



Design & Access Statement

Residential Development, Common Road,
Sissinghurst, Kent

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Contents

1.0 Design Assessment

1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 Use	5
1.3 Amount	6
1.4 Layout	7
1.5 Scale	8
1.6 Landscaping	9
1.7 Appearance	10
1.8 Access	11
1.9 Other Issues	12
2.0 Policy Context	13

1.1

Design Assessment

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the erection of 10 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. This design and access statement is submitted in accordance with the requirement of the Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Golding homes have asked RDA Architects to submit a detailed planning permission for the erection of 10 dwellings on land north west of an existing newly built development at Cobnut close and south east of Sissinghurst Primary School. Planning permission has already been achieved for a similar scheme under application 15/505629 thus development is acceptable. This application makes changes and amendments to the layout and appearance of the units to better suit the applicants needs. The site is currently an area of scrubland with no specific use and is surrounded by established development and ongoing construction

The newly built Cobnut Close features an access road off of Common Road which can be utilised to form access into the application site.

Pre-Application Advice

The applicant applied for pre-application advice resulting in the scheme being seen favourably. The resultant layout and design, subject of this application, has come from the local planning authorities comments and recommendations.



The Application Site

The site is located along Common Road, Sissinghurst in a semi-rural location. It is north of Cobnut Close, a development comprising of 11 local needs affordable housing which was completed in 2012, and also built by the applicant. A previous application, on the site in question, for 9 units was submitted by another applicant in July 2015 and received planning permission in May 2016

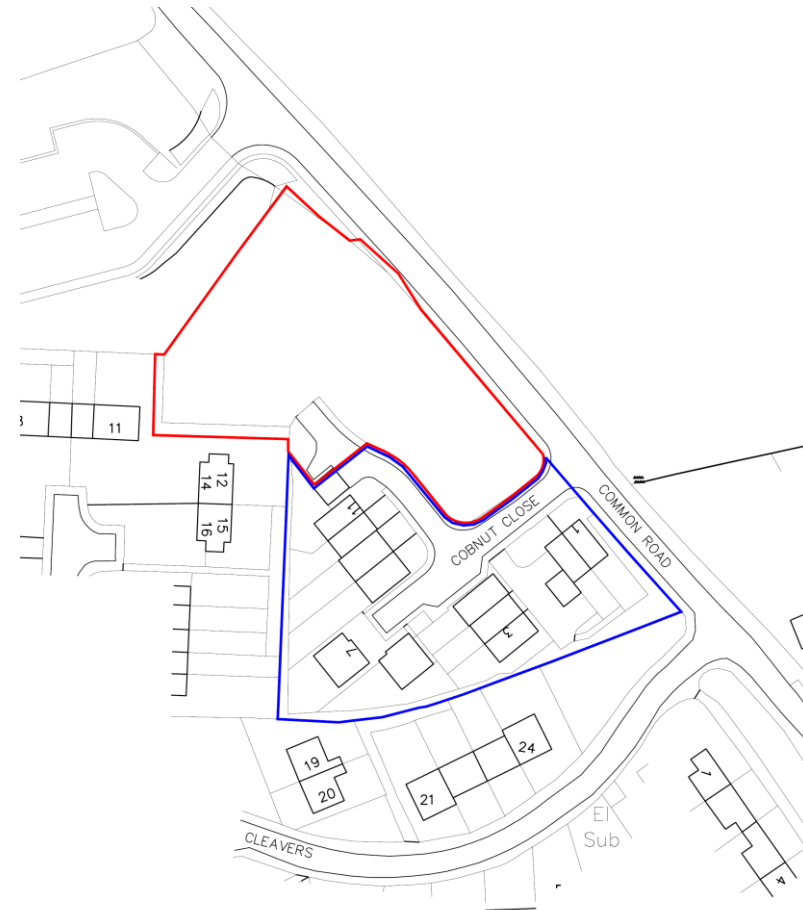
The site is a small area of land which remains as scrubland situated north west of the existing cobnut close and south east of the new Sissinghurst CofE Primary School.

To the east of the site, on the other side of Common Road lies a development for 60 houses that is currently being constructed.

