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Urban Design

Proof of Evidence

Proposed Development at:

**Fairmead & Rosemead Nurseries,
Cuffley Hill, Goffs Oak**

Appeal ref:

APP/W1905/W/22/3300254

LPA reference: 07/19/0200/F

On behalf of

**Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd. and
Landowners**

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Date: 26th August 2022

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1. Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1. My name is Colin Michael Pullan. I am Head of Urban Design and Masterplanning at Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH). I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Planning and a Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Design. I am on the executive of, and former Chair of, the Urban Design Group, a membership charity established in 1978 open to all who care about the quality of life in our cities, towns and villages and believe that raising standards of urban design is central to its improvement.
- 1.2. I have over 30 years' experience as an urban designer in the private sector, covering all design matters. I studied at the Oxford Polytechnic JCUD (now Oxford Brookes), one of the most distinguished urban design universities before moving into private practice as an urban designer/masterplanner at Thamesmead Town Ltd from 1987. From Thamesmead Town Ltd I moved into a private consultancy at Town Planning Consultancy in 1995 and then Chapman Warren Associates in 1999, during which time my experience broadened to take on national projects and more general planning and urban design issues.
- 1.3. From 2000 until 2011 I worked at RPS, a multidisciplinary practice where my responsibility as Urban Design Director was to provide sound urban design advice to public and private sector clients, with an awareness of both current and emerging best practice. In February 2011 I joined Lichfields. In January 2019 I joined LSH to head up their urban design team.
- 1.4. I have been the principal urban designer on many residential projects for both private and public sector clients and have very considerable experience in the preparation of layout and masterplans supported by development strategies, development briefs and design statements. I have presented urban design evidence at appeal covering issues that are pertinent to this appeal.
- 1.5. I am familiar with the appeal site and surrounding area and relevant national, I and local plan policy and guidance.
- 1.6. During my time at Lichfields and subsequently LSH I have been involved with, and presently am working on the 'Tudor Nurseries' residential development at Goffs Lane / Burton Lane to the east of the appeal site. This work has included the preparation of an initial layout plan for residential development, design codes and the delivery of reserved matters applications as part of a development team.

- 1.7. I was first approached by Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd. In July 2022 to review their scheme and having regard to the submission material and the context of the appeal site, local plan policies and guidance, I was satisfied that I could support it. I was subsequently appointed to prepare evidence in support of the appeal scheme.

- 1.8. My evidence is confined to urban design matters. I confirm that, insofar as the facts stated in my evidence are within my own knowledge, I have made clear what they are, and I believe them to be true; and that the opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinion irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

2. Introduction and Summary

- 2.1. This Urban Design evidence has been prepared on behalf of Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd. and Landowners (the “Appellant”). It considers urban design matters relating to the appeal against refusal of planning permission for:

“The erection of 58 dwellings (12no. 2 bed, 14no.3 bed, 22no. 4 bed, 5no. 5 bed and 5no. 1 bed) with associated infrastructure” (the “appeal scheme”).

- 2.2. The full planning application was reported to the Planning Committee meeting on the 25th January 2022 with an Officer’s firm recommendation of approval. There were no technical objections to the application and the Officer’s Report (CD A41) concluded on design matters:

“7.4 ...the scheme is considered to offer an attractive layout which makes good use of the land. The scheme is considered to be in accordance with adopted Policy DSC1.

9.1 ... The agenda report indicates that there is no technical shortfall in the proposal in terms of the sizes of dwellings, their plots or the relationships between them in terms of privacy and outlook. There would be no material impact on amenity for nearby residents. The design of the houses would not be out of place in Goffs Oak and has the potential to produce attractive façade designs as were approved in the scheme which is under construction to the south of Goffs Lane. There is no substantive outstanding technical issue to resolve in this scheme...

9.2...The number of dwellings proposed is more than double the amount estimated in the Local Plan policy but the density of development would be less than 16 dwellings per hectare: this is partly a function of the amount of developable area on the site but is low density nonetheless. There would be an area of public open space to the northern part of the site, there would be 40% affordable provision, all of which would be houses.”

- 2.3. However, members resolved to refuse the application. The decision notice of 9th February 2020 (CD A42) cited a single reason for refusal (“rfr”) which states:

“1. The proposal would over-develop the site to the detriment of its semi-rural character. As a result of the quantum of development, the proposal is incapable of guaranteeing delivery of a net gain in biodiversity, as secured by an additional buffer. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policies DSC1 and NEB1 of the Broxbourne Local Plan and to the aims and

objectives of paragraph 174 of the NPPF 2021 which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment and promote biodiversity.”

2.4. With reference to the Council’s Statement of Case (“**SofC**” CD C5) at paragraph 1.4 there are two limbs to the reason for refusal of which the first relates in part to urban design matters:

2.5. *“...the impact of the proposal, and in particular the overdevelopment of the site, on the character of the site in its context.”*

2.6. This is expanded further upon in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of the Council’s SofC (CD C5) to cite harm arising from the urbanizing effects of the site upon the public realm (which is considered to relate to matters of layout, enclosure and openness); and the perceived contrast of the appeal scheme to other developments at the edges of Goffs Oak (which I understand to refer to density and built form and the character of the settlement by providing denser more urban character on the outskirts of the village).

Scope of Urban Design Evidence

2.7. This evidence appraises the urban design merits of the appeal scheme in light of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. With regard to the rfr, Officer’s Report (CD A41) and the Council’s SofC (CD C5), it considers:

- The local context and character; and
- The appropriateness of the proposed design, layout, density, scale and massing (the form of development) and character of development with regard to the above.

