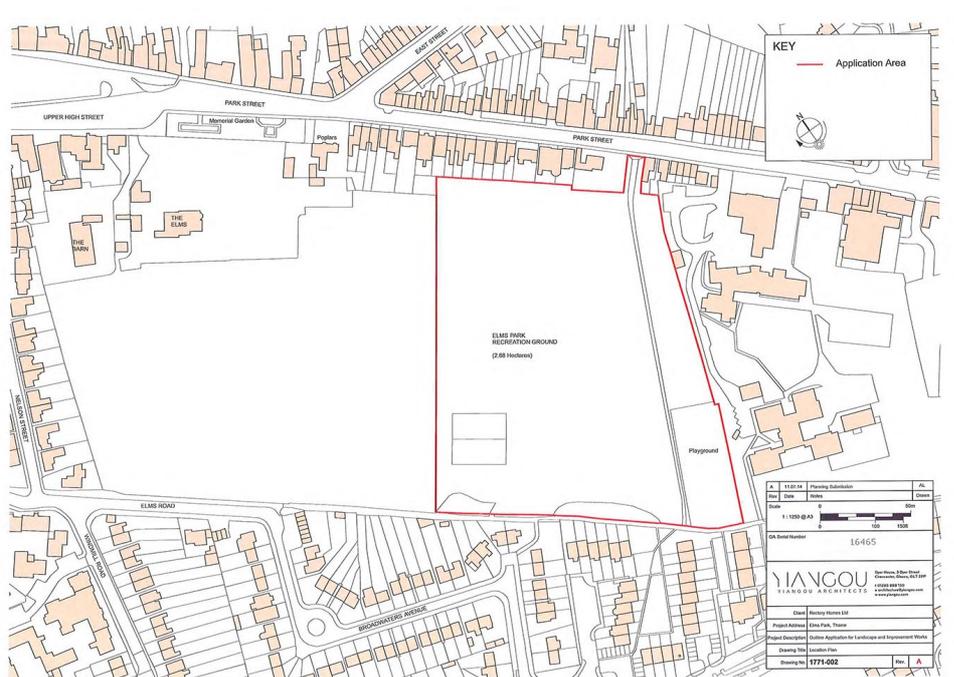


Figure 4: Elms Park application site plan

- 4.3 Elms Park Recreation Ground is identified as an Open Space to be Protected in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.4 The outline application site is an area of public open space, which slopes gently down towards the south, at similar levels to the Land at The Elms. Its western boundary to Elms Park is a chain link with a line of ornamental trees that provide some screening between the two areas. Its northern boundary is made up of the rear boundary fences and walls of properties on Park Street. Its eastern boundary to the school site is chain link fencing, and its southern boundary to the public footpath is rigid metal fencing.
- 4.5 The landscape of the park is generally mown grassland and it includes a number of semi-mature and mature trees, generally towards the edges of the space. There is a multi-use games area (MUGA) with basketball hoops near the south-western corner and a children's play area in the south-eastern corner, with equipment and surfaces that appear to be functional but dated.
- 4.6 There are two access points to the park, one from Park Street and one from the public footpath to the south, which links indirectly into a footpath through housing and on to Van Dieman's Road. A footpath/ cycleway connects these two entrances and is the only formal path within the park.

5. ELMS PARK: THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 As set out in Section 1, this outline application seeks planning permission for the principle of landscape and improvement works to Elms Park including new paths, play facilities, the removal of existing and provision of a new multi-use games area or replacement play space, a new performance stage and planting.
- 5.2 The proposals are submitted in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration. The application is accompanied by a series of documents as listed in Appendix B.
- 5.3 The only application drawing is the site location plan. An illustrative masterplan has been submitted which shows how the landscape of the park may be improved, although this will not be determined by the decision on this application.
- 5.4 The outline application is for landscaping and improvement works to Elms Park as required by the policies of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan. The works are proposed to be funded through a financial contribution through a s.106 legal agreement and to be implemented by Thame Town Council.
- 5.5 The Planning, Design and Access Statement states that a joint public consultation event for the Land at the Elms and Elms Park was held in November 2013. Responses focussed on the proposals for development on Land at The Elms. Pre-application discussions have been held with Thame Town Council and SODC but as yet no firm decisions have been made about the potential improvements to Elms Park, nor a design approach agreed.
- 5.6 It describes the works illustrated in the Landscape Illustrative Masterplan. The proposals can be outlined as follows:
- New footpath – a semi-circular bound gravel footpath around the west of the park to link into the new public open space proposed on Land at the Elms.
 - New tree planting – new heavy standard trees towards the southern and north eastern corners of the park.
 - The removal and replacement of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) – to move it further away from the proposed new housing on Land at The Elms and potentially closer to the existing play areas, the nature of the future MUGA to be determined in consultation with the Town Council and the public.
 - A new toddlers' play area – potentially close to the existing play area and based on a natural theme, also with seating and tables for supervising adults.
 - New areas of wildflower grassland – potentially around the edges of the park with different mowing regimes.
 - A new events space – potentially an open paved space, a platform or space within a structure and sited along the eastern boundary in the centre of the park. Power, cover and drainage would need to be considered to support events in the park.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1 Under the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a statutory obligation to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the Report summarises the relevant Development Plan policies.
- 6.2 The Development Plan is provided by:
- the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (December 2012; SOCS)
 - the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (July 2013; TNP)
 - the saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (January 2005; SOLP)
- 6.3 Appendix C provides a table of the relevant policies.
- 6.4 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that “special regard” must be given to the desirability of:
- preserving a listed building and its setting, and
 - preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to a listed building that affect its character as a building or special architectural or historic interest.
- 6.5 As well as the Development Plan and the legislative requirements for listed buildings and conservation areas, the government’s planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are also material considerations to be taken into account. Both the SOCS and the TNP have been prepared to be in general conformity with the NPPF, so this section focuses mainly on the Development Plan. However, the NPPF and the PPG set out and explain the tests to be applied when considering proposals that affect listed buildings and conservation areas, so these are outlined below.
- 6.6 This chapter sets out the most relevant areas of planning policy under the following headings:
- the principle of development
 - heritage
 - design
 - open space, trees and public access
 - dwelling numbers, mix and tenure
 - other policy requirements
 - application material/ design and access statements.
- 6.7 Generally, the site-specific TNP policy is set out first, followed by other applicable TNP policies, then Development Plan and NPPF policy and national Planning Policy guidance.