The land subject of this application is allocated in the Local Plan under 'saved' Policy CS2 (2) for primary school provision and is therefore suitable for development. KCC has stated that the site is no longer required for Primary school provision and can be put towards residential.

Proposed Use

The proposal is to create 10 new residential dwellings being a mixture of 3&4 bed houses.



1.3

Design Assessment

Amount

The site has an area of 2950m²

The proposal would see 9 dwellings created, comprising of:

2 x 3 bed two storey semi-detached houses

3 x 3 bed two storey detached houses

2 x 4 bed two and a half storey detached houses

2 x 4 bed two storey detached house

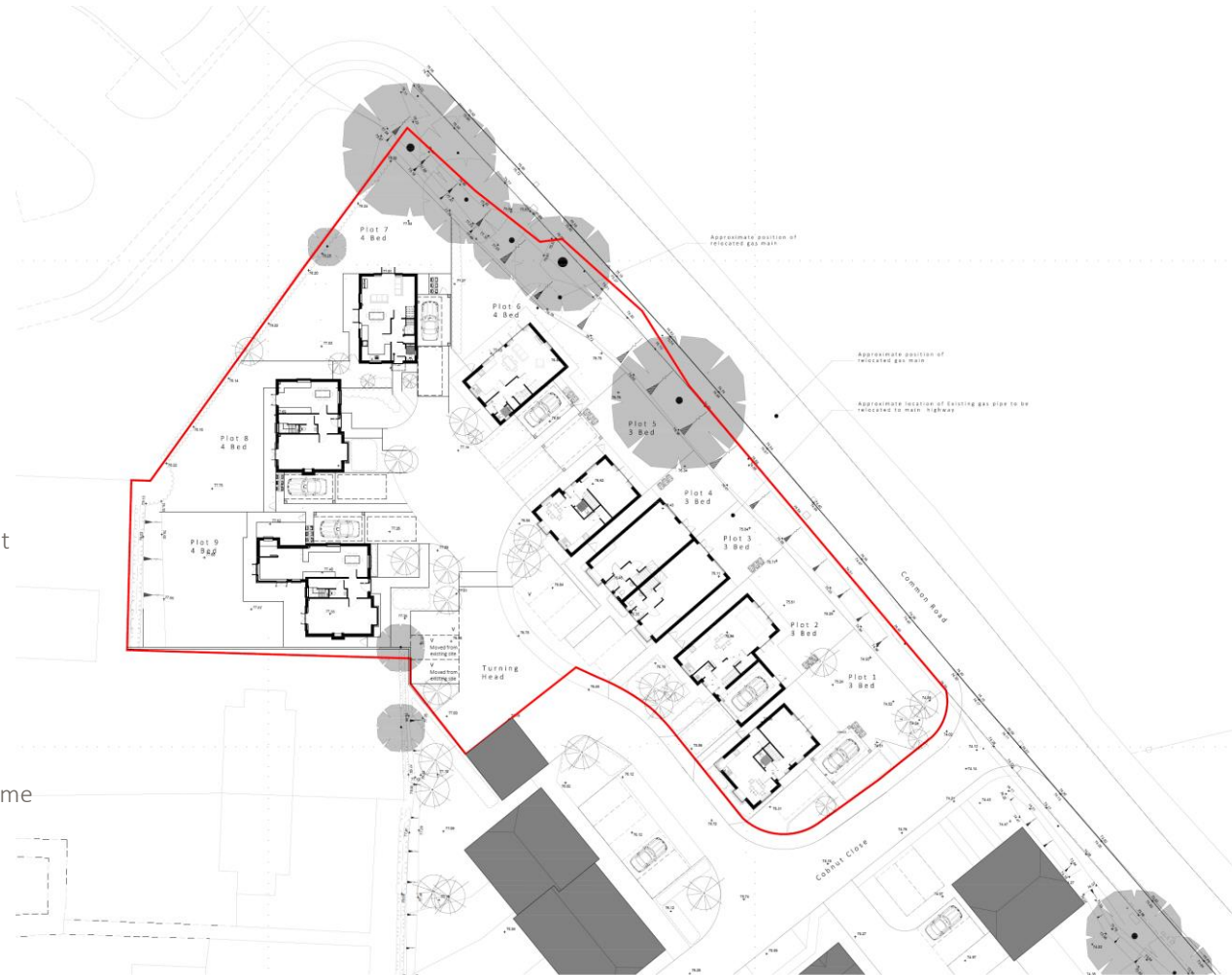
The scheme is of a similar density to the nearby built form of Cobnut close and the scheme to the East.