2.8. The evidence of Ms. Liz Fitzgerald addresses planning matters and the weight to be afforded to policy and guidance.

Summary

2.9. The imperative for seeking to secure ‘high quality’ design is set by the National Planning Policy Framework (“**NPPF**”) at Section 12, and in the context of this appeal, underlined by the National Design Guide (“**NDG**” CD D3) and the Broxbourne Local Plan Policy DSC1. It is necessary to undertake a careful assessment of the appeal scheme and its context in light of and the above to arrive at a balanced judgment as to whether the appeal scheme would be harmful or not upon its surroundings. Accordingly this evidence undertakes a review of the appeal scheme against the criteria within policy DSC1 and relevant guidance of the NDG in addressing the design matters of rfr. I leave it to others to accord weight to those documents.

- 2.10. Through an appraisal of the appeal scheme in context, and with regard to relevant urban design policies and guidance, this evidence concludes that whilst the development will of course give rise to change, I do not consider that the effects upon local character and appearance would be harmful.
- 2.11. The appeal site lies within a suburban housing area, bound by development on three sides (existing to the south and east and under construction to the west), and therein falls within the context of other urbanizing influences.
- 2.12. The appeal site forms part of a strategic site allocation in Goffs Oak (Local Plan Policy GO5), on land north of Cuffley Hill at Goffs Oak. Change will happen. The appeal scheme would form part of the wider suburban housing area to the village; continuing the pattern of growth at the edges of the village behind earlier ribbon development along principal routes.
- 2.13. The appeal site does not lie within a conservation area and does not contain any listed buildings, or is within the setting of any listed buildings/ heritage assets or protected views. The surrounding housing is not identified for any particular characteristic or feature that differentiates it from other housing areas in the borough or village. This is not an area of particular local distinctiveness; although the Council supports a traditional approach that reinforces local materials and detailing.
- 2.14. The NDG (CD D3) paragraph 64 states that that well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open spaces that optimises density; relates well to and enhances the existing character and context; and that built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context. What is proposed is not just housing, but significant landscaping, including existing trees that form a feature of the local landscape, an approach in accordance with the NDG paragraph 40 which says:
- “Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It enhances positive qualities and improves negative ones.”*
- 2.15. And; in accordance with paragraph 43 of the NDG, which says:

“...well-designed places do not need to copy their surroundings in every way. It is appropriate to introduce elements that reflect how we live today, to include innovation or change such as increased densities, and to incorporate new sustainable features or systems.”

- 2.16. The density of development has been informed by design. Numerically (at 18.7 dph), the appeal scheme is at a comparable or lower density than the surrounding context and for edge of village schemes approved – including a scheme to the south on Goffs Lane, also by Countryside Properties. One would not be able to discern the internal scale or density of development from the edges of the appeal site. From most publicly accessible viewpoints, it is generally only the lower density outer edge dwellings that would be seen (as described by predominantly detached / semi-detached dwellings or buildings within a strong landscape setting, streets and driveways addressing open space).
- 2.17. I conclude that the appeal scheme would be an attractive place in which people would want to live, a design which is wholly appropriate for its surroundings and considerate of the existing retained trees. The key interface with the adjoining countryside edge to the north west corner of the appeal site would be landscaping rather than the buildings themselves.
- 2.18. I concur with the Case Officer’s support for the appeal scheme and I set out below my own supportive views against relevant design policies and guidance within this evidence.

3. The Appeal Site and Surrounding Context

3.1. The context of the appeal site is set out in the DAS (CD A4) and is summarised within the Appellants SofC (CD C4). Informed by these documents the following paragraphs describe the local character and context relevant to the rfr and the Council's SofC (CD C5).

Location and Site Area

3.2. The appeal site lies to the east of Goffs Oak on Cuffley Hill, within 650m of the local centre. see Figure 1:



Figure 1: Site location: Source: Google Earth

3.3. The appeal site is comprised of the former Fairmead and Rosemead Nurseries and is allocated for housing as part of the Broxbourne Local Plan Policy GO5 (CD E1).

- 3.4. Extending to approximately 3.1ha, the appeal site is located north of Cuffley Hill and to the west of Robinson Avenue/Millcrest Road. To the west of the appeal site is the remainder of the site allocation GO5, the former CG Edwards site, upon which residential development is underway (Edwards Gate). To the north of the appeal site are residential gardens (extending from properties fronting Millcrest Road) and a dense tree belt, beyond which are agricultural fields to the north west.
- 3.5. The appeal site is well contained by mature woodland to the north and other mature, protected trees within the south and the back gardens of existing and planned development. The northern landscape area and the adjacent residential development form a 'buffer' between the appeal site and countryside beyond to the north west. See Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Site location: Source: Google Earth

- 3.6. The appeal site is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (No. 2 2017 LT6-290) (CD H2) which covers a copse, significant individual and groups of trees.

Access

- 3.7. The site is currently accessed via the main vehicular access to Fairmead Nursery from Cuffley Hill. Rosemead Nursery provides a second access from the service road which provides access to Nos. 90a to 100 Cuffley Hill. Access is proposed via a re-modelled access point adjacent to no. 90a Cuffley Hill. The service road would be re-configured to create a direct access onto Cuffley Hill with the existing service road becoming shared driveways accessed via the new connection.