Principle of development

- 6.8 TNP Policy HA4 sets out series of policy requirements for the allocation as follows:
- *the number of dwellings will be determined through a detailed design proposal and, in any case, will provide no more than 45 dwellings*
 - *a minimum of 1 hectare of landscaped publicly accessible open space.*
- The proposals must preserve and enhance the Thame Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings and structures.*
- 6.9 The TNP Basic Conditions Statement states that “*The allocation of Land at The Elms has the potential to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. However, the Thame NDP acknowledges that in such a sensitive location, the form, design and quantum of development can only be determined with the submission of a detailed planning application. The Thame NDP therefore allocates Land at The Elms for ‘up to 45 dwellings’ rather than fixing a number at this stage.*”
- 6.10 The supporting text sets out how these policy requirements must be met in terms of a number of considerations/ criteria that are also identified and addressed under the relevant topic headings below. These are:
- the precise number of dwellings is to be determined through a detailed design proposal to enable full consideration of the heritage issues, public benefits and other material planning matters
 - the retention of open land and mature trees in such a way as to maintain an appropriate setting for The Elms listed house
 - including an area of publicly accessible open space which must incorporate a north-south pedestrian/cycle link connecting Elms Road to Upper High Street
 - designing suitable sustainable urban drainage into the open space
 - providing public pedestrian/cycle links from the north-south route to the adjacent Elms Park
 - providing proposals for improving the adjacent Elms Park, informed by consultation with local people
 - ensuring that building frontages overlook the open space within the site, the adjacent Elms Park and the key pedestrian/ cycle routes through the development
 - retaining trees around the boundary and within the site
 - ensuring that the height and massing of buildings relates sympathetically to the height of existing buildings around the site’s boundaries. Buildings should generally be 2-2.5 storeys in height
 - ensuring that the detailed design of the buildings responds positively to the characteristics of the area
 - views into the site are a key consideration for the development proposals
 - a key consideration is that the site’s sensitivities mean that residential development will be restricted to the eastern and south-eastern side although it is not possible to define the exact extent of the built area and open space prior to designs being completed and agreed.

- 6.11 SOCS Policy CS1 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that applications that accord with the development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Heritage

- 6.12 TNP Policy HA4 for Land at The Elms requires:
- that the precise number of dwellings is to be determined through a detailed design proposal to enable full consideration of the heritage issues, public benefits and other material planning matters and
 - the retention of open land and mature trees in such a way as to maintain an appropriate setting for The Elms listed building.

The key considerations for the development of Land at The Elms include *“the site’s sensitivities mean that residential development will be restricted to the eastern and south-eastern side, although it is not possible to define the exact extent of the built area and open space prior to designs being completed and agreed. In any event the site will provide no more than 45 dwellings. However, it is possible to set out a policy that supports the principles of residential development whilst setting clear parameters on what is required of a successful scheme. These parameters are set out in HA4 Requirements.”* This wording was introduced into the Post-Examination TNP by the Examiner.

- 6.13 SOCS Policy CSEN3 seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas and their settings. CSQ3 Design highlights the importance of good design responding positively to the historic significance and heritage values of the historic environment.
- 6.14 The Thame Conservation Area Character Appraisal (April 2006) states *“the extensive grounds of The Elms and the adjoining recreation ground/playing field form a very important green space within the town. The grounds of The Elms, whilst not publicly accessible, make a strong contribution to the conservation area in views from the playing fields behind John Hampden School and from Elms Road. They also form a vital part of the setting of The Elms itself. Together these two green spaces frame the south-eastern side of the conservation area. They also separate Park St. and Nelson St. from the modern housing on Elms Road and Broadwater Avenue and so not only create an important part of the character of this part of the conservation area but also maintain its historic integrity as a one-time fringe of the town. Bringing these two areas into the conservation area will formally acknowledge the role they play and help focus attention on the historic character of the area should development around or on them ever be proposed.”*
- 6.15 SOLP Saved Policies CON 5 and Con 7 state that planning permission will not be granted for proposals either that adversely affect the setting of a listed building or that harm the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 6.16 The NPPF criteria for decision making on planning applications relating to heritage include:
- *“the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*

- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”.*
- 6.17 It sets out that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets likely to be affected, including any contribution made by their setting, to a level of detail that is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance.
- 6.18 The PPG explains that the setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, which may go beyond the property boundary. All heritage assets have a setting. This includes but is not limited to views of or from a heritage asset. It may also be influenced by factors such as our understanding of the historic relationship between places. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting.
- 6.19 The NPPF makes clear that significance can be harmed or lost through development within the setting of a heritage asset. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss to significance requires clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm or loss should be exceptional. Where development proposals will lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.
- 6.20 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the settings of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Design

- 6.21 TNP Policy HA4 for Land at The Elms requires that the precise number of dwellings is to be determined through a detailed design proposal to enable full consideration of the heritage issues, public benefits and other material planning matters. It also identifies some key design principles/ considerations including:
- ensuring that building frontages overlook the open space within the site, the adjacent Elms Park and the key pedestrian/ cycle routes through the development
 - ensuring that the height and massing of buildings relates sympathetically to the height of existing buildings around the site’s boundaries. Buildings should generally be 2-2.5 storeys in height
 - ensuring that the detailed design of the buildings responds positively to the characteristics of the area
 - views into the site are a key consideration for the development proposals.
- 6.22 A number of TNP policies require the character of new development to respond to its context in different ways. Policy H6 requires the design of new development to be high quality and designed to reflect Thame’s character. Policy ESDQ20 requires building style to be appropriate to the historic context, with the design of new buildings reflecting the design principles of their time in order to contribute to the varied character of the town. Policy ESDQ16 requires development to relate well to its site and its surroundings and Policy ESDQ18 that new development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character of the town as a whole.

- 6.23 TNP Policy ESDQ19 requires the Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawing to provide sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood, as set out in more detail below.
- 6.24 TNP Policy ESDQ23 requires that streets within new development must be designed as pleasant places to be, suitable for all users and overlooked by building frontages.
- 6.25 SOCS policy CSQ3 states that permission will be granted to high quality and inclusive design proposals, with a number of urban design criteria, including whether they:
- improve the quality of the public realm, with well designed external areas and a clear structure of open spaces
 - contribute to safe communities to reduce the fear of crime.
- 6.26 SOLP Saved Policy D1 sets out a series of principles for good design and local distinctiveness.

Open space, trees and public access

- 6.27 TNP Policy HA4 requires:
- provision of a minimum of 1 hectare of landscaped publicly accessible open space
 - the retention of open land and mature trees in such a way as to maintain and appropriate setting for The Elms listed building, to include an area of publicly accessible open space which must incorporate a north-south pedestrian/cycle link connecting Elms Road to Upper High Street
 - providing public pedestrian/cycle links from the north-south route to the adjacent Elms Park
 - providing proposals for improving the adjacent Elms Park, informed by consultation with local people
 - retaining trees around the boundary and within the site.
- 6.28 TNP Policy ESDQ1 identifies Elms Park as an open space to be retained and protected.
- 6.29 TNP Policy ESDQ6 requires a planning application for improvements to the Elms Park Recreation Area to be submitted implemented at the same time as an application for residential development of Land at The Elms and for the improvements to be implemented at the same time as the development of Land at The Elms.
- 6.30 TNP Policy HA4 has superseded SOLP Saved Policy THA3, which supported the use of Land at The Elms for informal recreation space.

Dwelling numbers, mix and tenure

- 6.31 TNP Policy HA4 for Land at The Elms requires that the precise number of dwellings is to be determined through a detailed design proposal to enable full consideration of the heritage issues, public benefits and other material planning matters but that it shall be no more than 45.
- 6.32 TNP Policy H8 requires affordable housing to be provided in accordance with the Core Strategy, integrated with the market housing and of a type and size

to meet Thame specific needs. H9 requires a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households in Thame.

