



**ERECTION OF A
DWELLINGHOUSE**

**LAND AT
THE WARREN,
8 CARBONE HILL,
NORTHAW
POTTERS BAR EN6 4LP**

PLANNING STATEMENT

MARCH 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Application

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Paul Dickinson & Associates, Town Planning and Development Consultants, in support of a planning application for the erection of detached dwellinghouse on land at The Warren, 8 Carbone Hill, Cuffley, Potters Bar EN6 4PL. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr Ian and Mrs Philippa Cooper, the landowners.
- 1.2 The Statement describes how the proposal accords with the development plan (the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005) and other material considerations including national policy and the emerging Draft Local Plan 2013-2032.
- 1.3 The application site lies in the Green Belt. National policy and local plan policies allow limited infilling in villages in the Green Belt. The Courts have determined that whether or not a proposed development constitutes “limited infilling in a village” is a question of planning judgement and depends on an assessment of the position on the ground. The policy therefore requires the decision-maker to consider whether, as a matter of fact on the ground, the site appears to be in the village.
- 1.4 This Statement explains how the site is an infill plot and forms a gap in an otherwise continuous developed frontage of residential properties along Carbone Hill. As such it constitutes limited infilling with a village which is appropriate development and allowed in the Green Belt in accordance with national and local plan policies. I also refer throughout my Statement to the recent planning permission 6/2023/0677/FULL granted on the opposite (southwest) side of No. 8 Carbone Hill where the Council confirmed the site involved limited infilling within a village and was appropriate development in the Green Belt.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Application Site

- 2.1 The site comprises a broadly rectangular plot of about 0.31 ha. It has maximum dimensions of about 38 m width x 85 m depth. For comparison purposes, the infill plot for the approved dwelling under permission 6/2023/0677/FULL on the opposite side of No. 8 Carbone Hill had a site area of 0.39 ha and up to 50m wide x 85 m depth.
- 2.2 The site currently forms part of a garden to The Warren (No 8 Carbone Hill) which is situated to the southwest. The main garden area for The Warren is immediately to the south of the house. There is also a detached garage set back into the site which would be demolished (there is ample existing hard surfacing in front of No. 8 which would be used for vehicle parking). The site is very well contained by mature trees and hedging along the front boundary to Carbone Hill so that it does not offer any views into or out of the site and is seen as an existing gap in the street scene.



Photograph 1 – Google street view showing No 8 Carbone Hill on right



Photograph 2 – Google street view showing No. 14 Carbone Hill on left

The Proposed Development

- 2.3 The application proposes the erection of a 5 bed detached dwellinghouse over two storeys with a detached double garage. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application describes the design principles of the proposal which reflects the contents of the site and surrounding area in terms of size, bulk, massing, siting, height and use of materials. The design has traditional Arts and Crafts influence. The principal materials are brick with off-white render gable details and includes architectural styles and detailing such as a porch with stitched quoin brick detailing, arched head and gable designs together with the use of traditional flush casement windows with brick cills and headers and a front bay to reflect the local vernacular. The roof has been designed with red clay tiles and sprocket eaves detailing. These materials and detailing are similar to those approved by the Council on the infill plot on the opposite side of No. 8 Carbone Hill under permission 6/2023/0677/FULL.
- 2.4 The proposed house would be set about 20 metres back from the Carbone Hill boundary (the same as the approved infill under 6/2023/0677/FULL) and the

- main two-storey element would be set in about 9 to 10 metres from each of the side boundaries thereby reflecting the prevailing character of large houses set well within spacious plots and retaining mature trees and hedging to the boundaries. This proposal is narrower than the proposal on the opposite side of No. 8 to reflect the fact this is a slightly narrower plot. The detached double garage would be positioned in front of the house and to the side of the forecourt. 'Highwood', immediately on the opposite side of Carbone Hill from the application site, has detached outbuildings including garaging in a similar position in front of its property so this is a characteristic of this part of the street.
- 2.5 The dwelling would be served via a new access from Carbone Hill. The site layout plan shows that this section of Carbone Hill is fairly straight and there is a wide highway verge so that the necessary visibility splays of 43m x 2.4m for a 30 mph section of road can easily be achieved and provides good visibility in both directions. Refuse collection would be from the road as with the other neighbouring residential dwellings.
- 2.6 The layout has also taken into account the tree survey and tree constraints information provided by GHA Trees and submitted with this application. This will ensure that all trees and boundary screening which make a contribution to the character of the area and street scene will be retained.