Surrounding Context

- 3.8. With reference to Figures 3, 4 and 5 below and the Archeological Desk Based Assessment (CD A6/A7 – Ordnance Survey Maps) the surrounding context is characterised by inter and post war suburban housing estates extending west along Cuffley Hill, north along Millcrest Road / Newgatestreet Road and south along Jones Road. The earliest areas of residential development are generally along Cuffley Hill to the east of the appeal site and date from the 1930s.



Figure 3: Surrounding context to west of appeal site. Source Google Earth



Figure 4: Surrounding housing. The Drive / Robinson Avenue. Semi-detached and detached two storey dwellings at circa 26 dph. Inter and post war traditional styled dwellings



Figure 5: Surrounding context to south of appeal site. Source Google Earth



Figure 6: Pembroke Drive. Bungalows, Semi-detached and detached 1.5- 2 storey houses of the 1960s/1970s. The density of development is at circa 14 dph

- 3.9. The general pattern of growth reflects ribbon development along the historic routes, followed by backland / infill development - such as at Doverfield to the south east of the appeal site. See Figures 7 and 8 below.



Figure 7: Doverfield: Late 1990s backland development to the south of Cuffley Hill. Source: Google Earth



Figure 8: Doverfield. A range of detached dwellings in buff brick, timber, red brick and hanging tile. The density of development is circa 12 dph

Emerging Context

Edwards Gate, Cuffley (Chase Homes) CG Edwards Site, 104 Cuffley Hill (CD G8)

- 3.10. To the immediate west of the appeal site the development of 23 four and five bedroom homes is largely complete. The site has an area of 1.071 hectares and the density of development is at 21.5 dph.
- 3.11. Permission was granted July 2019. With reference to the Officer's Report the design, layout and appearance of the scheme employs traditional features with predominantly brickwork facades and steeply pitched roofs broken up by dormers. The general form of the housing was considered to be in keeping in an area characterised by a varied townscape and house design. See Figure 9 below.



Figure 9: Edwards Gate. Detached houses with a generally urban layout – shared street space, few street trees – to west of appeal site

- 3.12. Commenting on density the Officer's Report stated that 21.5 dph was not considered to represent overdevelopment of the site (paragraph 8.16).
- 3.13. Noticeable from Figure 9 is that the detached dwellings are closely set, presenting an urban boundary to the countryside edge to the west. Commenting on context the Officer's Report acknowledged that due to the position of the site and the shielding vegetation it was considered that there would not be a significant impact on the character and appearance of the local context (paragraph 8.17). The appeal site would be 'shielded' by this development in addition to the surrounding trees, houses and gardens.

Monarch Oaks, Goffs Lane (CD G9)

- 3.14. To the south east of Goffs Oak village, permission was granted for a Countryside Properties development of 51 dwellings on 2.41 ha at a density of 21.5 dph. The scheme is presently under construction and is referred to in the Officer Report for the appeal scheme.
- 3.15. The context is shown below at Figure 10 and the layout at Figure 11. The accompany layout plan illustrates what is considered appropriate by the Council in terms of built form, open space, layout, enclosure, density and 'character' in the context of Local Plan Policy DCS1 to an edge of village / rural edge location.



Figure 10: Monarch Oaks. Application boundary. Source Google Earth

- 3.16. The layout is structured from a central access road, alongside a green verge that widens towards a focal space at the heart of the layout (See Figure 11). The layout provides a range of dwelling types included short terraces and detached houses.



Figure 11: Layout plan. Monarch Oaks. Countryside Properties

3.17. Commenting on the scheme the Officer's Report stated:

"6.5 The appearance of each dwelling will reflect the general character for the area utilizing similar materials of construction, including brickwork, timber boarding, pitched slate and tiled roofs, some rendering and traditional fenestration.

9.2 The scheme is well considered and appropriate to the site and its location. It will provide a pleasant suburban cul de sac of 51 new homes..."



Figure 12: illustrative character. Source Marketing material with rendered image of plot 30, 21 and 32

3.18. With reference to Figure 12, the 2.5 and 2 storey houses are of a traditional style with render, red and buff brick elevations and brown/red and grey roof tile.

Tina Nursery, Goffs Lane, Goffs Oak. Matthew Homes Ltd. (CD G10)

3.19. Also to the south east of Goffs Oak village and to the immediate north of Monarch Oaks, at Tina Nursery, permission has been granted (March 2022) for 81 dwellings on 3.62 ha (at a density of 22.37 ha). See Figures 13 and 14.



Figure 13: Tina Nursery. Application boundary. Source Google Earth

3.20. The scheme architects, Thrive, are the same as the appeal scheme. The proposed layout is shown below at Figure 14.



Figure 14: Layout plan. Source RMA (07/21/1174/RM)

3.21. Commenting on the scheme the Officer's Report stated:

"8.19 The appearance of the houses convey an appropriate mix of exterior features and detailing that compliments the local vernacular..."

8.20 The material and colour palette are based on traditional materials found in Broxbourne. These include a palette of browns, earth reds and creamy render, with a complementary colour applied to details (doors, windows, soffits, fascias and rainwater pipes)"



Figure 15: View along main access from south to north. Source Officer's Report

- 3.22. The materials, as applied to the traditional dwelling styles as illustrated above at Figure 15, are similar to the appeal scheme.

Land at the Junction of Newgatestreet Road & St James Road, Goffs Oak. Stonebond Properties (CD G11)

- 3.23. To the north of the appeal site planning permission was granted August 2021 for 38 dwellings on a site of 2.5 ha (at a density of 15.2 dph). See Figure 16.