- 6.33 TNP Policy H10 requires application proposals to submit a Thame-Specific Affordable Housing and Dwelling Mix Strategy identifying housing needs in Thame and how the proposed development addresses them.
- 6.34 SOCS Policy CSH3 seeks 40% affordable housing with 75% of affordable units being social rented and 25% being intermediate housing to meet the requirements of those in housing need. CSH4 seeks a mix of dwelling types and sizes. The policy seeks homes for people with additional special needs as part of the affordable housing provision, and specialist accommodation for older people will be permitted in suitable locations.

Other policy requirements

- 6.35 Drainage and flooding policy requirements are:
- TNP Policies ESDQ11 and ESDQ12 require applications to incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems and to be accompanied by a drainage strategy
 - TNP Policy HA4 requires the proposals to design suitable sustainable urban drainage into the open space
- 6.36 Ecology policy requirements are:
- SOCS Policy CSB1 seeks to avoid the loss of biodiversity.
- 6.37 Sustainable design and construction
- SOCS Policy CSQ2 requires development to achieve at least Level 3 of Code for Sustainable Homes, with 20% of energy demand from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources and incorporating measures that address adaptation to climate change (eg water conservation).
- 6.38 Section 106
- TNP Policies require developer contributions as follows:
 - towards a new cycle route to Haddenham and Thame Rail Station (GA3)
 - to fund additional healthcare facilities (CLW4)
 - to support a Green Living Plan (ESDQ14).

Application material/ Design and Access Statements

- 6.39 TNP Policy HA4 requires a detailed application to be submitted for development on Land at The Elms.
- 6.40 Other application material needed in association with a proposal for development of Land at The Elms is:
- A Thame-Specific Affordable Housing and Dwelling Mix Strategy
 - A planning application for improvements to the Elms Park Recreation Area at the same time as any application for the development of Land at The Elms.
- 6.41 TNP policy ESDQ19 requires developers to demonstrate in their Design and Access Statements how their proposed development reinforces Thame's

character and provide sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood, including:

- drawings to show the proposals in relation to their surroundings including street elevation and sections
- 3 dimensional drawings from at least 2 viewpoints
- rendered elevations clearly indicating materials
- details of how window opening relate to the elevation.

6.42 SODC's guidance on Design & Access Statements sets out 3 stages that should be followed:

- assessment of the site's wider and immediate context
- evaluation of the information collected to show how the principles and concepts behind the proposal relate to the assessment of the context
- proposals showing how the design relates to the principles and concepts set out in the evaluation – the statement should not justify a predetermined design through subsequent site assessment and evaluation.

6.43 The PPG sets out what should be included in a Design and Access Statement:

“A Design and Access Statement must:

- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and*
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.*

A development's context refers to the particular characteristics of the application site and its wider setting. These will be specific to the circumstances of an individual application and a Design and Access Statement should be tailored accordingly.

Design and Access Statements must also explain the applicant's approach to access and how relevant Local Plan policies have been taken into account. They must detail any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the proposed development have been addressed.”

7. LAND AT THE ELMS: KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 This section of the Report reviews the key planning considerations relating to the detailed planning application for development of Land at The Elms, with references to the relevant planning policy context set out in the preceding section 6, as necessary:

- Principle of development
- Heritage
- Design
- Open space, trees and public access
- Dwelling mix and affordable housing
- Other policy requirements
 - Drainage and flooding
 - Ecology
 - Sustainable design and construction
 - Section 106
- Application material/ Design and Access Statement

This assessment highlights the key planning considerations and is not intended to be a comprehensive checklist of policy compliance.

Principle of development

7.2 The application site (Land at the Elms) is allocated in the TNP for up to 45 homes. The principle of residential development on the site is therefore acceptable, although the acceptable number of new homes is not fixed other than by reference to a maximum, and is subject to compliance with the heritage, design and open space requirements as set out in 6.10 above.

7.3 Each of the considerations/ criteria for how the policy requirements must be met is assessed in more detail in the relevant sections below.

Heritage

7.4 The application site is within the Thame Conservation Area and in the setting of The Elms and The Barn, both Grade II Listed buildings, so the applicant must therefore provide a description of their significance (including the contribution made by their setting) to allow the heritage impacts of to be assessed.

7.5 The planning application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement. The assessment of significance of The Elms is contained in an appendix (prepared by the Nash Partnership). It concludes that The Elms was not built as a country house but as a town or suburban villa. The house did not command the full extent of the land to the south of it. However, it was positioned to enjoy the view over the pasture to the rear, and trees were introduced to benefit the view and strengthen the boundary screening. The important part of the setting of The Elms is identified as being the area to the west of the current boundary line between The Elms and The Poplars (see figure 5). The final conclusion is that *“to sustain the significance of The Elms, it is important that the house, its formal garden, the open land immediately to the rear, the specimen trees and and the treed boundaries on Elms Road to the rear of Nelson Street are conserved”*.

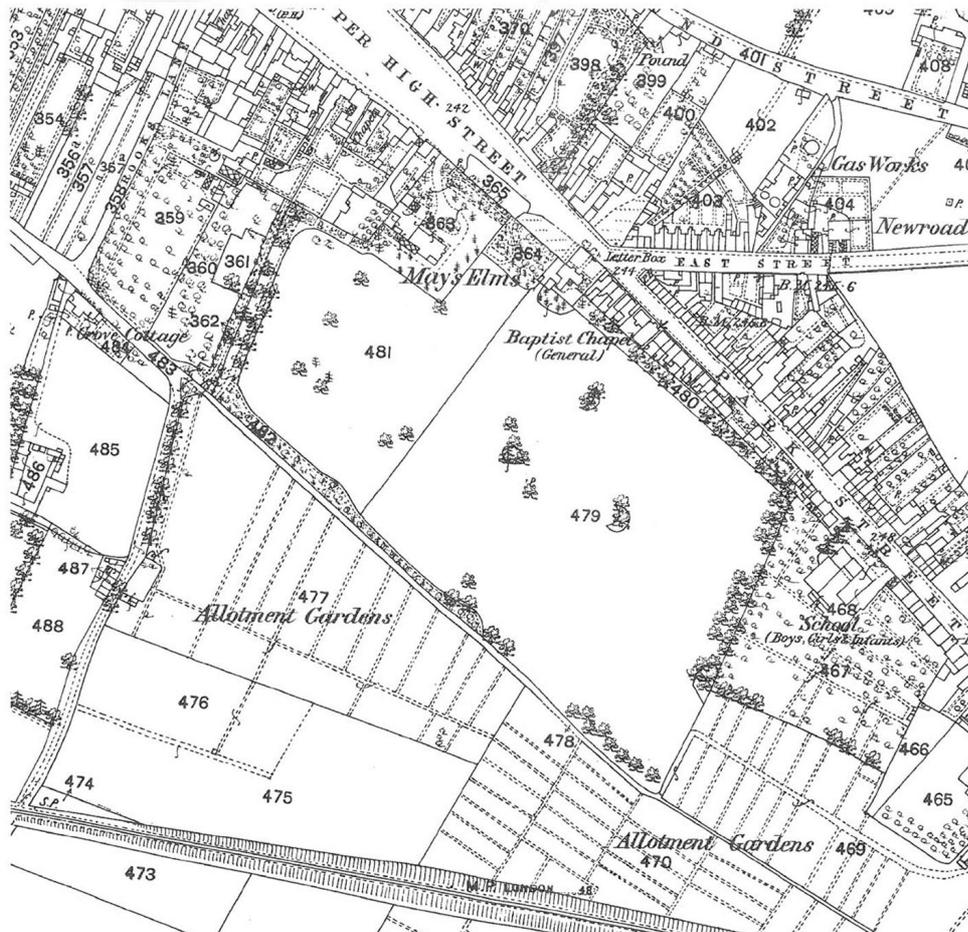


Figure 5: The applicant's Heritage Statement Appendix 1 1881 OS map showing land identified as important to the setting of The Elms