3.0 RELEVANT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework February December 2023 (NPPF) maintains a pro-growth agenda for the planning system. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development that means that development proposals should be approved without delay where they accord with an up-to-date development plan or, where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole.
- 3.2 National policies that are most relevant to the application include (these remain unchanged from the recent infill application 6/2023/0677/FULL except for new paragraph numbers):
- **To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay (para. 60);**
 - **Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly (para. 70);**
 - **Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and**

appropriate and effective landscaping, (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, such as increased densities; (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place; (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development; and (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible (para. 135);

- **A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it is for one of the specified exceptions, one of which includes ‘limited infilling in villages’ (para. 154).**

Development plan policies

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036

The development plan for the purposes of S70(2) to the TCPA 1990 and S38(6) to the PCPA 2004 is the is the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036 adopted October 2023. The following policies are most relevant to the application:

SP1 – Delivering sustainable development

SP3 – Settlement strategy and Green Belt boundaries

SADM1 – Windfall development

SADM2 – Highway network and safety

SP9 – Place making and high quality design

SADM11 – Amenity and layout

SADM12 – Parking, servicing and refuse

SADM34 – Development in the Green Belt

4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Green Belt Policy

- 4.1 The site lies in the Green Belt. Paragraphs 154 and 155 to the Framework set out the categories of development which are appropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 154(e) states that 'limited infilling in villages' is not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
- 4.2 Local Plan Policy SADM34 deals with development within the Green Belt. It states that within the Green Belt, planning permission will be granted for development in accordance with national policy and other policies in the plan subject to criteria set out in the rest of the policy. It states that limited infill development will be permitted in villages within the Green Belt. Under the specific heading 'Infill Development' the policy sets out four criteria:
- (i) it is within a continuous built-up frontage,**
 - (ii) it does not extend the existing built-up area of the village into the open countryside,**
 - (iii) it would not result in the loss of a view or vista which makes a significant contribution to the character of the settlement, and**
 - (iv) it is small scale and would not result in the provision of more than four dwellings (net).**
- 4.3 The Officers Report to the previous infill application 6/2023/0677/FULL give significant weight to the SADM34 criteria in assessing that application and determining that it was acceptable and met the criteria. They are therefore the same criteria which provide an appropriate benchmark against which to assess to the current application.

- 4.4 The first question to determine is whether the site lies within a village. The Court of Appeal decision in Wood v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Gravesham Borough Council [2015] EWCA Civ 195 considered the interpretation of national Green Belt policy in the Framework relating to 'limited infilling in villages'. The Courts determined that whether or not a proposed development constituted 'limited infilling in villages' for the purpose of national policy was a question of planning judgement and would depend on an assessment of the position on the ground.
- 4.5 The policy requires the decision-maker to consider whether, as a matter of fact on the ground, the site appears to be in the village. I consider there are a number of indicators to show this is read as part of the village. Cuffley is categorised as a 'village' in both the adopting and emerging local plans. This linear development forms part of the north-west edges of Cuffley village which itself includes facilities such as a pub, church, school and railway station. The site lies within a long ribbon development of large detached houses running along both sides of Carbone Hill. The general density and clustered pattern of linear development of houses fronting the road is a clear indicator that this is within a village.
- 4.6 As well as the visual presence of the linear development of residential dwellinghouses themselves, there are other physical indicators that this section of Carbone Hill can be considered to be within a village rather than in the countryside. These include numerous crossovers and drives to dwellings and associated house signs, entrance gates, boundary walls and fences and telephone poles with spurs off to individual properties. The roadside verges are more formal and regularly maintained with mowing stripes etc (rather than just casual topping done by a Council tractor once or twice a year which is more typical of country lanes outside villages). Similarly, the hedges to properties are more regularly and formally cut. There are yellow Neighbourhood Watch signs. This section of road is within a 30mph speed limit with regular repeater signs.

- There are street lights on the section of road from the site leading into the centre of Cuffley village and specifically a street light immediately opposite the proposed entrance. Finally, there is the attendant activities associated with these dwellings of persons coming and going from these properties, parked cars and regular service and delivery vehicles.
- 4.7 Therefore for all the above reasons, and taking account of facts on the ground, I conclude the site is read as a part of the village of Cuffley.
- 4.8 The Officer Report to the recent planning application 9/202/0677/FULL noted that the defined settlement boundary ends approximately 400 metres as the crow flies before the application site, but that ribbon development continues out of the settlement on both sides of the road which is intersecting by Vineyards Road to the south and Carbone Hill to the north. The report notes that the street scene remains verdant and open when passing the site into and out of the defined settlement with spacings between dwellings remaining mostly consistent. The character and appearance of the area between the outer limits of the defined settlement along The Ridgeway and the application site is considered to be relatively consistent and unchanged. Accordingly the Officers Report concluded that site is considered to lie within a village for planning policy purposes.
- 4.9 The current application site is the opposite side of No. 8 Carbone Hill from the recent approval. The linear development continues and plot sizes and widths remain consistent on this side of No. 8. It is therefore considered that the current application site also lies within a village for planning policy purposes.
- 4.10 I consider the site complies with the criteria relating to infilling in villages set out in adopted Policy SADM34 for the following reasons:
- (1) It is within a continuous built-up frontage: The site comprises a gap within a continuous built-up frontage of linear development of residential dwellings lying on both sides of Carbone Hill running northeast from the