Figure 16: Land at the Junction of Newgatestreet Road & St James Road Goffs Oak (07/20/1220/F). Stonebond Properties. Source Google Earth

- 3.24. Compared to the other emerging schemes outlined above, the proposed layout is quite distinct by virtue of its formality and symmetry. See Figures 17 and 18.



Figure 17: Proposed Layout. Source Officer's Report



Figure 18: Indicative visualization. Source Officer's Report

3.25. Commenting upon the scheme the Officer's Report concluded:

"9.2 The application is for 38 dwellings. The proposed development does represent a small and prospectively pleasant development that is in accordance with most of the Council's policies and guidelines. Its conventional layout, design and density are appropriate to Goffs Oak and it provides a configuration that retains a significant area of green space...

9.5 Officers note the quantum of development exceeds what was indicated in the policy allocation, however the unit number is indicative only to ensure best use of land and does not prohibit enhancement or uplift where this can be achieved without dilution of the design and layout of the proposals. The applicant has demonstrated high standards of quality and design throughout and provide a high quality soft landscape around the designs, resulting in a development that is anticipated to support the visual aesthetic of Goffs Oak and St James and is accompanied by the community infrastructure and contributions to have a positive impact on the surrounding community."

3.26. The traditional form of development and materials are similar to the appeal scheme. The density of development is also comparable to the appeal scheme.

Summary

3.27. The surrounding residential streets are characterised by a range of dwellings, of different height and scale, age and style. More recent dwellings are generally of a traditional style and recent developments have sought to reinforce some of the more attractive local characteristics and materials through high quality design – an approach evidently supported by the Council with reference to the Officer's Report extracts.

3.28. The layouts of the recent schemes are site specific and have been both formal (Edwards Gate and Newgate Street Road) and informal (Monarch Oaks).

4. Planning Policy Framework

4.1. This section summaries relevant design related policies and guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021

4.2. Of particular relevance to this evidence in considering matters of urban design related to the reason for refusal are the following paragraphs of the NPPF:

1. Paragraph 124: Which requires development to make the efficient use of land.
2. Paragraph 126: Which underlines that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, being clear about design expectations.
3. Paragraph 130: Which sets six qualitative design criteria of which (b, c and e) are relevant:
 - 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); and
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space).
4. Paragraph 131. Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.
5. Paragraph 134: Which states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design (contained in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code), taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:
 - (a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes.

Broxbourne Local Plan June 2020

Policy GO5: North of Cuffley Hill

4.3. Policy GO5 states that the appeal site, as identified on the Policies map below, is allocated for residential development of approximately 26 dwellings (Rosemead and Fairmead Nursery Site).



Figure 19: Broxbourne Local Plan: 2018-2033 Figure10 Goffs Oak indicative Concept Plan. CD E6

- 4.4. With reference to Figure 19 - the Indicative Concept Plan - the appeal site is shown accessed from the south off Cuffley Hill with two spurs leading northeast and northwest. The development areas are shown to the south of the nurseries and include areas of existing trees (as shown indicatively) which would be presumed to be integrated into the built areas. To the north is an area of open space which extends the buffer / separation to the countryside edge.
- 4.5. The plan above suggests that the greatest density of development was anticipated to the west, i.e. at the countryside edge, and the lowest within the appeal site to the north. This may be on account of the existing trees.
- 4.6. The combined illustrative development area of the Rosemead Nursery Site and Fairmead Nursery Site is approximately 2.5x the area of the CG Edwards Site (Edwards Gate) which as described earlier is for 23 dwellings. The appeal site areas alone would therefore suggest that circa 59 dwellings could be achieved subject to considerations of retained trees, at a similar density to Edwards Gate of 21.5 dph.

Policy DSC1: General Design Principles

4.7. Policy DSC1 states:

I. The Council expects a high standard of design for all development. Wherever possible, development proposals must:

(a) enhance local character and distinctiveness, taking into account: existing patterns of development; significant views; urban form; building typology and details; height; roof form; fenestration detail; materials; building lines and other setbacks; trees; landscaping; and features of local and historic significance;

(b) significant natural features on site such as trees, waterbodies, habitats, etc. should be dealt with sensitively and retained where-ever possible;

(c) increase permeability of the area by providing easy to navigate and safe physical connections with surrounding spaces, streets, paths and neighbouring development;

(d) consider surface drainage requirements from the outset and work with the local topography to create low maintenance SuDS;

(e) reinforce existing pedestrian connections and create new ones with a clear hierarchy of paths and streets that promote pedestrian friendly environments and active lifestyles;

(f) provide coherent and logical layouts with active frontages and good natural surveillance;

(g) create local landmarks and marker features for a well-defined townscape;

(h) increase accessibility to open spaces, sports and play facilities where-ever possible;

(i) avoid the creation of blank walls on public fronted elevations;

(j) mitigate against flooding and climate change through incorporation of features such as trees and planting, water bodies, retention/filter beds, permeable paving, green energy features and the retention/selection of appropriate materials. II. All developments should have regard to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to design.

- 4.8. The supporting text to the policy states that major residential developments (schemes of 10 dwellings or larger) should include within their Planning Statement or Design and Access Statement evidence of how the Building for Life Criteria and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) have been considered in formulation of the proposal. The appeal scheme application was supported by a Building for a Healthy Life assessment (CD A8).

Borough-wide Supplementary Planning Guidance (2013) (SPG CD E3)

- 4.9. The SPG is of some age and the conclusions on actions / development are out-of-date with the NPPF and NDG.

National Planning Practice Guidance – Design: Process and Tools (NPPG)

- 4.10. The NPPG establishes that 'good design' can be described with the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide (CD D3).

