

Application No: 14/4950N

Location: Land north of, Parkers Road, Leighton, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 4GA

Proposal: Reserved matters approval for Phase 2B - residential development of 223 dwellings, following outline element of application 11/1879N

Applicant: Sherrie Shaw, Bloor Homes Ltd - North West

Expiry Date: 15-May-2015

#### **SUMMARY:**

The site already has outline planning permission for residential development which has established the acceptability in principle of this proposal. The scheme is contained within the existing site boundaries and will not result in further encroachment into open countryside.

The proposal is acceptable in terms of design, amenity, access and parking and greenspace.

The proposal is therefore economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE Subject to receipt of amended plans and conditions**

#### **PROPOSAL:**

Members may recall that in October 2011, Strategic Planning Board resolved to grant planning permission for a “hybrid” application (i.e. part outline and part full planning permission) for residential development on this site. Full planning permission was sought for 131 dwellings in Phase A to the south of the site close to Parkers Road and outline planning permission was sought for up to an additional 269 dwellings of the remainder of the site (Phase B). In total planning permission for a maximum of 400 dwellings was applied for.

This application is for approval of Reserved Matters for Phase 2B comprising residential development of 223 dwellings

#### **SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The site comprises 15.1ha of agricultural land (plus highway land – Parker’s Road) located on the north western edge of Crewe. The site is defined by Parkers Road to the south, Moss Lane to the east existing development to the west and a public footpath along part of its northern boundary. It is bisected by a network of existing hedgerows, some of which contain trees. In addition, there are a small number of free standing trees within fields.

Existing residential development lies to the east, south and south west of the site. Leighton Hospital lies to the west of the site. The wider site context includes Crewe Town Centre and railway station to the south west, Bentley Cars to the south on Pyms Lane and the village of Bradfield Green to the North West.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

**11/1879N** - A Hybrid planning application Seeking Residential Development for up to 400 New Dwellings with Open Space; Comprising a Full Planning Application for Phase A of 131 Dwellings and Phase B which Seeks Outline Planning Permission for up to 269 Dwellings with Access and Associated Infrastructure. In Respect of the Outline Element (Phase B), Only Access is Sought for Approval and All Other Matters are Reserved for Determination at a Later Date. Approved 1 May 2014.

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

### **National Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework

### **Local Plan Policy**

PS8 Open Countryside  
GR21 Flood Prevention  
NR4 Non-statutory sites  
GR1 New Development  
GR2 Design  
GR3 Residential Development  
GR5 Landscaping  
GR9 Accessibility, servicing and provision of parking  
GR14 Cycling Measures  
GR15 Pedestrian Measures  
GR17 Car parking  
GR18 Traffic Generation  
GR 22 Open Space Provision  
NR1 Trees and Woodland  
NR3 Habitats  
NR5 Habitats  
H2 Provision of New Housing Development  
H6 Residential Development in the Open countryside  
H13 Affordable Housing and Low Cost Housing

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

**Highways** – No objection

**Environmental Protection** – No objection subject to conditions restricting hours of piling and requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

**Environment Agency** – Refer to Standing Advice

**Archaeology** - A final short report on the archaeological work is awaited to discharge the archaeological condition.

**Public Rights of Way** – The development is to affect Public Footpath No. 2 Leighton. Recommend standard informative relating to protection of the Right of Way and it's users during construction.

**Natural England** - currently has no comment to make on the reserved matters approval.

**Flood Risk Manager** – no objections in principle on flood risk grounds we would suggest the following conditions:

- No development should commence on site until such time as detailed proposals for disposal of surface water (including a scheme for the on-site storage and regulated discharge) have been submitted to and agreed in writing by Cheshire East Council both as Planning Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved scheme.
- The surface water run-off generated by the proposed development shall not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site and shall not increase the risk of flooding off-site.

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

### **Local Residents**

5 representations have been received making the following points:

- Moss Lane will be heavily impacted by this application and the applicants failure to provide any funding to slow down the traffic on Moss lane is a disgrace, MVDPC, CEC Highways have failed in their duties to secure funding from the SECTION 106 agreement to make this lane safe and to keep children and pedestrians safe from additional traffic created by this application time is now to secure funds to slow down traffic on the lane and make it safe for users and especially with the children's play area on the lane.
- Also the public footpath and right of way has been there for 10's of years the applicant knew it was there when they purchased the land the public footpath is used all the time to get to flowers lane and must not be altered or removed it is a public right of way and must be protected from this developer
- The decision to build the first phase of houses on this development has already been agreed on and is currently underway. An additional 223 dwellings is a step too far for the local area to cope with. This in addition to the development to the Cross Keys area on North Street. Leighton Hospital will be under even more pressure as will the schools and GP surgeries in the area. The homes being built are not the type for

small families or couples but large 4 & 5 bedroom dwellings which are obviously aimed at families and so I assume the local schools in particular will be put under a great strain with coping with the additional numbers to accommodate in the coming years.