junction with the B157 The Ridgeway. There are residential dwellings adjacent on each side of the infill plot. This linear development extends for at least a further 300 metres to the northeast before finishing at the point Carbone Hill turns to the north where there is a distinct change in character and the linear development ends and open countryside begins with sporadic individual houses. On the ground, this reads as the clear and defined edge of the village. Therefore the application site is well within the village and situated in a continuous built-up frontage. See urban grain plan.

- (2) It does not extend the existing built-up area of the village into the open countryside: As indicated above, the linear residential development along this section of Carbone Hill continues on for more than 300 metres to the northeast before the linear development ends and there is open countryside (this is also the end of the 30mph speed limit). The development of this infill plot therefore would not extend the existing built-up area of the village.
- (3) It would not result in the loss of a view or vista which makes a significant contribution to the character of the settlement: The application site is well screened by mature trees and hedging along the Carbone Hill boundary so that it does not provide any use views or vistas. The new dwelling would be set back about 20 metres from this boundary so that existing trees and other vegetation would be retained unchanged. Overall the proposal would not materially alter or appear out of keeping with the street scene.
- (4) It is small scale and would not result in the provision of more than four dwellings (net): The proposal is for a single detached dwellinghouse and therefore is small scale (below the policy threshold of four dwellings net). The plot width would be consistent with the character of development on

this side of Carbone Hill which comprises large detached houses in substantial plots. See urban grain plan.

- 4.11 In summary, the proposal constitutes 'limited infilling' as it relates to one dwelling and is an infill plot within continuous linear development with existing dwellinghouses on each side. The infill plot would be of a size and shape comparable to plots of adjoining development and would have an existing frontage to the road. The size and shape of the plot enables the proposed house to be accommodate with ample spacing around it and to plot boundaries allowing the retention of existing boundary trees and vegetation and therefore maintaining the prevailing character of development along the street. The proposed dwellinghouse follows the building line established by its neighbours. Therefore the infill development would be consistent with the established pattern of development and would not extend the village into open countryside.
- 4.12 This is consistent with the findings of the Officers Report to application 6/2023/0677/FULL. This concluded that proposal would be limited infilling (one dwelling) with appropriate gaps to each side and would follow the front building line of the dwellings along this part of Carbone Hill. It considered the proposed dwelling would be within a continuous built up frontage and also it would not extend the existing built up area of the village into open countryside or result in the loss of a view or vista which makes a significant contribution to the character of the settlement. Accordingly it considered the proposal would represent limited infilling in a village and would be appropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 4.13 For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal constitutes limited infilling in a village and as such is appropriate development in the Green Belt which accords with NPPF paragraph 154(e) and would comply with the criteria in adopted Policy SADM34. The Courts have held that for appropriate development in the Green Belt, an assessment of Green Belt openness and the purposes of including land within it is not required.

Design

- 4.14 Policy SP9 requires all developments to achieve high quality design. I explained above that the infill plot is a similar width and achieves similar gaps to boundaries compared with neighbouring plots (and the recent permission 6/2023/0677/FULL) and the proposed dwellinghouse follows the building line established by its neighbours. Therefore the infill development would be consistent with the established pattern of development and would not extend the village into open countryside. Based on the above reasons, I consider the proposal to be acceptable with regard to its context.
- 4.15 The proposed dwelling is set back 20 metres from the Carbone Hill boundary and would ensure the retention of frontage trees and hedging so that the wider street scene views would remain unchanged (other than a new gated entrance which is an existing characteristic of this section of the road). The scale, massing and design of the proposed dwelling reflects the local vernacular styling of neighbouring properties. The infill plot would not result in a scale or design of development that would appear incongruous or harmful to the character of the settlement. Therefore the proposal would not result in any harm to the character of the area.
- 4.16 The Officer's Report to application 6/2023/0677/FULL concluded that the scale and design of that proposal would respect and relate to the dwellings within the context of the site. The principal elevation of the dwelling would face towards Carbone Hill, and features of the dwelling would be in keeping with the gable and Dutch roof features that are characteristic of the wider area. The proposed material palette, which included white render, red clay tiles, brickwork and timber, would be consistent and in keeping with the material palette of the wider area. The ridge height of the proposed dwelling would respect the roof heights of adjoining neighbours and there would be generous separation gaps to the boundaries. The current application has been prepared by the same architects as the previous application. The same considerations have been retained so

that the scale massing design features materials and separation gaps would be acceptable and ensure that the character of the area is maintained.