National Design Guide (NDG CD D3)

- 4.11. The National Design Guide sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places which contribute towards the themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The Design Guide lends some objectivity to the inherently subjective issue of 'good design'. It is confirmed in paragraph 16 that well-designed places and buildings come about when there is a clearly expressed story for the design concept and how it has evolved into a design proposal. In paragraph 21 it is noted that a well-designed place comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including: layout; form and scale; appearance; landscape; materials and detailing.

5. Design Evolution

- 5.1. With reference to the evidence of Ms. Liz Fitzgerald and my Section 4, the Council undertook a feasibility masterplanning exercise to inform the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA, 2017). The feasibility concept plan for the appeal site is at Figure 19 (CD E6) and it has demonstrably informed the general land use disposition on the appeal site.
- 5.2. The following paragraphs summarise the design process with reference to the DAS (November 2018 – CD A4) and DAS Addendum (August 2021) (CD A26) that resolved the capacity for 58 dwellings on the appeal site scheme as opposed to the indicative 26 dwelling as shown by the concept plan at Policy GO5.
- 5.3. At page 12 of the DAS (CD A4) the constraints and opportunities plan (see Figure 20 below) illustrates the potential for development and provides a more informed assessment of the capacity for development with consideration made to the tree survey, root protection areas, boundaries and drainage. The land uses generally follows the indicative concept plan at Policy GO5.



Figure 20: Constraints and opportunities. Source DAS (CD A4)

5.4. At page 13 of the DAS (CD A4) the initial sketch plan demonstrated that some 59 dwellings could be accommodated. See Figure 21 below. The plan illustrates predominantly detached dwellings addressing the northern woodland edge and the boundaries to back gardens, an area of open space and SUDS within the northern area and to the south west corner a cluster of terraces backing onto retained trees.



Figure 21: Initial sketch scheme. Source DAS (CD A4)



Figure 22: November 2018 Scheme

- 5.5. The submission scheme described within the DAS November 2018 (CD A4) (Figure 22) was amended in the August 2021 DAS Addendum (CD A26). The principal changes had regard to improving the relationship to adjacent gardens (landscaping and separation distances); removal of apartments and replacement with houses; retention of further trees; and a review of garden sizes (DAS Addendum Section 4).

5.6. The final amendments to the appeal scheme in November 2021 (CD A37) concerned the landscaping proposals, adding more street trees within the layout and along the eastern boundary.

5.7. From the design evolution of the appeal scheme as described by the DASs (CD A4, A27), it is evident that an understanding of context has informed the design, in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 125, 128 and 130 (c). This approach of developing a scheme informed by site constraints and opportunities, and refining the capacity for development, as illustrated within the DAS (CD A4), is also consistent with the expectations of the Broxbourne Local Plan which states at paragraph 3.19:

“for each of the Local Plan sites shown on the Policies Map an indicative dwelling figure is provided within the relevant policy in Part 3 of the Plan... The indicative dwelling figures are neither a minimum nor maximum, but rather an estimate of capacity to inform the plan making process and to provide a starting point for consideration of site-specific issues through the planning application process. In considering the merits of planning applications at the Local Plan sites, the Council will apply the dwelling numbers in the context of sustainable place-making, to achieve efficient use of land through a design-led approach. Proposals at a Local Plan sites which differ from the indicative dwelling numbers provided within this Plan should be fully justified with regard to site-specific factors.”

6. The Appeal Scheme

- 6.1. This section describes the appeal scheme informed by the DASs (CD A4, A27) and a number of CGI views generated of the scheme.

Density

- 6.2. NPPF Paragraph 124 requires development to make the efficient use of land and; paragraph 130(e) states that development should optimise the potential of the appeal site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development.
- 6.3. In summary, the appeal scheme comprises: 58 dwellings of which 40% are affordable housing; the retention of protected trees; provision of SuDs; 0.85ha of open space in the northern and central parts of the appeal site; additional ad hoc open space throughout the layout; and a play area.
- 6.4. The appeal scheme is at a density of 18.7dph (58 dwellings on 3.1 ha). The proposed development accords with the NDG (CD D3) paragraph 109 - *Well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand*. The overall quality of the design of dwellings and access to communal spaces is also consistent with NDG paragraph 116. *Where different tenures are provided, they are well-integrated and designed to the same high quality to create tenure neutral homes and spaces, where no tenure is disadvantaged'*
- 6.5. The surrounding densities as described at Section 3 are greater, or comparable, to that of the appeal scheme.
- 6.6. I consider that the appeal scheme makes an efficient / optimum use of land; and is appropriately considerate of the local area in density and form - derived from a thorough site analysis and context appraisal as described by the DAS (CD A4) – such that outwardly it is of a low density development within a strong woodland setting.

Layout

- 6.7. The structure of the appeal scheme is consistent with NDG (CD D3) Paragraph 41, *Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary* and paragraph 42 *Well-designed development*

proposals are shaped by an understanding of the context that identifies opportunities for design as well as constraints upon it.

- 6.8. With reference to Figure 23 below, the layout is structured from a single access that directs movement towards the central woodland.



Figure 23: Site layout Plan illustrating also adjacent Edwards Gate scheme to the west. CD A37

- 6.9. On entering the appeal scheme the initial view would be of a small cluster of detached dwellings at plots 1-4 to the west and 56-58 to the east set to either side of the access road with a view beyond to the woodland. Parked cars are set to the side of the dwellings to allow for landscaped gardens (from circa 2-5m deep) and dwellings to frame the street space. See Figure 24 below.