- The additional number of homes will bring with it noise and car pollution.
- The additional homes will increase traffic, vehicle access and parking issues on Parkers Road and adjacent streets.
- The site in general will mean a loss of wildlife and plants
- This proposed site holds so much adorable wildlife, rabbits, birds, squirrels etc...
- There are enough houses already built in the first phase. It is wonderful to see the countryside here, and this phase would not only blot the landscape, but would also see off a much welcome array of wildlife that lives here.
- Development should go elsewhere. Residents want to see wildlife from the fields beyond.
- What infrastructure is the local council putting into place to help local schools and communities deal with the extra people who will live in these houses. There is already a cap on spending so we are limited to services provided without the extra people on these new estates. Residents are being made to pay for short sightedness on the councils plans for the provision of housing in the past and there is now an attitude of passing all new home build applications in order to rectify this.
- The site is being accessed by one road leading to Parkers road, there will be heavy traffic congestion around that area in rush hours and will lead to people taking risks on what is an already very busy road.
- Residents are confused about the planning application above for north of Parker's Road as there is already considerable building work being carried out and assume the application is because the site is in fact going to be much bigger than any of the residents were first told.
- Parker's Road is already very busy during peak hours. It is shocking that the new site holding 400 dwellings is to have one vehicular access road and this leads onto/off Parker's Road. What is the council going to do about this influx of hundreds more vehicles on the road at peak hours? Why is there no other access at the side or rear of the site? Has the Council considered the danger an increase of vehicles brings to pedestrians using the footpaths and crossing the roads?
- The schools in the vicinity are already full to bursting. Is a new school going to be built to cope with the influx of children coming to the area? The houses are likely to be 3 and 4 bedroom houses so will hold families with children.
- Leighton had a population of around 5,000. There is no doctor's surgery in the village and no supermarket. Are new ones being proposed or planned?
- Is the site not directly on or next to a historical roman walkway?
- Will the council be considering a revised speed limit of 20 mph on Parker's Road or are they happy for it to continue to be used as a drag strip? With an increase of footfall in the area this could cause serious accidents. The limit is 30mph but this is never adhered to, especially by those using Parker's Road as a short cut in order to avoid Bradfield Road.
- Local residents living on Parkfield at the top near Parker's Road have already suffered while Parker's Road was being dug up last year.

- Concern with over saturation of detached houses in this area and fear selling one of the older houses on Parkfield or Mills Way will become impossible or at least cause negative equity for many.
- Residents who attended the public meeting at Mablins Lane School in 2011 were never posted a letter asking if they would like to comment on the application for the houses being built currently. The first they knew was when the developer put signs up and the end of the road when it was blocked off for water works. They would have opposed the current works for the same reasons as above.

### **Leighton Hospital**

- The latest application includes three variations of two and three bedroom bungalows. The Hospital's previous concern was in relation to the ability of the surrounding road network to cope with additional demand from this development – but that there was at least some mitigation with the inclusion of footpaths and cycle lanes, linking the development to the surrounding employment areas and district centres, thus enabling alternative (and sustainable) means for transport as opposed to a reliance on the private motor vehicle.
- Since some of the proposed bungalows are wheelchair accessible we now feel that this will place even more burden on the local road infrastructure. This is because this particular demographic group is far more reliant on travel by private motor vehicle. They are also reliant on a support network and their attendant carers will also drive single occupancy vehicles to and from these properties on a daily basis, sometimes several times per day.
- The concern is purely in relation to the ability of the local road infrastructure to support the development with these additions. There is no issue with the bungalows or wheelchair users per se.
- There are difficulties for blue light vehicles attempting to negotiate Smithy Lane (in both directions) and the traffic attempting to part as the road is not sufficiently wide enough. Due to the location of the ambulance service in the north west the hospital has not only blue light vehicles accessing the site but also have the same vehicles blue lighting from the site to the next call. It is only a matter of time before an inbound ambulance meets and outbound one.
- This situation arises because the two largest employers in the area, Bentley Motors, and the Hospital, both rely on the Smithy Lane / Minshull New Road /Bradfield Road / Flowers Lane island, and this is severely compromised at certain times of the day.
- It is also unclear from the Section 106 Agreement relating to Planning Approval 11/1879N how the improvements to the traffic island will be managed and funded. Indeed the November 2014 Section 106 agreement seems to concern itself more with the improvements of the Remer Street Corridor than this roundabout.
- Suggest that as an early deliverable that the traffic management risks at this island are sustainably managed and reduced via this development.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Main Issues**