- 7.6 So Appendix 1 to the Heritage Statement concludes that the open nature of the application site to the west of the boundary between The Elms and The Poplars contributes to the significance of the listed building. This contradicts the statement in the main body of the Heritage Statement that there is no evidence to establish why the west side of the application site should be treated differently to the east.
- 7.7 The application proposes built development within this part of the application site, which will cause a loss of openness and the removal of one of the mature parkland trees, and so will cause harm/ loss to The Elms' heritage significance as a listed building.
- 7.8 The NPPF requires that where a development proposal causes substantial harm then it should be permitted only in exceptional cases. Where it causes less than substantial loss/ harm then the loss/ harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. The key NPPF tests to be applied are:
- Is there a convincing justification for the harm/loss of significance?
 - Is the harm/loss outweighed by the public benefits?
- 7.9 The Heritage Statement does not recognise that harm/ loss is caused to the significance of The Elms by the proposed development. As a result, it does not provide a clear and convincing justification for the loss, so does not currently comply with the NPPF.

- 7.10 TNP Policy HA4 requires that the detailed design of the proposals, the heritage issues, public benefits and other material planning considerations are balanced to come up with the right number of new homes for the application site. These assessments, together with an assessment of the public benefits, are set out below.

Design

- 7.11 The applicant's Design and Access Statement does not provide an assessment of the character of Thame nor an appraisal of the site in its surroundings, both required by TNP policies in order to explain why a particular design solution is suitable for a site.
- 7.12 The architectural character of the proposals is clearly contemporary and the Design and Access Statement provides images that reflect contemporary design principles. The application proposals do not provide full drawings of the entire scheme, with only typical house types for The Crescent and Park Edge terraces. The contemporary architectural style of the buildings is generally considered suitable to the historic context, although the drawings lack clarity and detail so it is difficult to fully assess the quality of the proposed detailed design of the buildings as required by TNP Policies HA4, ESDQ19 and ESDQ20.
- 7.13 The application does not currently provide material to explain why a formal crescent is appropriate to the site and its surroundings or to the character of Thame as required by TNP Policies ESDQ16 and 17.
- 7.14 The crescent will enclose the new public open space and the parkland trees and focus views onto its centre, rather than maintaining a sense of spaciousness for the setting for The Elms. The crescent is broken into several buildings in order to retain mature parkland trees and to create footpath/ cycleway links into the wider surroundings. Neither of these issues is successfully resolved, as set out in 7.18 and 7.26 below.
- 7.15 The formal crescent does not reflect the specific local character of Thame. However, The Elms, as an early C19th town or suburban villa, is also not typical of Thame's character. The Land at The Elms is set behind the street frontages so the main influence of its character will be on The Elms itself, and on Elms Park, rather than on the wider street scene of Thame.
- 7.16 The proposed buildings are generally 3 storeys in height with the exception of 3 terraced houses in the northern part of the site. The building heights of The Crescent appear to be lower than The Elms, although there seems to be a lack of consistency between different drawings that should be clarified. The proposed development should not dominate or compete with The Elms in terms of height.
- 7.17 Building frontages are proposed to overlook the central open space and Elms Park as required by TNP Policy HA4, but the open space and pedestrian/ cycleway links to Elms Park and to the south are less well supervised, with flank elevations overlooking them, and little supervision from habitable rooms.
- 7.18 Currently, the only views into the application site are from Elms Park, where there is a sense of openness through a screen of trees along the boundary, although the Land at The Elms is not clearly visible and The Elms itself cannot be seen. The proposed development, with terraces along the park boundary and the removal of the existing trees, will alter the character of

these views, creating a built edge to the park, which will alter the character of the conservation area.

- 7.19 The proposals will create opportunities for new views to be created to enhance appreciation of the setting of The Elms as a listed building. These are:
- a view from Elms Park into the new public open space
 - a view of The Elms from the new site entrance to be created on Elms Road.
- 7.20 The view from Elms Park towards the application site will initially be of mature trees to be retained as part of the development. From the pedestrian/ cycleway between the two open spaces, the gap in the crescent will narrow the view rather than opening it up into the new circular open space.
- 7.21 The proposed view from the new site entrance will be of parking bays, garages and bin stores rather than a long view across the open space to The Elms. This is a missed opportunity to enhance appreciation of The Elms in as a listed building in its setting. Any views of The Elms will be dependent upon the boundary between the application site and The Elms being kept as currently proposed (the ha-ha and a post and rail fence).
- 7.22 Access to the new homes will be from a shared surface street that runs between The Crescent and the Park Edge terraces. This street will be lined with parking bays, garages with home office/ studios above, boundary walls, bin and cycle stores. One side of this street is proposed to have tree planting. It is not clear that this will be a safe and attractive street, with houses set back from the road behind the garages/ home offices and the boundary walls to private gardens.
- 7.23 The quality and appropriateness of design is potentially a public benefit of a scheme. However, in the case of the proposed development there are a number of unresolved urban design issues, relating in particular to:
- insufficient/ inconsistent information or explanation to allow a full assessment
 - failure to take opportunities to create views to enhance appreciation of The Elms as a listed building – a potential public benefit
 - failure to create safe and attractive footpath/ cycleways into the proposed public open space– potential public benefits.

Open space, trees, and public access

- 7.24 The application proposals provide 1.22 hectares of public open space, meeting the requirements of TNP Policy HA4, although the area measured is overstated as it currently includes a number of areas that are not usable as open space.
- 7.25 They also provide the required footpath/ cycleway links between the new open space, east-west to Elms Park and north-south to Elms Road. In order to encourage people who do not live in the development to use the public open space and the route through to the High Street, the site needs to be designed to be open and welcoming. However, at present the layout tends to suggest the public open space is for the use of the residents rather than the public:
- The pedestrian/ cycle route through to the High Street is welcome, and it is noted that this is included in the s.106 Heads of Terms. This

means that a commitment to this route can be locked into the legal agreement, ensuring it is delivered.

- The east west open space link is no wider than the canopies of trees to be retained and will narrow in width towards the new public open space, so there will be no visual connection between the two open spaces and the current sense of openness looking out from Elms Park will be lost.
- From the south, the route from the new entrance has to detour around the side of The Crescent, with no views of The Elms or the new open space to encourage its use.