Figure 24: CGI view looking into appeal scheme from alongside Plots 3 and 4 to the left of frame

6.10. The streetscene into the appeal scheme would be demonstrably landscape dominant with street trees significantly contributing to the quality of the space. The pattern of development – a semi-detached house and four detached houses with hidden parking to the side – would also be of an appreciable lower density than the close set detached houses with front of plot parking and integral garages at Edwards Gate to the west (Figure 9 earlier). Parking is set to the side of dwellings as approved at Monarch Oaks. With reference to Figures 24 and 25 below - the entrance to the approved layout for Monarch Oaks - the approach into the appeal scheme, and how it would be perceived from Cuffley Hill would be no more ‘urban’ in character than approved at Monarch Oaks.



Figure 25: The approach into Monarch Oaks

- 6.11. Into the layout of the appeal scheme and at the end of the access road flanked by footpaths, at Plots 23 and 48 one would arrive at the central area of open space comprising woodland, amenity space and an area of SUDS. See Figures 26 and 27 below. From here the formal carriageway gives way to shared surfaces and driveways.



Figure 26: Central area of open space and edges. CD A37. To the south is the access road with footpaths. Beyond, there are shared surfaces and driveways – a lower order of street space appropriate to the transition to edge of countryside



Figure 27: CGI view looking towards the open space and the white rendered Plot 23

- 6.12. The proposed focal area of woodland and open space is flanked by 14 dwellings (Plots 31, 32, 23-26, 48, 41-44, 37, 38 and 33) of which 10 are detached dwellings. For all dwellings except Plot 32, parking is to the side of the dwelling. Front gardens, except for at Plot 33 range in depth from circa 2-4m. There is a more informal building line around the edge of the central open space and the shared driveway – a lower order of street – gently meanders through the appeal scheme. With reference to Figure 27 and Figure 28 below, the streetscenes would generally comprise spaciouly sited dwellings framed by the boundary planting behind and within the layout.



Figure 28: CGI view of Plot 33 from along shared surface at the northern edge of the built area

- 6.13. To the east of the open space there are four private cul-de-sacs comprised of a mix of detached and semi-detached houses that flank onto the appeal site boundary and adjacent gardens. A retained landscape buffer will reduce the visual effects of new development as may be seen from these gardens. The edge comprises eight detached dwellings and the four cul-de-sacs set against the buffer and gardens of 22 dwellings. See Figure 29 below. The perceived density from the adjacent gardens would be very low and there would remain a sense of 'openness' to the outlook with views between the flanking detached dwellings.



Figure 29: Edge to the east. CD A37

- 6.14. In accordance with the NDG (CD D3) (3. Built Form), where appropriate the development is of a more compact form - as described by the provision of some terraced houses and closer set dwellings to the west.
- 6.15. To the west, and set against the new development at Edwards Gate the pocket of terraced housing provides for the affordable and therein inclusive community. This more compact pocket of development, arranged to address a shared space and area of woodland and green, would not outwardly contribute to the visual experience on entering the appeal site, or the appreciation of density from within the open space or along the northern countryside edge. Only on walking the shared space to the west would one be aware of the smaller houses. See Figures 30 and 31 below. Outwardly, the layout remains an appropriate very low density for an edge of countryside site, whilst delivering a balanced mix tenure scheme of affordable homes and homes for sale.



Figure 30: Pocket of terraced development to the south west. CD A37



Figure 31: CGI view looking south from adjacent to plot 15

6.16. To the north east corner of the appeal scheme is proposed three dwellings: Plots 33, 34 and 36, which are set behind the adjacent garden boundary to no. 55 Robinson Avenue. To the north and northwest is open space. To the west, the edge of the open space is addressed by Plots 31 and 32 which are set behind the built edge at the adjacent Edwards Gate development (Plots 14 and 15). See Figure 32 below.



Figure 32: Northern edge. CD A37. Edwards Gate is to the left of frame

6.17. With reference to Figure 32 above and 33 below, from beyond the appeal site to the north the view south into the appeal scheme will be of a woodland scene and glimpsed behind,

detached dwellings within a spacious setting. There would be a strong sense of openness and a clear landscape transition from the countryside beyond to the woodland green.



Figure 33: CGI view south from the northern edge of appeal scheme looking through woodland and open space

6.18. Overall, the layout would be appreciated as a low density enclave set behind the more suburban character of Cuffley Hill and Robinson Avenue.

6.19. As noted in the Officer's Report (CD A41) at paragraph 7.4:

"the scheme is considered to offer an attractive layout which makes good use of the land. The scheme is considered to be in accordance with adopted Policy DSC1:"

Open Space

6.20. The appeal scheme provides more than the required amount of open space. To the north there are areas of substantial landscaping, open space and SUDS that integrate the existing tree buffer planting along the boundaries, as well as within the development areas. Areas of internal green space will also provide a setting for the built development, such as to the south west around the cluster of dwellings (Plots 5-9 and 16-18), and to the east adjacent to Plots 54-56 and 48, 49).

Character and Built Form

6.21. With regard to the layout and DAS (CD A4), I consider that the 'character' of the scheme would be informed primarily by the trees and views of open spaces and secondary to this, the built form and street spaces.

6.22. The proposed house types are of a traditional style familiar in appearance and character and whilst may be 'standard' in spatial configuration, draw upon the local material palette ensuring that they relate well to and reflect the local vernacular.

