

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL BOARD
14TH MARCH 2002
REPORT OF CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

PCB 14.3.02
PART 1
ITEM NO.
FOR DECISION
CPO

- A) **S6/2001/1153/DE**
ERECTION OF 211 DWELLINGS WITH GARAGING, PARKING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE (RESERVED MATTERS FOLLOWING OUTLINE PERMISSION
S6/1999/1064/OP)
- B) **S6/2001/1448/DE**
ERECTION OF 56 DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED GARAGES, PARKING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE (RESERVED MATTERS FOLLOWING OUTLINE PERMISSION
S6/1999/1064/OP)
- C) **S6/2001/1463/DE**
ERECTION OF 68 DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED GARAGES, PARKING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE (RESERVED MATTERS FOLLOWING OUTLINE PERMISSION
S6/1999/1064/OP)

LAND AT HATFIELD AERODROME, HATFIELD

APPLICANT: ARLINGTON PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED

(Hatfield North)

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Board, on 14th February 2002, Members considered and approved the Framework Plan and Design Statement for the development of the land allocated for residential use in the master plan for the Hatfield Aerodrome site. Outline planning permission for the residential development of this land was granted on 29th December 2000 subject to a Section 106 agreement and various conditions covering a wide range of matters.

The three applications now before the Board are for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to that outline permission. Although the applications are in the name of Arlington Property Developments as the overall site developer, application A) is for Bovis Homes and applications B) and C) for Bryant Homes. Members will recall that the whole residential land allocated is split in a 75:25 ratio between Bovis and Bryant. The proposals deal with the first phase of development of the residential land as indicated on the Framework Plan, and would account for 335 dwellings in total, being approximately one third of the overall number of units indicated for the Aerodrome site by the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in November 1999. The submitted plans deal with the siting, design, external appearance and means of access to the dwellings in the first phase, together with the basic distribution of structural landscape planting.

2.0 **RELEVANT POLICIES**

- 2.1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No. 1 (1998);
British Aerospace inset.
Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance – November 1999
- 2.2 Central Government Planning Policy Guidance Notes: No. 3 (Housing 2001), No. 13 (Transport 2001)

3.0 **PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 The applications have been advertised in the local press. There are no existing residential properties neighbouring the site, so no individual letters of notification have been sent, though Ellenbrook Residents Association has been notified of application A).
- 3.2 At the time of preparation of this report, no comments have been received from residents or from Hatfield Town Council. The Welwyn Hatfield Access Group comments that all applications should be considered in accordance with the criteria in the adopted District Plan concerning disabled access.
- 3.3 The comments of the County Council as Highway Authority have been taken into account in assessing the proposed layouts, and are discussed where appropriate below. The comments of other technical consultees were considered at outline stage, and dealt with by condition. The Environment Agency has made additional comments on these applications concerning opportunities for minimisation of quantity of water drawn from the public supply, and for attenuation and storage of surface water.

4.0 **DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 In assessing the detailed proposals in each of the three applications, my staff and I have had regard to the guidance contained in the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (particularly Chapter 13 – Area Brief – Residential) concerning housing mix, provision of affordable housing, density and open space, as well as design issues such as permeability, surveillance, visual continuity and enclosure, use of gateway features and variation in roof heights. Advice in PPG 3 on housing densities and parking standards has also been taken into account, as well as advice in PPG 13 on parking and accessibility.
- 4.2 Consideration of the applications has proceeded in parallel with the finalisation of the Framework Plan and Design Statement, and the design approach to each individual reserved matters application is expected to sit within the overall co-ordinated strategy of the two house builders as set out in the statement. In particular, the emphasis is on adapting standard house types where necessary, to secure an end result which combines the advantages of a traditional range of dwellings with a recognition of the essentially modern context of the site. I deal below with each of the three applications in turn:

4.3 **APPLICATION A)**

- 4.3.1 This application, for Bovis Homes, relates to land in the south-western corner of the site, adjoining the Green Belt to the west and opposite the new University halls of residence to the south. A total of 211 dwellings are proposed, at an average density of 36 dwellings per hectare, with 79 affordable units (37%) and a mix of sizes from 1-bed flats to 6 bed houses. The overall housing mix is; 1 – 2 bed units – 34%, 3 – bed units –

44%, 4 – bed units – 7%, 5 – bed units or larger – 15%. The density figure is within the range advised by PPG 3, although towards the lower end of this range, which reflects the location of this land parcel close to the Green Belt. It is proposed to provide a slightly higher proportion of affordable housing than required by the SPG or current Council policy on other sites; this however will be compensated for by a slightly reduced proportion on subsequent phases, to achieve 30% over the whole development. On this phase 13 units (6% of total) are shown as shared ownership houses. The overall mix departs from that indicated by the SPG in that slightly more 3 – bed and 5 – bed or larger units are shown, at the expense of 4 – bed units. If the current application is approved, I would expect the schemes for subsequent phases to correct this balance, to ensure that the SPG mix is delivered over the residential land as a whole.

