

Full Council

Date:	18 May 2021
Title:	Amendments: Pearces Yard, Land to the West of Windmill Road and Reserve Site C
Contact Officer:	Graeme Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer

a) Pearces Yard, Aylesbury Road

Background

- Members will recall that planning application P21/S0644/FUL proposed the demolition of the Wynnstay store and the adjacent veterinary practice sited on the Aylesbury Road frontage, which occupies a building that is locally listed building for local heritage reasons.
- At Council on 30 March 2021, it was resolved that:
 - Thame Town Council objects to the planning application on the grounds that the development fails to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and setting of a number of listed buildings; the harm to heritage assets is not considered to be outweighed by the public benefits. In addition, the proposal results in the loss of employment land which has not been demonstrated to be justified.

Additional information

- A Sustainability and Energy Statement (March 2021) has subsequently been submitted by the applicant. The document explains that sustainability gains in terms of orientation will be limited by the form of the building, but that a fabric-first approach will lower energy demand. Bedroom and corridors will be passively ventilated with other areas having a mix of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and active cooling. The document explains a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant, topped up by gas boilers will provide the required space and water heating requirements. Other heating systems are not examined as it has already been decided to use CHP. Photovoltaics will not be employed to prevent harm to the setting of the Grade II* listed Lashlake House and Grade II Jasmine Cottage (other heritage assets and views are not considered).
- The District's Building Control Team have noted that the proposed energy strategy will only result in a reduction in carbon emissions of some 33%, less than the minimum 40% required by Local Plan Policy DES10.

Note

- Given that the shortfall in the proposed mitigation required by Local Plan Policy DES10 has been identified, and the Sustainability and Energy Statement does not impact on the Town Council's earlier resolution, it is recommended that the amendment would not alter the Town Council's objection.

continued.....

b) Land to the West of Windmill Road, Thame

Background

1. Planning application P20/S4693/FUL proposes 31 affordable homes to be kept in perpetuity under a community land trust mechanism for those with a local connection to Thame.
2. At Council on 9 February 2021, the Town Council resolved to Support the application, with a Response:

The development should incorporate additional tree planting where possible, particularly towards the southern boundary of the site which will need to provide a suitable transition to the countryside.

Additional information

3. **Energy Statement.** The applicant has submitted an Energy Statement that recognises Local Plan Policy DES10. Small terraces and compact forms will reduce heat loss while building orientation was balanced against spatial design considerations.
4. A fabric-first approach has been taken. The statement explains that the likely worst-performing house was modelled to ensure compliance (an end of terrace unit) and the best performing roof in terms of photovoltaic gain. Options have been given to meet the policy requirement. The options cover a range of permutations including Passivhaus, improved build methodology with either improved passive ventilation or mechanical ventilation with heat recovery or building regulation-compliant fabric with large photovoltaic.
5. The applicant claims that all of the options would meet or exceed the Policy DES10 standard of 40% reduction in carbon emissions over standard building regulation build. The Trust's aspirations to ensure the project performs to the highest standards are noted by the applicant, but financial considerations for this no-profit scheme means the highest is borderline in terms of affordability. The options will be refined at final design stage.
6. The District's Building Control Team have requested SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) calculations are provided to demonstrate the design of the proposed dwellings will achieve the minimum 40% reduction on base building regulation requirements.
7. **Contaminated Land.** A contaminated land questionnaire has also been submitted but is blank.
8. **An Ecological Impact Assessment** (January 2020) has also been submitted. The District's Countryside Officer notes that overall, the current habitats on site would not prevent a barrier to development. Criticisms have been made against some of the Assessment's biodiversity metric. These include an over-emphasis on the value of some of the proposed landscaping shrubs, amenity grassland, the value given to the proposed copse planting and the likely successful delivery of calcareous grassland.
9. It is also noted that a specific bat survey be made of a single plum tree, which is proposed for removal. A further tree has been reported within the submitted tree report as having some mammal burrowing activity and will require further investigation.
10. As it stands, the officer believes the scheme would result in a net loss of biodiversity. Once the specific bat roosting and mammal excavation has been investigated, the officer does believe the loss can be offset through a suitable planning condition.