6.23. Commenting on character the Officer's Report (CD A41) noted:

"7.5 The design of the houses has followed the lead given by the nearby Countryside scheme to the south of Goffs Lane which was approved in April of last year and is currently under construction on site. The houses of all sizes would be of traditional form with strong roof pitches, predominantly brick facades but with weatherboarding or render on seven houses to add visual interest and reflect the materials local to Goffs Oak... The design is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy DSC1 of the Broxbourne Local Plan."

6.24. Concluding on design matters the Officer's Report (CD A41) stated:

"9.1 The design of the houses would not be out of place in Goffs Oak and has the potential to produce attractive façade designs as were approved in the scheme which is under construction to the south of Goffs Lane. There is no substantive outstanding technical issue to resolve in this scheme: the site and views from neighbouring houses would change fundamentally as a result of any residential scheme built under this Local Plan allocation for housing..."

The number of dwellings proposed is more than double the amount estimated in the Local Plan policy but the density of development would be less than 16 dwellings per hectare: this is partly a function of the amount of developable area on the site but is low density nonetheless"

7. Appropriateness of the Appeal Scheme

- 7.1. This section is structured around the requirements of Policy DSC1. It draws also upon the NDG and my Section 6 previous in describing the layout, and Section 3 in describing local context.

DSC1 (a) enhance local character and distinctiveness, taking into account: existing patterns of development; significant views; urban form; building typology and details; height; roof form; fenestration detail; materials; building lines and other setbacks; trees; landscaping; and features of local and historic significance;

- 7.2. With regard to placemaking and character, at paragraphs 55, and 57 the NDG states:

“55 Well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness...

57 ... Character starts to be determined by the siting of development in the wider landscape, then by the layout – the pattern of streets, landscape and spaces, the movement network and the arrangement of development blocks. It continues to be created by the form, scale, design, materials and details of buildings and landscape. In this way, it creates a coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including all residents and local communities.”

- 7.3. The DAS (CD A4) describes how the design has been informed by context. As set out earlier, the surrounding character is diverse and lacks local distinctiveness. Notwithstanding this, the DAS (CD A4) explains how local design references have been drawn upon, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 130; and the NDG (CD D3) - C1 Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context: paragraph 44. *...well-designed places do not need to copy their surroundings in every way. It is appropriate to introduce elements that reflect how we live today* and paragraph 45. *To communicate the benefits of a scheme, it is important to explain how the design of a development relates to context and local character.*

- 7.4. The layout of the appeal scheme creates its own ‘place’ informed by context, the constraints of the appeal site and resolved through dialogue with Officers as described in the DAS (CD A4).

- 7.5. The structure of the appeal scheme is consistent with NDG (CD D3) paragraph 42 *Well-designed development proposals are shaped by an understanding of the context that identifies opportunities for design as well as constraints upon it.*
- 7.6. The proposed pattern and grain of the scheme is of residential streets framed by dwellings and trees, consistent with the objectives of NPPF Paragraph 130 (c) Sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
- 7.7. With regard to the DAS (CD A4) and my Section 6 it is demonstrable that the density, layout and plot siting, the design and orientation buildings within plots has been designed with careful regard to context and to optimise development:
- There is a gradation of density of built form from south to north such the perceived density of built form reduces towards the countryside edges of the appeal site, characterised by the transition from the small pocket of terraces to the south east corner adjacent to the few detached houses to the north and northwest overlooking the open space;
 - The pattern and grain, siting and landscaping is an appropriate response to the context and reflects accepted development;
 - The layout of streets and spaces reflect the pattern of emerging neighbouring residential developments;
 - The proposed siting of individual dwellings within plots has clearly has regard to neighbouring dwellings (i.e. in terms of amenity, privacy and outlook), boundaries, landscape and townscape; and
 - The architectural form, the design of buildings and materials will be an appropriate addition to the village.

DSC1 (b) significant natural features on site such as trees, waterbodies, habitats, etc. should be dealt with sensitively and retained where-ever possible;

- 7.8. As described in the DAS (CD A4), the appeal scheme would retain a significant number of the existing trees on the appeal site, which with the open space will provide for wildlife habitats.

DSC1 (c) increase permeability of the area by providing easy to navigate and safe physical connections with surrounding spaces, streets, paths and neighbouring development;

- 7.9. As described at Section 6 the appeal scheme provides legible and permeable routes that provide safe connections through the layout.

DSC1 (d) consider surface drainage requirements from the outset and work with the local topography to create low maintenance SUDS;

7.10. The appeal scheme provides a water attenuation basin (SUDS) to the north.

DSC1 (e) reinforce existing pedestrian connections and create new ones with a clear hierarchy of paths and streets that promote pedestrian friendly environments and active lifestyles;

7.11. As described at Section 6, I consider that the appeal scheme would provide a clear hierarchy of space, from the initial access road with footpaths to either side through to the single sided shared lanes and driveways. Shared spaces and the low density of development promote pedestrian friendly and more neighbourly street spaces that would generally be lightly trafficked.

DSC1 (f) provide coherent and logical layouts with active frontages and good natural surveillance;

7.12. As described by the layout and density at Section 6, I consider that the pattern of development and built form is consistent with the NDG (CD D3) paragraph 63. *Well-designed places have compact forms of development that are walkable; accessible local public transport, services and facilities, to ensure sustainable development; recognisable streets and other spaces with their edges defined by buildings; memorable features or groupings of buildings, spaces, uses or activities that create a sense of place, promoting inclusion and cohesion;* NDG paragraph 6. *Well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open space that optimises density;* and NDG paragraph 66 *Built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context. The appropriate density will result from the context, accessibility, the proposed building types, form and character of the development.* The layout would ensure that there are active fronts to the public realm of open and street spaces to provide natural surveillance.