- 4.3.2 The manner in which this phase of development is to be accessed has been agreed in the Framework Plan for the residential area; the parcel will be bisected by the main residential spine road which will enter from the public transport route running between the University site and the residential land. Either side of the spine road (which will also be the bus route), a small number of secondary roads would serve the residential development in this phase, making use of shared surfaces, private drives and parking courtyards.
- 4.3.3 Two principal cycleways would run north–south through the development, one alongside the spine road, and the other along the boundary of this parcel. Both routes would link the southern public transport corridor with the strategic east– west cycleway which passes through the centre of the residential area. Permeability in this phase of development would be encouraged by the provision of several informal pedestrian and cycle links running east–west, through to the Green Belt.
- 4.3.4 In terms of urban design there are several key features to the proposals, which have been refined through negotiations. The first of these is a ‘softened’ edge to the Green Belt, achieved by low density development of detached units in differing alignments, with the general building line broken up at three points by accessways and open space. Building height adjoining the Green Belt is two-storey with some rooms in roofs. Generally across the site there is a mixture of two and three storey development to give a variation in heights, with the three storey town houses and flat blocks facing the public transport corridor and spine road to provide a sense of enclosure.
- 4.3.5 Focal points would be created in the layout by the use of distinctive buildings at the south-western corner of the site, fronting the approach from the public transport corridor, and at the entrance to the residential spine road from the corridor. In the latter location, a ‘gateway’ effect would be created by the alignment of dwellings coupled with setback on either side of the tree lined spine road. Boulevard style planting would be continued northwards along the road, linking in to the first major area of open space immediately to the north of this phase. Play area requirements for this phase are intended to be met partly on that northern open space and partly on land to the east, though there is provision for a Local Area for Play (LAP) towards the south-west corner of the application site.
- 4.3.6 Generally, the proposals, though based on a conventional range of house and flat types, show variety in housing mix and street scene appearance, with good levels of permeability and accessibility to non-car means of transport. Car parking provision is based on the SPG standards, with some relaxation for the smaller units, particularly the affordable housing, to accord with advice in PPG3 of a general maximum of 1.5 spaces per unit and to give more amenity space to the flat blocks in particular.

4.4 APPLICATION B)

- 4.4.1 This application relates to a smaller parcel of land, to be developed by Bryant Homes further to the north adjoining the proposed school site. The number of dwellings proposed here is 56 at an average density of 45 units per hectare. The 42 affordable units proposed in this parcel constitute 75% of total dwellings in this parcel, and this is because the next Bryant phase (part of the 'crescent' area fronting Central Park) will contain no affordable units, due to the complexity of producing a bespoke design for that area. The proportion of affordable units taken across both phases will be 30%, as required. Overall housing mix in this first application would be 44 1 and 2-bed units (79%), 10 3-bed units (18%) 1 4-bed unit and 1 5-bed unit (total 4%). This reflects the high proportion of smaller affordable units in this phase, and counter balancing of the mix will take place in subsequent applications.
- 4.4.2 The proposals contain a mixture of two and three-storey units, with eight bungalows as part of the affordable housing immediately northwest of the school site. The proposed bungalows have been relocated to this position during negotiation, in order to bring them closer to the intended bus route and community facilities. Key features are a row of three-storey town houses, to give enclosure to part of the central green area of the residential development, where the strategic east-west cycleway passes through on its route from the District Centre to the Green Belt, and the use of three-storey flat blocks as statement buildings, particularly at the end of the north-south section of the spine road. Generally, the proposed houses and flats front onto the roads and shared surfaces in a direct way, creating a traditional street form, with units linked by car ports or provided with rear access from parking courtyards. The layout is designed to be permeable to pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.4.3 The general architectural approach in this application contrasts with that of the Bovis application, but is also based on traditional housing design which appears to have worked well on other sites elsewhere in the country and should do so here. In discussion with the applicants, the house type details have been revised to create a more modern and urban feel, appropriate to the context of the site whilst retaining the essential integrity of the designs. A landscape policy statement has been submitted, together with an indicative landscape drawing showing the principle locations of the tree, shrub and hedge planting. In the event of approval of the scheme, further details of numbers and species of planting will be required.
- 4.4.4 This parcel of land occupies a critical position adjoining the proposed school site, and the layout has therefore had to take into account the need to limit points of vehicular access to the spine road to avoid conflicts with the potential school access and likely traffic congestion. Car parking standards are again in accordance with the SPG, subject to relaxation for the flat blocks and bungalows to one allocated space per units.