11. **Air Quality Assessment April 2021.** The District's Air Quality officer requested an air quality assessment as the scheme's on-site parking provision crossed the trigger threshold. The submitted assessment proposed mitigation through:
- all on-site energy needs to be met by electricity;
 - providing every car parking space with electric vehicle charging points; and
 - the site's location, plus proposed infrastructure, means active / public transport travel to local destinations are likely to be considered as realistic options for future residents.
12. The District's Air Quality officer has removed their objection, subject to the above mitigation methods being delivered in the final scheme.
13. **Road Safety Audit Response.** This provides further information regarding the design of the Phoenix Trail crossing. It has been agreed that Oxfordshire County Council and Sustrans will provide all necessary requirements and recommendations for incorporation at the detailed design stage. This includes the design of the road's speed humps, signage and markings. It appears the Highways Officer is content that these and other matters have been resolved or can be left to subsequent conditions.
14. **Flood Risk and SUDS Assessment October 2020.** This report is stated to assess the flood risk on the site and provide an outline mitigation strategy, using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The County, in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority has no objections, subject to the condition recommended by the District's drainage team. This requires a detailed report demonstrating the performance of the scheme "as built", with requirements for on-site inspection of the finished scheme and proof of a future programme of maintenance.

Note

15. Given that the relevant District and County officers have identified where earlier concerns have been satisfied, will require the submission of extra information or can be addressed through conditions, it is recommended that the amendment would not alter the Town Council's decision to support the application, with comment.

c) Reserve Site C, Wenman Road.

Background

16. Planning Application P21/S0917/O proposes the delivery of up to 57 homes on Thame Neighbourhood Plan Reserve Site C.
17. At Council on 27 April 2021, the Town Council resolved to Support the application, with comments made on matters regarding the proposed publicly accessible open space, access during the construction phase, noise, footpaths and landscaping.

Additional Information

18. **Energy Strategy.** This document has been submitted to demonstrate that the scheme can be made compliant with Local Plan Policy DES10. It provides an expected baseline energy requirement for the built development, which provides a baseline from which to reduce carbon emissions by 40%. Various options that could be used to meet this are discussed. It is proposed a fabric first approach will be taken, which would mean that photovoltaics, for example, would be likely to provide more energy than would be required. Members should

note this will all be examined again, once the “as built” design emerges at Reserved Matters stage.

19. **Air Quality Response.** This document was submitted in response to the District’s Air Quality Officer. It is confirmed that the provisional conditions requiring one electric vehicle charging point for every dwelling will be met, with one EVCP being provided for every 10 flats (this may / may not be relevant), with individual dwellings receiving a voucher to permit individual choice regarding supplier. This is normally time-limited to 5 years and is linked to the property, not the original buyer. Other conditioned items, such as Sustainable Travel Packs, compliant gas boilers and secure cycle storage will be provided.
20. **Noise.** A response has been provided to meet the concerns of the District’s Environmental Health Team and Thame Town Council with regards to noise. The applicant has explained that the noise assessment undertaken in connection with the 2014 Outline permission for Site C carried out on-site observations and therefore includes the noise emitted by both industry and the road, with the latter being the greater, continual nuisance. They have reiterated that double glazing, passive ventilation, and internal / site layout will provide necessary mitigation. The District’s Environmental Health Team are no longer objecting to the application.
21. **Schedule of amendments.** The applicant has submitted a table and updated the illustrative masterplan and parameter plan for the site. This is in response to stakeholder response to date. This has included rationalising the access route to Hode Garth, clarifying private / public space and improving the function of the open space over the pipeline protection area. There has been a reduction in hard surfaces while improving public connectivity and the western and eastern boundary footpaths now have better separation from the roads with improved tree and hedge planting. Houses fronting Wenman Road have been reduced in height to two storeys to better reflect those fronting Wenman Road to the west.
22. **Response to Highway Matters.** Further comments have been given noting those made by the County’s Highways Team and the Town Council. New plans showing the correct turning radii at the site access, and adequate provision for refuse vehicles have been submitted. The applicant is arguing the request for extra funds to improve local bus connectivity is not required, as the existing 280 service is adequate, and Service 40 does not provide a connection to anywhere desirable to the intended occupants. The applicant notes the Town Council’s support for the principle of directly accessing the site from Wenman Road for the purpose of building the scheme but does not support its subsequent domestic use. The increase in peak trips is likely to be only one every two minutes, which they argue is negligible. The applicant believes the extra access will create vehicle conflict points on the local network and consider the access shown through their illustrative masterplan is more appropriate in the context of Wenman Road.
23. **Flood Risk Assessment and Response Note.** These have been submitted to demonstrate the proposals are acceptable in terms of flood risk and drainage in response to concerns from both the District and County Councils. Among specific issues around run-off rates the document confirms that the proposed retention basin within the publicly accessible open space is located outside the adjacent river’s flood risk zones 2 and 3.

Note

24. Given the extra information provided and the associated response it is felt there is no need to alter the Town Council’s recommendation to support this application (plus comments).