Each property has 2 parking spaces.

Plot 2 has a garage

Plots 1,5,6,7, 8 & 9 have car barns.

The houses will be 100% market housing as the amount of units required to activate an affordable allocation is 10, which these scheme does not meet.



1.4

Design Assessment

Layout

The layout will be designed in a sympathetic way matching the scale layout and form of the surroundings.

Access utilises the existing road serving Cobnut Close with the houses orientated in towards the street and the existing houses to create a natural extension to the Cobnut Close development.

There is a area of dense vegetation to the north east boundary along Common Road, which itself is approximately 1m lower than the site. This doesn't allow for an effective street frontage along Common Road. Being a busy main road it is safer and more effective to have the units accessed off of and orientated into Cobnut Close.

Each property has 2 spaces with some having car barns and garages. The north part of the site adopts a courtyard type approach with potential residents utilising a shared space.



1.5

Design Assessment

Scale

The surrounding area comprises two storey buildings with a range of hipped and gabled roofs. Some units have rooms within the roof space and feature dormer windows.

Roof pitches will be shallow to maintain a low height and not appear too tall in relation to the surroundings.

The proposal is of an appropriate scale that not only matches the surroundings but enhances.

1.6

Design Assessment

Landscaping

The existing site is currently an area of overgrown unusable scrubland. Development would see this parcel of land better integrated into this area of Sissinghurst, and provide housing for local residents. Green landscaping will be incorporated into the scheme using native species which will enhance the area. Hard landscaping will use sustainable drainage to mitigate the extra surface water run off that may occur.

Should approval be granted, it is accepted that the landscaping will require a detailed condition submission.



1.7

Design Assessment

Appearance

The proposed appearance has been considered with the existing units in Cobnut Close in mind, creating a continuation instead of being seen as 2 separate developments. This has been achieved by utilising traditional materials that are sympathetic to the area but with a more contemporary design. This could include red multi-stock brickwork, slate roof tiles, beige weatherboarding, tile hanging & render with large format windows.

Care will be taken to ensure the surrounding areas are not only heavily considered but enhanced by the proposal.



Street Scene AA

1.8

Design Assessment

Access

Vehicular access to the site and the new dwellings is achieved via the existing vehicular access that serves Cobnut Close. This would mean a connection to Common Road itself is not needed. Each dwelling has parking at the front or down the side of the property.

Refuse collection will meet local authority standards. Residents will store bins in their rear gardens and will put them out at the front of their property on collection days

Car parking is to local authority standards

Layout and dwellings designed with access for all in mind.



Other Issues

Contamination

The existing site is an area of undeveloped scrubland and no contamination is likely to be present.

Ecological

An ecological report was submitted with the previous planning application 15/505629, produced by Icen Ecology Ltd in June 2015. Being only 3 years ago, the information is still relevant and the resulting recommendations would be followed.

Icen Ecology concluded that 'The proposed development is considered unlikely to be adversely detrimental to any designated sites, protected species or habitats, provided their recommendations are followed.

The main items of note within the recommendations state that:

- 1) There is a single mature English Oak tree identified on the site that is Category 1 with respect for its potential to support bat roost. Category 1 trees are those with suitable features that can be used by bats such as cracks and crevices. – If the tree requires felling or tree surgery then a bat survey will be provided. This is not expected to be the case as the tree will be left as it is.
- 2) External lighting can be detrimental to wildlife, particularly bats so it is recommended that attention is given to the position of lighting and to not shine into the trees adjacent to Common Road. Lighting should be directed to where needed and light spillage avoided – Any external lighting would take this recommendation into account.
- 3) It is recommended that any vegetation removal is undertaken outside of nesting season. If birds are found then works must cease until the young have fledged and no works should be undertaken within 7m of the nest. – Care will be undertaken when removing vegetation.