The site lies in the Open Countryside as designated in the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan First Review, where policies NE2 and RES5 state that only development which is essential for

the purposes of, agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted.

However, the granting of the outline planning permission established the acceptability in principle of residential development on this site and this application does not present an opportunity to re-examine those issues.

The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle and the main issues in the consideration of this application are sustainability of detailed design, layout, appearance, scale and landscaping of the proposal (the reserved matters) in terms of economic, social and environmental factors.

## **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Affordable Housing**

The overall level of affordable housing provision was established through the Section 106 Agreement attached to the outline planning permission. However, comments were awaited at the time of report preparation from the Council's housing officer in respect of the detail of the on site provision and an update will be provided for Members prior to the meeting.

### **Amenity**

The nearest neighbouring properties are those at the junction of Flowers Lane and Parkers Road. The recommended 21.3m between principal windows and 13.7m between principal elevations and flank elevations will be achieved between the proposed dwellings and these existing properties. Therefore, it is considered that an adequate level of privacy and light will be maintained to existing properties.

To turn to the standard of amenity within the site, the scheme falls slightly short of the recommended 21.3m between principal windows and 13.7m between principal and flank elevations, as set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance, in some cases. Between some plots, these distances will be reduced to approximately 17m between principal windows. However, in these instances, the properties are not directly facing each other and are at an oblique angle.

The Council's SPG advocates the provision of 50sq.m of private amenity space for all new family dwellings. A number of plots fail to achieve this standard and the minimum garden areas are now approximately 45sq.m.

Whilst the proposal fails to meet all the requirements of the Council's SPG of the adopted Local Plan, the provision of an adequate standard of amenity for future residents must be balanced against the need to make the best use of land and the proposed increase in the number of properties to be built on this site will contribute to the Council's housing land supply and will ease pressure to develop other Greenfield and open countryside sites within the Borough.

Environmental Protection have recommended conditions relating to restricting hours of piling and requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. These were imposed on the outline consent and as a result there is no need for them to be replicated on this reserved matters approval.

### **Open space**

The layout approved at the outline stage included provision for a large central formal open space, incorporating a NEAP Standard children's play area within Phase A, and a further area of informal recreation space, adjacent to the Flowers Lane Access, as part of Phase B. The Section 106 agreement also included provision for a private management company to be set up by the developer to maintain the open spaces within the development.

Therefore, all of the formal open space requirements, and much of the informal open space were provided as part of Phase A. As these reserved matters relate only to Phase B, the only part of the open space falling to be considered as part of this application are the treatment and landscaping of those incidental areas open space around the northern perimeter. Comments were awaited from the Greenspaces Officer at the time of report preparation and these will be included within an update report.

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure requirements such as education and highways contributions were dealt with at the outline stage.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Ecology**

Article 12 (1) of the EC Habitats Directive requires Member states to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of certain animal species prohibiting the deterioration or destruction of breeding sites and resting places. Art. 16 of the Directive provides that if there is no satisfactory alternative and the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range, then Member States may derogate *"in the interests of public health and public safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment"* among other reasons.

The Directive is then implemented in England and Wales : The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. ("The Regulations"). The Regulations set up a licensing regime dealing with the requirements for derogation under Art. 16 and this function is carried out by Natural England.

The Regulations provide that the Local Planning Authority must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of their functions.

It should be noted that, since a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, the planning authority must have regard to the requirements for derogation referred to in Article 16 and the fact that Natural England will have a role in ensuring that the requirements for derogation set out in the Directive are met.

If it appears to the planning authority that circumstances exist which make it very likely that the requirements for derogation will not be met, then the planning authority will need to consider whether, taking the development plan and all other material considerations into account, planning permission should be refused. Conversely, if it seems from the information that the requirements are likely to be met, then there would be no impediment to planning permission in this regard. If it is unclear whether the requirements will be met or not, a balanced view taking into account the particular circumstances of the application should be taken and the guidance in the NPPF. In line with guidance in the NPPF, appropriate mitigation and enhancement should be secured if planning permission is granted.