- 7.26 The trees around the perimeter of the site are an important part of its character. The character of these trees varies, with mature treebelts on the western and southern boundaries, which screen views into and out of the site, and ornamental trees on the eastern boundary to Elms Park, which filter views of the site. The proposals remove all of the existing trees along the eastern boundary and a number from the southern and western boundaries (principally to form the vehicular access from Elms Road). There is no explanation in the application material as to why the trees on the eastern boundary are to be removed.
- 7.27 The Park Edge terrace properties are set right on the site boundary with the park, with small front gardens. The Design and Access Statement describes these houses as dual fronted so it would be reasonable to expect the to be set back far enough from the site boundary to allow a common front path to serve this frontage.
- 7.28 The mature trees that stand in isolation within the site are important, giving it a 'parkland' character that contributes to the setting of the listed building, as identified above. The proposals remove a significant mature horse chestnut from within the site. The justification is set out in the Planning Statement, which states that this is 'to allow for the formation of The Crescent' but, as set out in 7.7 above, this does not satisfy the NPPF requirement for a clear and convincing justification.
- 7.29 The TNP requires an application for improvements to Elms Park, informed by consultation with local people, to be submitted at the same time as the application for development on Land at The Elms. The park improvements are required to be implemented at the same time as the proposed development. An outline application has been submitted, although there has been little consultation to date. The improvements to the park should aim to address the following impacts:
- loss of landscape character/openness and views to the west of Elms Park through development of Land at The Elms
 - introduction of a built edge set close to the park boundary
 - loss of ornamental trees on park boundary.
- 7.30 Provision of a public open space is a public benefit provided it is designed to be welcoming to the public. However, currently the design of the east-west open space and footpath/ cycleway links do not achieve this aim. A number of other impacts could potentially be mitigated through improvements to Elms Park

Dwelling mix and affordable housing

- 7.31 The provision of a mix of dwelling types and tenure to meet Thame's specific needs is a key requirement of the TNP. Policy H10 requires developers to submit a Thame-Specific Affordable Housing and Dwellings Mix Strategy with any planning application. The Planning Statement accompanying the application states in Paragraph 5.8 *"The TNP requires affordable housing in a mix of types and sizes that 'will meet the specific need identified for Thame' however no such housing needs survey has been undertaken in respect of Thame."* The Planning Statement goes on to quote the district-wide SODC Housing Needs Assessment in attempting to justify the proposed mix.
- 7.32 The Thame Neighbourhood Plan places the onus on developers to demonstrate through their own Affordable Housing and Dwellings Mix Strategy. This application has not submitted the strategy required by Policy H10, has not attempted to identify housing needs within Thame and does not demonstrate how the proposed development addresses housing needs.
- 7.33 The application therefore fails to comply with the requirements of Policy H10.

Other policy requirements

- 7.34 Drainage and flooding
- A Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the application. It includes a surface water drainage strategy. This proposes to use infiltration techniques to drain surface water run-off into the permeable sub-base
- 7.35 Ecology
- The application material includes an Ecology and Protected Species Appraisal, which concluded that the grassland habitat has negligible ecological value, while the parkland trees are considered of wildlife merit within the site context and have bat roosting potential and the boundary tree belts have moderate ecological value in the site context and are moderately well-used by bats for commuting and foraging and provide bird and bat roosting opportunities. The proposals include creating species rich wildflower grassland and provision of bat boxes.
- 7.36 Sustainable design and construction
- The application includes a welcome commitment to meeting Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. However, there is no information on how this will be achieved. As the energy generation component of Cash can have significant design and visual impact implications, we would expect to see an Energy and Sustainability Statement accompanying the application to explain the approach.
- 7.37 Section 106
- The Planning Statement proposes the following heads of terms:
 - affordable housing – 40% provision in the form of 15 x 1 and 2-bedroom social rented apartments for the elderly (over 55s) and 3 x 2 and 3-bedroom houses for shared ownership
 - new public open space, pedestrian/ cycle links through the site, mature trees and tree belts on site to be managed and maintained through a private management company
 - improvements to Elms Park – a financial contribution to accord with an outline planning permission secured at the same time as detailed planning permission for the application site

- highway improvements – financial contribution towards highway improvements including Windmill Road/ Nelson Street/ junction to site access.

Application material/ Design and Access Statement

- 7.38 This is a full planning application and – as such – we would expect to be able to understand exactly what is being proposed. Whilst sufficient to be validated and registered by South Oxfordshire District Council, the material is inadequate to properly assess the planning application, particularly in terms of design detail.
- 7.39 The Design and Access Statement fails to meet the national and local requirements (including TNP Policy ESDQ15) for such a document as it does not provide a clear explanation of how the design has evolved and why The Crescent is an appropriate form of development.
- 7.40 The Statement of Community involvement fails to set out clearly what issues were raised during consultation, and fails to provide an explanation of how and why the proposals changed as a result of consultation. No pre-application consultation has been undertaken on the current scheme – the public consultation boards show the previous Nash Partnership proposals. This is contrary to TNP Policy CLW2.
- 7.41 The application drawings provide an inadequate amount of information to enable the proposals to be properly assessed – they do not show all of the elevations, the reproduction is blurred and it is unclear how details such as window openings will be designed. This is contrary to TNP Policy ESDQ19.
- 7.42 There is no Thame-Specific Affordable Housing and Dwelling Mix Strategy (TNP Policy H10).

Conclusion

- 7.43 The above assessment has identified that harm/ loss will be caused to the significance of The Elms as a listed building, in particular through the loss of openness and the loss of a mature parkland tree on the application site. There is also a loss of openness to Elms Park, which will potentially cause harm/ loss of significance to the conservation area.
- 7.44 The development proposals include a number of potential public benefits for Thame, such as the public open space, new footpath/ cycleway linkages and an open space link between Elms Park and the new public open space for but at present the design of the scheme would not successfully realise these benefits.
- 7.45 The development proposals also fail to take opportunities to enhance the appreciation of The Elms as a listed building in its setting, in particular in relation to possible views that could be created for users of the new links.
- 7.46 At present the harm/ loss caused by the development proposals is not outweighed by public benefits.
- 7.47 The development proposals also fail to comply with policy in a number of other respects, most notably in terms of affordable housing.

8. ELMS PARK: KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 This section of the Report reviews the key planning considerations relating to the outline planning application for improvements to Elms Park, with references to the relevant planning policy context set out in the preceding section 6, as necessary:

- Open space
- Heritage
- Design
- Application material/ Design and Access Statement

Open space

8.2 Elms Park is identified as an open space to be retained and protected. It is also identified as an opportunity to improve the quality of existing open spaces, where it is directly related to development (i.e. of the Land at The Elms). A planning application is required to be submitted at the same time as any for the Land at The Elms and improvements are required to be carried out at the same time as development at The Elms. The outline application complies with the policy requirements.