4.5 APPLICATION C)

- 4.5.1 This application contains proposals for the second part of the Bryant Homes first phase, which is located to the north and east of the site of application B) up to the northern end of the allocated residential land. This site adjoins the existing Booker distribution depot to the north, and the Ocado distribution centre which is under construction to the east.
- 4.5.2 The total number of dwellings proposed is 68, of which 19 (28%) would be affordable housing. The density of development would be 33 units to the hectare, towards the

lower end of the PPG3 density range, reflecting the location of the parcel away from the main infrastructure, and the relatively low proportion of flats.

The overall mix would be: 1 and 2-bed units – 21 (31%), 3-bed units – 30 (44%), 4-bed units – 14 (21%), 5-bed or larger units – 3 (4%). With the exception of a slightly greater number of 3-bed units, these figures are within the housing mix ranges set out in the SPG.

- 4.5.3 The same design principles have been applied as in the case of application B) above, with the greater proportion of private housing allowing the use of a wider range of house types, though the elevational styles are fairly simple and traditional, as is the case for the application B) parcel.

Again, the blocks of development front directly onto the minor access roads and shared surfaces, and units are linked in many cases by carports allowing access on each plot through to parking spaces, and in some cases garages, in rear garden areas.

Parking standards are in accordance with the SPG, with relaxation to 1 allocated space per unit for the flats.

The layout has a high level of permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.

- 4.5.4 A critical part of this parcel is the boundary with the adjoining commercial area, which contains substantial warehouse buildings and parking areas for both cars and commercial vehicles.

A conscious decision has been made to orientate development adjacent to this boundary towards the commercial area, to provide rear garden areas which are shielded to some extent from noise and other adverse impacts. The submitted indicative landscaping proposals show tree planting of mixed indigenous and evergreen species to take place within a 6 metre wide strip along the north eastern and north western boundaries of the application site with the commercial area, and more detail would need to be agreed in the event of approval of this housing scheme.

The strip is in addition to existing planting and mounding within the Booker site, and the agreed planting strip of around 10 m width within the Ocada site.

Although the width and planting of these buffer zones would, if the scheme is approved, go some way towards reducing the impact of the commercial activities and vehicle movements on the proposed residential properties, I still have some concerns about potential noise nuisance to the nearest plots.

Further work is currently being carried out by the Council's noise consultants and I would therefore recommend that in the event of approval a condition is imposed requiring a scheme of noise insulation measures (including extra glazing and acoustic ventilation where appropriate) for the affected part of the site to be agreed prior to the start of development and subsequently implemented prior to occupation.

5.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Since the first discussions with Bovis and Bryant Homes last year, considerable efforts have been made to refine the layouts and house designs in order to achieve the urban design objectives of the SPG and provide a style of building appropriate to the modern urban context of the site.

These negotiations have also involved the County Council as highway authority in achieving a road, cycleway and pedestrian access layout which promotes the accessibility and sustainability aims of the SPG, as well as housing colleagues within this Council, to ensure that the substantial amounts of affordable housing to be delivered through these applications is in appropriate locations and to the standard required by the Housing Corporation.

5.2 There are certain matters that remain to be resolved for all three application sites in terms of choice of materials and detailed landscaping proposals, both of which will have an important part to play in the final appearance and character of the development. I am satisfied, however, that these matters can be dealt with through appropriate conditions, and that the siting, design, and external appearance of the new housing in all three applications, and the relevant means of access are acceptable and can be approved.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

I recommend that the reserved matters of siting, design, external appearance and means of access are approved in respect of the three applications S6/2001/1153/DE, S6/2001/1448/DE and S6/2001/1463/DE, pursuant to the outline planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP, subject to the following conditions;

6.2 **S6/2001/1153/DE**

1. SC 19 MATERIALS – DETAILS TO BE SUBMITTED
2. Reserved matters have not been discharged in relation to landscaping, and a full landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of development and the approved scheme subsequently implemented in accordance with Condition 6 of outline planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP dated 29th December 2000.
REASON: To enhance the visual appearance of development.
3. No development shall commence until the details of a system for minimising the quantity of water drawn from the public supply have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
REASON: To reduce the impact of the development on the water environment in the interest of sustainable development.

6.3 **S6/2001/1448/DE**

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2. Reserved matters have not been discharged in relation to landscaping, and a full landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of development and the approved scheme subsequently implemented in accordance with Condition 6 of outline planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP dated 29th December 2000.
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6.4 **S6/2001/1463/DE**

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3. No development shall commence until the details of a system for minimising the quantity of water drawn from the public supply have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To reduce the impact of the development on the water environment in the interest of sustainable development.

4. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme of noise amelioration measures relating to the dwellings hereby approved shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority and the approved measures shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation of the dwellings to which they relate.

REASON: To prevent an unacceptable level of noise nuisance to occupiers of the new dwellings.

Background Papers

Applications S6/1999/1064/OP, S6/2001/1153/DE, S6/2001/1448/DE, S6/2001/1463/DE



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BRYANT HOMES SITE, HATFIELD

SCALE: 1:5000

DRAWN BY: LIZA WREN

DATE 4th March 2002

Drawing No

S8/2001/1483

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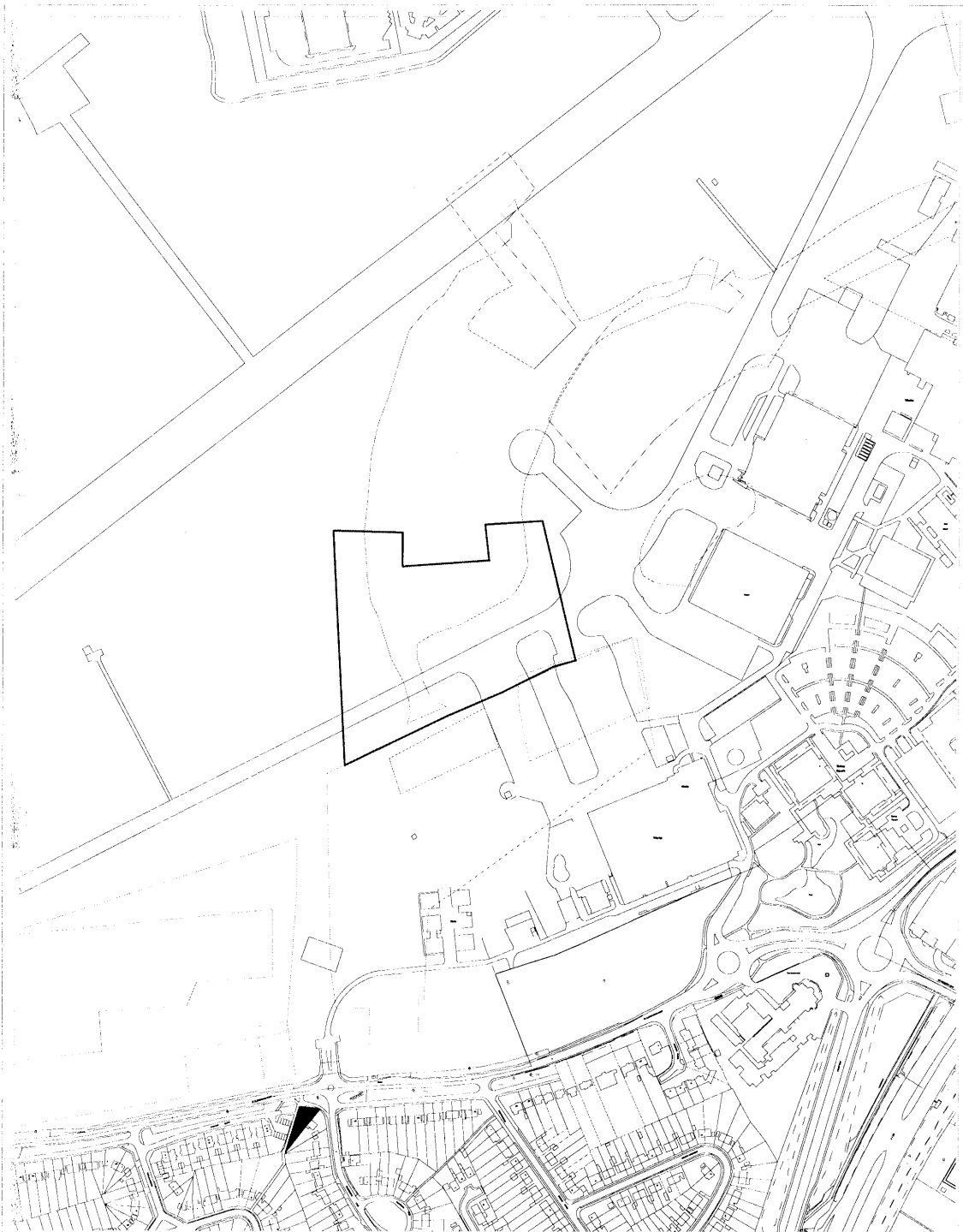
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BOVIS HOMES PHASE ONE, HATFIELD

SCALE: 1:5000

DRAWN BY: LIZA WREN

DATE 4th March 2002

Drawing No.

S8/2001/1153

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