In this case, the detailed design of the core ecological mitigation located to the north of the site has been dealt with through the discharge of a condition attached to the 2011 outline permission. The Council's Ecologist advises that landscape proposals for the open space located along the northern boundary of the application boundary are required.

He advises that landscaping proposals for this element of the site should be submitted for this part of the site as part of this reserved matters application. He also advises that the required landscape details should include proposals for the creation of native species hedgerows to compensate for those lost as a result of the development. This has been brought to the attention of the developer and additional landscaping information has been submitted.

The northern part of the open space area associated with the development was included in the terrestrial habitat provision made as part of the Great Crested Newt mitigation strategy agreed at the outline stage for this site. The design of this area, which will need to integrate ecology, landscape and open space requirements, needs careful thought if it is going to be successful.

With this in mind he advises that the submitted plan, whilst being broadly acceptable is so far that it includes grass and tree planting lacks sufficient detail to be satisfied that a suitable landscaping scheme would be delivered. If consent is granted this matter could be differed to a condition.

However, Condition 7 of the outline permission (reference 11/1879N) already requires the submission of a landscaping scheme for each phase. In addition condition 11 of outline (11/1879N) requires the submission of a habitat management plan to be submitted prior to the commencement of development. These two conditions are still outstanding.

The landscaping scheme for this reserved matters application must work in combination with any scheme produced to discharge condition 7 and 11 of the outline permission.

## **Landscape**

The design and access statement is the same as submitted with the outline. The layout plan as submitted reproduces in very poor quality and the layout does not fully accord with the outline masterplan.

The Landscape Officer has now considered the additional landscape information which has been submitted and commented that the revised layout appears to be more closely aligned to the outline masterplan. An access path to plot 157 appears to encroach into the landscape buffer to the north and that this should be amended. The Landscape strategy appears to be reasonable although full landscape details will be required prior to the commencement of development. This could be secured by condition.

## **Forestry**

The submission as originally received did not contain any detailed arboricultural information. There was insufficient information to allow an assessment of the impact on existing trees and in this respect the application does not accord with the guidelines contained within BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction- Recommendations.

This was also brought to the attention of the developer and further information has been submitted, which has been considered by the Landscape Officer. The submission now includes an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement. The AIA suggest there are no anticipated construction impacts and there is good separation between trees and development. However, the site plan in the assessment does not accord with the layout plan now submitted, with the area to the west of the site differing. The social relationship between retained trees and plots 153 and 157 appear poor. Consequently, the Landscape Officer has recommended the layout of these plots is revisited.

Provided an acceptable layout is achieved, conditions are recommended to secure a revised tree protection scheme plan adherence to the approved tree protection scheme and the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and a schedule of tree works to be submitted/ approved/implemented.

## **Drainage and Flooding**

The Council's Flood Risk Manager and the Environment Agency have raised no objection subject to drainage conditions. These were, however, attached to the outline consent and do not need to be repeated here.

## **Design**

The layout of the site is a continuation of the Phase A and therefore a similar development. The properties are orientated in such a way that active frontage is provided to the roads and a sense of enclosure and overlooking is maintained. The density, of the development and the spacing between the dwellings will not appear out of character with that of the remaining part of the site and the adjoining development.

To turn to elevational detail, the surrounding development comprises a mixture of ages and architectural styles, ranging from single-storey properties to two-storey properties. Notwithstanding this, there is consistency in terms of materials with most walls being finished in simple red brick; some properties incorporate render and cladding. The predominant roof forms are gables although some are hipped and most are finished in grey concrete tiles.

The properties are traditional gabled and pitched roofed dwellings which incorporate features such as lean-to porches and window head details that add visual interest to the elevations and are similar to other properties in the vicinity. The proposals are in keeping with those on the Phase A development and it is considered that the proposed dwellings would be appropriate for the site and in keeping with the character of the surroundings.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Highway Safety and Traffic Generation**

The proposal site benefits from outline permission for 223 dwellings and is being developed as part of the wider Parker's Road site for a total of 400 dwellings (including the 223 that are the subject of this reserved matters application). Access was not a reserved matter in that application and therefore the means of access and off-site transport impacts and mitigation were addressed at that time. It is therefore the internal layout that is assessed.