Heritage

8.3 Elms Park lies within the Thame Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal states that Elms Park together with the Land at The Elms, is an important green space in this part of town, separating modern areas of Thame from the historic settlement, and forming a vital part of the setting of The Elms itself. The proposed development on Land at The Elms to the west of Elms Park will affect the openness of the green space and will have an impact on both on views and on the degree of separation between different parts of Thame. Improvements to Elms Park have the potential to mitigate some of the impacts of the development of Land at The Elms and to provide public benefits to outweigh any potential harm/ loss of significance to the conservation area as a result of the development at The Elms.

Design

8.4 The outline planning application has all matters reserved, so all proposals for Elms Park are illustrative only. The design of proposals is therefore not proposed to be determined at this stage.

8.5 TNP Policy HA4 requires proposals for improving Elms Park to be informed by consultation with local people. A consultation was held in November 2013 based on previous proposals by the Nash Partnership but none has been held since.

8.6 The assessment of the development proposals for Land at The Elms has identified a number of areas where improvements to Elms Park could potentially mitigate the impacts of development:

- loss of landscape character/openness and views to the west of Elms Park through development of Land at The Elms
- introduction of a built edge set close to the park boundary
- loss of ornamental trees on park boundary.

- 8.7 However currently the illustrative proposals do not clearly illustrate how this potential mitigation might be achieved.
- 8.8 The applicant also wishes to remove or relocate the MUGA that is currently sited close to the boundary between Elms Park and Land at The Elms.

Conclusion

- 8.9 The application does not currently demonstrate how improvements to Elms Park might potentially mitigate some of the impacts of the proposed development at The Elms.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Land at The Elms Detailed Application Ref. P14/S2176/FUL

- 9.1 It is understood that the applicant has been asked to revise the development proposals in response to a number of issues identified through consultation responses.
- 9.2 It is recommended that an objection is raised subject to the resolution of the following matters:
- Reconsideration of the site layout to ensure that the public benefits of the proposals outweigh any harm or loss to the significance of The Elms as a listed building, by such things as:
 - reconfiguration of the public open space and linkages to ensure that high quality, safe and attractive pedestrian/ cycleways are created and the proposed public open space is welcoming to all
 - retaining all mature parkland trees
 - taking opportunities to create new views of The Elms
- Provide a clear justification of how the proposed benefits outweigh any harm to comply with the NPPF
- Provision of more detailed and complete design information for the proposed terraces to ensure that the design quality can be fully assessed
 - Provide justification for the appropriateness of the design concept in relation to the site and surrounding context and the local character of Thame
 - Clarifications to ensure that application material is consistent
 - Revision to the scheme to provide a policy compliant affordable housing proposal
 - Review of the site layout between The Crescent and Park Edge terraces to ensure that a high quality public realm can be created
 - A demonstration of how the potential impacts of the scheme on Elms Park, including introduction of a built edge, loss or ornamental trees on boundary and loss of openness, can be mitigated.

Elms Park Outline Application Ref. P14/S2310/O

- 9.3 It is recommended that an objection is raised subject to the resolution of the following matters:
- The illustrative masterplan should demonstrate how the improvements to the park will mitigate the impacts of the proposed development at Land at The Elms

**10. APPENDIX A: FURTHER MATTERS OF CLARIFICATION /
CONSIDERATION**

Land at The Elms
Detailed Application Ref. P14/S2176/FUL

- 10.1 It is understood that the applicant has been asked to review the development proposals to address many of the issues identified in this report.
- 10.2 The applicant should also be asked to provide additional information to clarify a number of issues as part of consideration of amendments to the proposals, as follows:
- Provide existing and proposed site levels with FFLs and heights of buildings
 - Provide complete and detailed plans/elevations of terraces to allow a full assessment of their design quality.
 - Clarify how the detailed street design will accommodate the service and maintenance margin requirements for shared surfaces in conjunction with permeable paving.
 - Confirm whether affordable housing for the elderly is intended to be intermediate or social rented tenure (application form contradicts Planning Statement)
 - Provide appraisal of site in surroundings and of character of Thame to demonstrate appropriateness of design proposals
 - Provide commitment to maintaining open boundary between The Elms and the application site, to maintain important relationship between the listed building and it's setting.
 - Demonstrate how Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 will be achieved.

Elms Park
Outline Application Ref. P14/S2310/O

- 10.3 The applicant should be asked to revise the illustrative proposals for the improvement to the park to demonstrate how the impacts of the proposed development of Land at The Elms would be mitigated.

**APPENDIX B: LIST OF DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED WITH THE
APPLICATIONS**

Land at The Elms
Detailed Application Ref. P14/S2176/FUL

Documents

The following documents have been submitted:

- Planning application form and ownership certificates
- Application drawings
- Planning Statement
- Statement of Community Engagement
- Design and Access Statement, including Sustainability Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Transport Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecology and Protected Species Appraisal
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal
- Landscape Management Plan
- Desk-based Archaeological Assessment
- Conservation Management Plan
- Ground Investigation Report
- Topographical Survey
- Arboricultural Report and Tree Condition Survey

Application drawings

The following drawings have been submitted:

- Access Plan & Elevation Southern drwg no 1771-117-A.pdf
- Apartments Plans & Elevations drwg no 1771-115-B.pdf
- Block Plan Existing drwg no 1771-010-A.pdf
- Block Plan Proposed drwg no 1771-110-A.pdf
- Crescent Town House Plans & Elevations drwg no 1771-112-C.pdf
- Elevations & Sections drwg no 1771-116-A.pdf
- End Condition Plans & Elevations drwg no 1771-161-B.pdf
- Hard Landscape Layout 1of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-1A.pdf
- Hard Landscape Layout 2of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-2A.pdf
- Hard Landscape Layout 3of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-3A.pdf
- Hard Landscape Layout 4of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-4A.pdf
- Parkland Management Plan drwg no 1771-111-A.pdf
- Parkside Town House Plans & Elevations drwg no 1771-113-D.pdf
- Proposed House Types drwg no 1771-160-A.pdf
- Site location plan drwg no 1771-001-A.pdf
- Soft Landscape 3of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-7A.pdf
- Soft Landscape 4of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-8A.pdf

- Soft Landscape Layout 1of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-5A.pdf
- Soft Landscape Layout 2of4 drwg no 22147-RG-L04-6A.pdf
- Terrace Houses Plans & Elevations drwg no 1771-114-C.pdf
- The Elms Footpath - Cycleway Plans & Elevations drwg no 1771-118-B.pdf
- Topographical Survey drwg no 15294-R2-Part 1.pdf
- Topographical Survey drwg no 15294-R2-part 2.pdf
- Topographical Survey drwg no 15294-R2-Part 3.pdf
- Watercolour View No 1 drwg no 1771-119-A.pdf

Illustrative drawings

- Landscape Masterplan drwg no 140701 RG-L04A.pdf

Elms Park

Outline planning application ref: P14/S2310/O

Documents

The following documents have been submitted:

- Planning application form and ownership certificates
- Application drawings (see below)
- Illustrative drawings (see below)
- Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Initial Ecology and Protected Species Appraisal