Flood Risk

The development is situated within flood zone 1 and is less than 1 hectare so is not likely to require a flood risk assessment. In terms of surface water, the Government information states that the site is in a low risk area.

Transport

The site is located next to Common Road which provides access to the A229 and allows easy access to neighbouring villages and Maidstone. The site is a few meters away from a bus stop which has frequent buses to Maidstone, stopping at nearby villages along the way. One of which is Staplehurst, where travel by train to London is achievable. The site does not meet the threshold for a transport assessment being less than 40 dwellings.

Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications to be determined with the statutory development plan. The plan in question comprises 'saved' policies from the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (2006) and the policies of the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy (2010). In addition to the local plan and policies, the Government has published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. This sets out the Government's requirements and policies for planning in England and must be taken into account.

National Planning Policy Framework

Sustainable development is the main focus for planning with the NPPF enforcing the ideal that sustainable development should go ahead.

Paragraph 7 states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 14 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through decision making. Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Paragraph 55 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside. – **The site is located in the countryside but is not considered isolated due to development encircling the site and being within 300m of the settlement core.**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Development Plan Policy (2008)

The Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy is the key strategic planning document governing all development within the borough. It set out the level of new housing between 2006 & 2026. This plan was adopted before the NPPF was produced and is therefore inconsistent with national planning policy in certain areas. Policy 1 seeks to restrict new housing to previously developed land and within the development boundary (the site falls outside the built development boundary). However the NPPF provides a more flexible approach, making use of sustainable sites such as the one subject to this application.

The Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (2006)

This plan was adopted in 2006 and although some policies have been removed/superseded some saved ones remain.

The land subject of this application is allocated in the Local Plan under 'saved' Policy CS2 (2) for primary school provision and is therefore suitable for development. KCC has stated that the site is no longer required for Primary school provision and can be put towards residential. In this respect, planning approval for a housing development of 9 units on a previous application was granted in 2015.

Key policies effecting the proposal-

Policy EN1

All proposals for development within the Plan area will be required to satisfy all of the following criteria:

- 1 The nature and intensity of the proposed use would be compatible with neighbouring uses and would not cause significant harm to the amenities or character of the area in terms of noise, vibration, smell, safety or health impacts, or excessive traffic generation;*
- 2 The proposal would not cause significant harm to the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers, and would provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development, when assessed in terms of daylight, sunlight and privacy;*
- 3 The design of the proposal, encompassing scale, layout and orientation of buildings, site coverage by buildings, external appearance, roofscape, materials and landscaping, would respect the context of the site and take account of the efficient use of energy;*
- 4 The proposal would not result in the loss of significant buildings, related spaces, trees, shrubs, hedges, or other features important to the character of the built up area or landscape;*
- 5 There would be no significant adverse effect on any features of nature conservation importance which could not be prevented by conditions or agreements;*
- 6 The design, layout and landscaping of all development should take account of the security of people and property and incorporate measures to reduce or eliminate crime; and*
- 7 The design of public spaces and pedestrian routes to all new development proposals should provide safe and easy access for people with disabilities and people with particular access requirements.*

As the site is located outside the built development boundary, policy EN25 applies.

POLICY EN25

Outside of the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, all proposals for development will be required to satisfy all of the following criteria:

- 1 The proposal would have a minimal impact on the landscape character of the locality;*
- 2 The development proposal would have no detrimental impact on the landscape setting of settlements;*
- 3 The development proposal would not result in unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane which is of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, or historic or archaeological importance;*
- 4 Where built development is proposed, there would be no existing building or structure suitable for conversion or re-use to provide the required facilities. Any new buildings should, where practicable, be located adjacent to existing buildings or be well screened by existing vegetation; and*
- 5 Where an extension or alteration to an existing building is proposed, it would respect local building styles and materials, have no significant adverse impact on the form, appearance or setting of the building, and would respect the architectural and historic integrity of any adjoining building or group of buildings of which it forms part.*

These points have been fully complied with.