- 4.17 The proposal therefore accords with adopted Policy SP9 which requires high quality design informed by an analysis of the site's character and context including the wider townscape and landscape and to provide coherent and attractive forms and elevations and use high quality materials.

Neighbour amenity

- 4.18 The proposal would not result in loss of residential amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties and would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants including compliance with national space standards. The separation distances to neighbouring properties are very generous and, together with the retained intervening mature boundary trees, this will ensure that there is no unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy.

Trees

- 4.19 The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan prepared in accordance with BS5837:2012 recommendations by GHA Trees. The statement concludes that the proposed site layout and all of its associated structures allows for the healthy retention of all of the trees on the site itself, and within nearby adjacent sites and therefore the arboricultural landscape character of the site will be retained.
- 4.20 The only trees required to be removed are G6 mixed scrub (holly, laurel, hazel, sweet chestnut, hornbeam, yew) and G25 (Purple leaf plum, fig, cypress, mixed shrubs). These are both assessed as Category C and therefore not a constraint on development and do not make any contribution to the visual amenity of the street scene. The proposed access can be constructed between T4 and T5 using no-dig methods where necessary.

Bats

- 4.21 A Bat Survey Report of the garage to be demolished was undertaken by NCM Associates in August 2023 and is submitted with the application. The survey assessed that there was negligible potential for bat presence or bat roosts in the building because there were no suitable external crevices or cavities and there is no loft or roof void. No signs of any bat activity were found in the building. The report concludes that the garage was not identified as a bat roost or hibernation site and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required..

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposal constitutes infilling in a village and is therefore appropriate development which accords with national Green Belt policy at para. 154(e) to the Framework. It also complies with the criteria in adopted policy SADM34.
- 5.2 The application site is located within a long ribbon of large detached houses that extends outwards the village centre and for the reasons set out above it reads as within a village in the Green Belt.
- 5.3 The proposal is limited infilling within the village providing a single house in a gap plot within a built-up linear frontage of other residential properties. There are existing houses on both sides and the development continues along Carbone Hill in both directions. The proposal would not result in encroachment into open countryside or extending the village into open and undeveloped parts of the Green Belt (the edge of the village is about 300 metres further to the east) and would not result in the loss of any views or vistas. The infill plot would not result in a scale or design of development that would appear incongruous or harmful to the character of the settlement.
- 5.4 The proposal would not result in any harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants. The proposal would not result in the unacceptable loss of any trees.
- 5.5 The Council has a recently adopted local plan (October 2023) which makes housing provision for the period to 2036. However the latest Housing Delivery Test results published in January 2024 shows that the Council has achieved only 57% of its housing target over the last three years (a shortfall of 972 dwellings over the three years) and therefore the presumption in favour of development applies.

- 5.6 The proposals are sustainable development that would contribute to the three overarching economic, social and environmental objectives at para. 8 to the Framework. The following benefits weigh in favour of the proposals:
- Economic objective – Provides land for housing to support economic growth and is immediately available for housing development to support economic growth. It offers benefits to the local community and local economy including creation of jobs and supply chain investment associated with the construction stage and increased demand for local goods and services over the long-term occupation of the dwelling. The proposal offers financial benefit from the payment of the New Homes Bonus which is a material consideration.
 - Social objective – Supports a strong and vibrant community by contributing to the supply of housing and meets the Government’s policy to significantly boost the supply of housing and makes a modest contribution to the objectively assessed housing needs of the Borough noting that the Council has a significant under delivery of housing (only 57% of target in the last three years) based on the latest Housing Delivery Test results.
 - Environmental objective – The proposal delivers additional housing without harm to the built, historic or natural environment and without harm to the character and visual amenity of the area. It provides an acceptable standard of amenity for existing and future occupants in accordance with emerging Local Plan and national standards.
- 5.7 I conclude that based on the above evidence, the proposed development accords with the development plan and other material considerations, including Green Belt and other national policy.
- 5.8 The benefits of making a limited but still important contribution to the supply of housing attracts significant positive weight. The social, economic and

environmental benefits indicated above would also carry positive weight in favour of the proposals. The only harm identified in the officer's report to the previous application was that there is no direct footpath between the application site and the shops and services within Cuffley although it was accepted that cycling could be an option for some. Having regard to the overall planning balance, I do not consider there are any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the framework taken as a whole and therefore planning permission should be granted.

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27 March 2024