Application drawings

- Site Location Plan

Illustrative drawings

- Landscape Illustrative Masterplan drwg no RG-L04-10

APPENDIX C: LIST OF RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

South Oxfordshire Core Strategy

Policy	Summary
CS1	<p>Presumption in favour of sustainable development Advises that applications that accord with the Development Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
CSS1	<p>The overall strategy Identifies Thame as one of the higher order settlements suitable for additional development.</p>
CSM2	<p>Transport Assessments and Travel Plans Requires the submission of a Transport Assessment where new development would have transport implications. In addition, all major developments are required to provide a Travel Plan.</p>
CSH1	<p>Amount and distribution of housing States in Table 7.3 that 775 new homes will be provided in Thame in the period up to 2026/27</p>
CSH2	<p>Density Seeks a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (net) in residential development proposals, except where this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.</p>
CSH3	<p>Affordable Housing Seeks 40% affordable housing on qualifying sites (such as the application site), with 75% of affordable units social rented and 25% intermediate housing. All such housing should meet the required standards and be of a size and type meeting the requirements of those in housing need.</p>
CSH4	<p>Meeting housing needs States that a mix of dwelling types and sizes will be sought on all new residential developments. On sites such as Land at the Elms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 10% of market housing should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards • all ground floor affordable housing properties should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards • the provision of dwellings for people with additional special needs will be sought as part of the overall affordable housing percentage • specialist accommodation for older people will be permitted in suitable locations. <p>The supporting text to this policy states that '<i>specialist accommodation for the elderly should be provided on a mixed-tenure basis, and such accommodation should be located on sites in or adjacent to the towns or larger village</i>'.</p>

CSTHA1	<p>The strategy for Thame States that proposals for development in Thame should be consistent with the strategy which is to, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify land for 775 new homes • improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links • support schemes which enhance the quality of the town's environment
CSTHSA2	<p>New allocations at Thame Advises that the Neighbourhood Plan for Thame will allocate land for 775 new homes</p>
CSEN3	<p>Historic Environment Seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas and their settings.</p>
CSQ2	<p>Sustainable Design and Construction Advises that on schemes of the scale proposed at Land at The Elms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of energy demand should be from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources • development should achieve at least Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes • Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes should be implemented in accordance with current policy and good practice • proposals should incorporate measures that address issues of adaptation to climate change (e.g. the need for water conservation and storage).
CSQ3	<p>Design Permission will be granted to new development that is of a high quality and inclusive design that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds positively to and respects the character of the site and its surroundings, particularly the historic significance and heritage values of the historic environment, enhancing local distinctiveness and ensuring that new development is of a scale, type and density appropriate to the site and its setting; • improves the quality of the public realm with well designed external areas, and, where appropriate a clear structure of open spaces; • provides and/or links into green infrastructure where available; • is designed to create safe communities and reduce the likelihood and fear of crime; • creates a distinctive sense of place and is easy to understand through the use of vistas, landmarks and focal points; • ensures high levels of accessibility and ease of use by all modes of transport both within the site and with the wider area, also making sure that any new development is properly integrated with existing development ensuring accessibility to local services; and • is adaptable to changing requirements and constructed with materials appropriate to the area.

	All proposals for new development should be accompanied by a design and access statement to show how they have responded to the above criteria.
CSG1	Green Infrastructure States that, where appropriate, development proposals will be required to contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure.
CSB1	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity Seeks to avoid the loss of biodiversity and achieve a net gain of biodiversity across the district.
CSI1	Infrastructure provision Advises that new development must be served by, and supported by, appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services. Permission will only be granted where infrastructure and services to meet the requirements of the new development is in place, or mitigation provided to ensure such is in place within an agreed timescale.

Table 1: Relevant SOCS policies

Thame Neighbourhood Plan

Policy	Summary
H1	<p>Allocate land for 775 new homes Identifies those sites allocated for housing development, including the Application Site (Land at the Elms) for up to 45 homes.</p>
H3	<p>Review delivery of Land at The Elms States that should Land at The Elms deliver fewer than 45 dwellings, the balance shall be provided on one of two reserve sites.</p>
H4	<p>Integrate allocated sites Advises that homes within allocated sites should be well connected within the site and with the wider town.</p>
H6	<p>Design new development to be of high quality Housing on allocated sites should be of a high quality and designed to reflect Thame's character. Proposals should meet the requirements set out for each site in Section 3 and adhere to the policies in Chapter 11 (see ESDQ policies below).</p>
H7	<p>Provide new facilities Requires provision of, or contributions to, facilities in accordance with Policy D1 of the TNP.</p>
H8	<p>Provide affordable housing On sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings, affordable housing should be provided in accordance with the Core Strategy. This should be integrated with the market housing, and of a type and size to meet Thame specific needs.</p>
H9	<p>Provide a mix of housing types Requires a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households in Thame. States that large areas of uniform type and size will not be acceptable.</p>
H10	<p>Provide a Thame-Specific Affordable Housing and Dwelling Mix Strategy Schemes of the scale proposed should submit a Thame-Specific Affordable Housing and Dwelling Mix Strategy, identifying housing needs within Thame and how the proposed development addresses those needs.</p>
GA1	<p>New development to provide good pedestrian and cycle connections to the town centre and other local destinations Proposals on allocated sites should deliver good pedestrian and cycle connections as part of a comprehensive approach to movement that encourages walking and cycling.</p>

GA3	Developer contributions required to support the provision of a cycle route to Haddenham and Thame Rail Parkway Station Advises that contributions will be sought from all new developments to fund the design and delivery of a cycle route to the rail station.
GA6	New development to provide parking on site for occupants and visitors Development outside the town centre must provide on-site parking in accordance with the District Council's standards.
CLW1	Allocate land for a new community facility Expects developer contributions from all new homes towards the funding of a community facility.
CLW2	Actively involve local people in ongoing consultation Encourages community involvement in development proposals prior to the submission of an application, demonstrated through the Statement of Community Involvement.
CLW4	Contributions required from developers of new housing to fund additional healthcare facilities States that financial contributions will be required from developers of new housing sites to fund additional healthcare services.
ESDQ6	Improve Elms Park Recreation Area Requires the submission of a planning application for improvements to the Elms Park Recreation Area at the same time as any application for the development of the adjacent land at The Elms. Requires that the improvements are implemented at the same time as any residential development of land at The Elms.
ESDQ10	Produce a Sports Facilities Strategy Developer contributions will be sought to fund a Sports Facilities Strategy and the subsequent implementation of sports facilities.
ESDQ11	Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage into new development Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should be included in new development to reduce surface water run-off.
ESDQ12	Applications for new development to provide a drainage strategy All allocated and windfall sites must be accompanied by a Drainage Strategy.
ESDQ13	New dwellings: code for sustainable homes All new development will be expected to meeting the requirements set out in the Core Strategy in respect of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
ESDQ14	Produce a Green Living Plan Developer contributions will be sought from allocated sites to develop a Green Living Plan, such contributions to fund a Green Living Plan coordinator who will be responsible for producing the Plan.