The plans appear to indicate a general layout of roads around the development of 5.5m carriageway with two x 2.0m footways and this is to be expected for the adoptable highway.

The SHM notes the inclusion of angular feature squares within the development that seem to be intended to break up the straight lines of the road and built form. It is also noted that these appear to be replicated from Phase A but would request that track analysis is provided around such features for a large bin lorry to ensure ease of access within the development. Track analysis should also be provided for refuse vehicles turning in each of the different type of turning head proposed.

Parts of the development are accessed from private access points with up to five dwellings served off each point. The principle of such access is acceptable. However, in more than one situation the distances of 70m or more from the highway are noted. Householders should not be expected to walk more than 30m with their refuse and operatives should not be expected to walk more than 25m to collect it. This issue should be addressed either by revision to the layout and/or in terms of suitable refuse collection points being provided within the development along or close to these private access points.

Suitable parking provision needs to be provided at dwellings; two spaces for 2 or 3 bedroom dwellings and three spaces for 4+ dwellings, at dimensions of 5.0m x 2.5m. Where garages are relied upon as parking spaces they need to meet the Cheshire East Council minimum dimensions.

The SHM notes a long straight section of road running through the centre of the site passing through a rectangular feature on the road. There also appears to be a road feature to the

north of this rectangular feature. It is not clear whether or not vertical deflections are intended. Clarity is required on this point as Cheshire East Council does not favour vertical deflections. It will, however, be necessary to control speeds on what is currently proposed as a long, straight section of road with suitable layout design.

These queries have been raised with the developer and further information has been provided. In response the SHM has confirmed the following:

1. Feature Squares and Tracking. The tracking for the bin lorry does, at face value indicate vehicles successfully negotiating these feature squares.
2. Private Driveways and Refuse Collection. The applicant has now indicated a number of refuse collection points on the latest layout plans for the longer private drives.
3. Paving Provision and Garage Sizes. On the basis that garage sizes will replicate those approved in Phase 1 (which the developer has confirmed) the SHM would be content given approval of these house types/garage sizes.
4. Vertical Deflections. The developer has confirmed that these are proposed at feature junctions. Although CEC does not favour vertical deflection measures if such measures are proposed and they are simply replicating Phase 1 measures then Strategic Infrastructure would have no objection. The developer has confirmed that this is the case

Consequently the SHM has no objection to the application.

Leighton Hospital has raised concerns about the wheelchair accessible bungalows on the basis that their occupants and carers would increase traffic on congested routes around the hospital used by ambulances.

In responses, it is noted that the original consent required the provision of bungalows as part of the phase 2 development. Building Regulations require wheelchair accessibility but it does not necessarily mean that all such properties will be occupied by wheelchair users. There is no planning condition restricting their occupation to these groups. Therefore bungalows make up only a percentage of the dwellings proposed, and of these only a percentage will be occupied by those with mobility problems or requiring visiting carers. Therefore the additional traffic generation would be minimal.

Furthermore, traffic generation and the impact on the blue light routes was considered at the outline stage. A package of mitigation agreed with the highway authority and hospital including S106 contributions to the Remer St corridor, the rebuilding of the Flowers Lane junction by the Developer under a Section 38 Agreement (hence why it is not referred to in the Section 106 as mentioned in the hospital representation) and walking and cycling measures, all of which will be implemented when the appropriate trigger points in terms of completion of units within the development are met.

On this basis, whilst the hospital's concerns are understood, it is not considered that the form sustainable grounds for refusal.

## **CONCLUSION**

Subject to the receipt of the amended plans to address the relationship between retained trees and plots 153 and 157 and the pedestrian access within the POS and outstanding

consultation responses, for the reasons given above, and having due regard to all other material considerations it is considered that the proposed development complies with the relevant Local Plan policies.

The proposal is therefore economically, environmentally and socially sustainable and accordingly it is recommended for approval subject to the standard conditions relating to approved plans, materials, boundary treatment and landscaping.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPROVE Subject to receipt of amended plans amended plans to address the relationship between retained trees and plots 153 and 157 and the pedestrian access within the POS and the following Conditions:**

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Boundary treatment**
- 5. Landscape scheme**
- 6. Landscape implementation**
- 7. A revised tree protection scheme plan**
- 8. Adherence to the approved tree protection scheme and the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement.**
- 9. A schedule of tree works to be submitted/ approved/implemented.**