DSC1 (g) create local landmarks and marker features for a well-defined townscape;

7.13. In accordance with NDG (CD D3) paragraph 57: *Materials, construction details and planting are selected with care for their context the appeal scheme is of a contemporary style in brick with simple elevations of a hue similar;* the built form would comprise a variety of dwellings that address the street and open spaces with variation in detailing and material from a

common, locally familiar, palette. The approach would create an interesting streetscene and a memorable, well-defined townscape as illustrated by the streetscenes (CD A33) and Figure 19 previous. Marker buildings – which define edges or a boundary – would be differentiated by variation or common materials and detailing. See Figure 34 below.



Figure 34: Street elevation AA. CD A33. From left to right: Plot 33, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43

- 7.14. With reference to Figure 34, the black painted timber boarded dwelling would define the northern edge of the streetscene. The building has an additional bay. To the right, the 2.5 storey plots 38, 41 and 42 are of a common material and simple form. They are more harmonious and together would define the eastern edge of the open space. Similar taller dwellings (plots 24, 25, 48 and 31) would also address the opposite edge of the open space wherein the openness and scale of trees provides opportunity for the slight increase in height.

DSC1 (h) increase accessibility to open spaces, sports and play facilities where-ever possible;

- 7.15. In accordance NDG (CD D3) paragraph 91: *Well design spaces provide attractive open spaces in locations that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy, such as play, food production, recreation and sport, so as to encourage physical activity and promote health, well-being and social inclusion;* and NDG paragraph 92: *Well-designed places provide usable green spaces;* and NDG paragraph 98: *Well-designed developments include site-specific enhancements to achieve biodiversity net gains at neighbourhood, street and household level:* the appeal scheme provides a comprehensive landscape strategy. The layout of the appeal scheme as described earlier would afford access for residents and visitors to open space. Routes through the scheme to the north would converge on the play area.

DSC1 (i) avoid the creation of blank walls on public fronted elevations;

- 7.16. Generally, the layout would define the public realm by frontages. There are very few instances where there would be flank walls to gardens to the public realm. Considering the layout, all public spaces are overlooked and addressed by front elevations. Only in some instances where dwellings flank onto an adjacent street space may there be less animated elevations as shown at Figure 35 – wherein considering the elevation and streetscene, I do not consider this to detract from the quality of the public of the realm.

DCS1 (j) mitigate against flooding and climate change through incorporation of features such as trees and planting, water bodies, retention/filter beds, permeable paving, green energy features and the retention/selection of appropriate materials.

- 7.17. As set out in the DAS (CD A4), the appeal scheme would provide and retain a significant amount of trees and the water attenuation basin to the north.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The urban design matters cited in the rfr concern principally the response to context and the density of development. There are a number of relevant design criteria set by Policy DSC1 referred to in the rfr which has provided a basis upon which the appeal scheme appropriateness has been appraised.

8.2. In the absence of up-to-date local design guidance, the NPPF explains that the NDG (CD D3) is to be used to assess the design. Considering the merits of the appeal scheme against the ten characteristics of the NDG, I draw the following conclusions.

1. Context

8.3. As described by the DAS (CD A4) the appeal scheme has demonstrably been informed by a robust understanding of the site context and existing features, to create a positive sense of place. The proposed density of development is below that of the adjacent Edwards Gate scheme.

2. Identity

8.4. The appeal scheme has a strong identity with a built form informed by the local vernacular that has been supported by the Council for other recent developments.

8.5. The buildings and landscape are designed to engage with visitors and residents through the quality of the landscaping, street spaces, the activity of public facing edges.

8.6. The architecture is attractive, references local materials and features, and is coherently applied across the buildings.

3. Built form

8.7. The built form responds positively to its context by creating an attractive frontage along street and shared space; a very low density edge to the north and dwellings framing an attractive woodland space. Internally, the buildings frame legible open and street spaces. The height, scale and massing of the built form is considered appropriate having regard to the proposed spaces, the relationship to adjacent dwellings and streets (enclosure) and surrounding built form.

4. Movement

- 8.8. The appeal scheme is structured around attractive spaces. The movement patterns are clear and legible and prioritise pedestrians and cyclists within this cul de sac site.

5. Nature

- 8.9. Through planting and design, the landscape strategy provides opportunities for wildlife and ecology.

6. Public spaces

- 8.10. Publicly accessible streets and spaces are well overlooked.

7. Uses

- 8.11. This is a residential led scheme, accessible to local services. There is a mix of tenures and range of dwelling sizes.

8. Homes and buildings

- 8.12. The buildings provide good quality internal and external living environments for residents to promote health and wellbeing. Residents are afforded private and communal amenity spaces within the appeal scheme. The building design has considered servicing, access to refuse and servicing.

9. Resources

- 8.13. The appeal scheme proposes a compact and walkable development and are considered to achieve the optimum and efficient use of the sites.

10. Lifespan

- 8.14. The appeal scheme will be well managed to maintain the quality of the built form and open spaces.

- 8.15. In my opinion, the appeal scheme is a well-designed and contextual proposal, an attractive addition to Goffs Oak. It is of a high standard of urban design and the requirements and guidance on good design have been met. The urban design related reason for refusal I do not consider is justified. Whilst the development of the appeal site will of course give rise to change, it will be seen as reinforcing/enhancing the characters of development identified in the village and of the appeal site, the retained woodland setting and the layout and design of the dwellings.