ESDQ15	<p>Developers must demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement how their proposed development reinforces Thame's character Sets out a requirement that Design and Access Statements should demonstrate how the proposed development reinforces Thame's character having regard to the policies and guidance set out nationally and locally.</p>
ESDQ16	<p><i>Development must relate well to its site and its surroundings</i> Proposals should respond to the specific character of a site and its surroundings, maintaining or enhancing its strengths and addressing weaknesses.</p>
ESDQ17	<p><i>Development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character of the town as a whole</i> Development should incorporate design principles that reflect the most successful parts of the town.</p>
ESDQ18	<p><i>New development must contribute to local character by creating a sense of place appropriate to its location</i> New development will be expected to support the town centre as the main focus of activity and not to create alternative centres. It is important that the new residential areas are designed to create a sense of place by ensuring that the character varies within the development.</p>
ESDQ19	<p>The Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings must provide sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood Development proposals in historic character areas must include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drawings showing the proposals in relation to their surroundings. This will include a street elevation and sections across the street • three-dimensional drawings from at least two viewpoints • rendered elevations, clearly indicating the proposed palette of materials • details of how window openings relate to the elevation (i.e. are they flush or set back?).
ESDQ20	<p>Building style must be appropriate to the historic context The design of new buildings should reflect the design principles of their time in order to contribute to the varied character of the town.</p>
ESDQ23	<p><i>Streets within new development must be designed as pleasant places to be</i> New residential streets must be designed with an equal emphasis on all modes of transport, i.e. pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles.</p>
ESDQ24	<p><i>Pedestrian and cycle routes must link together potential destinations, such as new housing and the town centre</i></p>

ESDQ26	<p><i>Design new buildings to reflect the three-dimensional qualities of traditional buildings</i> Building should be designed as a three-dimensional whole, with various design guidance incorporated.</p>
ESDQ27	<p><i>Design in the ‘forgotten’ elements from the start of the design process</i> Sets out how detailed design elements must be integrated in to the scheme from an early stage.</p>
ESDQ28	<p><i>Provide good quality private outdoor space</i> All new dwellings should be provided with a private outdoor garden amenity space, or a shared amenity area.</p>
ESDQ29	<p><i>Design car parking so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development</i> Sets standards and requirements in respect of the provision of parking for new development.</p>
D1	<p><i>Provide appropriate new facilities</i> Development must provide, or contribute to, off-site facilities as required by the Delivery Strategy and by Core Strategy CS11.</p>
HA4	<p><i>The Elms – allocation for no more than 45 residential dwellings</i> Emphasises that the key issue is heritage. States that Land at The Elms is allocated for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential development. The number of dwellings will be determined through a detailed design proposal and in any case, will provide no more than 45 dwellings. If fewer than 45 dwellings are provided, the balance of Thame’s housing requirement will be provided in accordance with Policy H3 • a minimum of 1 hectare of landscaped publicly accessible open space. <p>States that the proposals must preserve and enhance the Thame Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings and structures .</p> <p>The supporting text to the policy sets out a number of other requirements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site’s sensitivities mean that the residential development will be restricted to the eastern and south-eastern side, although it is not possible to define the exact extent of the built area and open space prior to designs being completed and agreed. • ensuring the retention of open land and mature trees in such a way as to maintain an appropriate setting for The Elms listed house. This is to include an area of publicly accessible open space which must incorporate a north-south pedestrian/cycle link connecting Elms Road to Upper High Street • ensuring that building frontages overlook the open space within the site, the adjacent Elms Park and the key pedestrian / cycle routes through the development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• retaining trees around the boundary and within the site• ensuring that the height and massing of buildings relates sympathetically to the height of existing buildings around the site's boundaries. Buildings should generally be 2 - 2.5 storeys in height
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Table 2: Relevant TNP policies

South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Saved Policies)

Policy	Summary
C6	<p><i>Biodiversity Conservation</i> In considering proposals for development, the maintenance and enhancement of the biodiversity resource of the district will be sought.</p>
C8	<p><i>Species Protection</i> Development that would have an adverse effect on a site supporting a specially protected species will not be permitted, unless damage to the ecological interest can be prevented through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations.</p>
C9	<p><i>Landscape Features</i> States that any development that would cause the loss of landscape features will not be permitted where those features make an important contribution to the local scene, and/or provide all or part of an important wildlife habitat and/or have important historical value.</p>
CON 5	<p><i>The setting of listed buildings</i> States that proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.</p>
CON 7	<p><i>Proposals affecting a Conservation Area</i> Planning permission will not be granted for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. The following will be required when considering proposals for development in conservation areas:</p> <p>(i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area; and (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the character of the area.</p> <p>The contribution made to a conservation area by existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views will be taken into account.</p>
CON 12	<p><i>Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording</i> Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.</p>
EP1	<p><i>Prevention of Polluting Emissions</i> Proposals which would (by reason of smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust, grit, or other forms of polluting emissions) have an adverse effect on people and other living organisms, the atmosphere, the land, underground water supplies or watercourses will not be permitted,</p>

	unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented.
EP2	Noise and Vibrations Proposals which would by reason of noise or vibrations have an adverse effect on existing or proposed occupiers will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented.
EP7	Groundwater protection Development that may have an adverse effect upon groundwater resources will not be permitted unless effective preventative measures are taken to ensure that the quality and quantity of these resources are maintained.
D1	Good design and local distinctiveness The principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development through, inter alia: (i) the provision of a clear structure of spaces; (ii) respecting existing settlement patterns; (iii) providing for a choice of routes and transport modes to, from and within the development; (iv) providing a development that users find easy to understand through the use of landmarks, vistas and focal points; (v) providing landscape structure as a framework for new development; (vi) respecting the character of the existing landscape; (vii) providing good quality site and building design and appropriate materials; and (ix) providing well-designed external areas.
D4	Privacy and daylight All new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight.
D6	Design against crime The design and layout of development will be encouraged in ways which will reduce the opportunity for crime and will promote suitable means of improving the security of premises.
D10	Waste management Proposals which do not make adequate provision for the management of waste in new developments, including communal and private storage space for recyclables and facilities for the disposal of waste products, will not be permitted.
D12	Public art On all housing developments in excess of 1 hectare, a contribution towards public art will be sought.
R2	Formal recreation When granting planning permission for new residential development,

	<p>developers will be required to provide outdoor playing space for the new residents to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 persons.</p> <p>Developers will be required to demonstrate that satisfactory provision for long-term maintenance has been made.</p>
R6	<p>Informal recreation</p> <p>When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide public open space for informal recreation to meet the needs of the new residents in accordance with an amount appropriate to the locality and the size of the development proposed</p>
T1	<p>Transport requirements for new developments</p> <p>Require all types of new development to provide, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe and convenient access to the highway network • safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians
T2	<p>Transport requirements for new developments</p> <p>Requires provision for a range of transport access, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loading, unloading, circulation and turning space • parking of vehicles in accordance with the Council's maximum parking standards • cycle parking in accordance with the Council's standards
T7	<p>Cycling and walking</p> <p>States that planning permission will be granted for proposals to improve and extend the footpath and cycleway network provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents. Development that would prejudice pedestrian and cycle circulation or route provision will not be permitted.</p>

Table 3: Relevant SOLP policies