

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL  
PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

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**Session 14B – Alternative Sites  
& Countryside Housing Policies**

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016 PM**

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**STATEMENT PREPARED BY:**

**Woolf Bond Planning LLP**



**On behalf of:**

**Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd.**



**Respondent ID. R19447**

**NOVEMBER 2016**

**Qn14.1 Does the site have any relevant planning history? (applications, permissions, appeals, previous allocations)**

1. Our client has a controlling interest in a 10.24ha parcel of land located to the west of North Street, Barming.
2. The eastern part of the site, adjacent to North Street is proposed as a housing allocation for 35 dwellings in policy H1(23). Planning permission has recently been granted on this site for 35 dwellings under LPA Ref 16/505427/FULL.
3. We support this smaller allocation and consider the wider site should also be allocated for approximately 250 dwellings.

**Qn14.2 What is the site's policy status in the submitted Local Plan? (eg whether in defined settlement/countryside/AONB/conservation area/ Landscape of Local Value etc)**

4. The site forms part of the countryside adjacent to the proposed Barming settlement boundary.
5. It is not subject to any other policy constraints or national designations and is not a protected landscape.

**Qn14.3 What is the site's policy status in any made or emerging neighbourhood plan?**

6. There is no Neighbourhood Plan covering this part of the Borough.

**Qn14.4 Is the site greenfield or previously developed (brownfield) land according to the definition in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework?**

7. Greenfield.

**Qn14.5 What previous consideration by the Council has been given to the site's development (eg inclusion in a Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land availability Assessment (SHEDDLAA) and does the Representor have any comments on its conclusions.**

8. The Council's assessment of the site is set out at Appendix A to the SHEDLAA under Site Ref: HO-113. We have summarised the SHEDLAA in detail in our Regulation 19 representations and do not repeat this detail here.

9. The assessment of the site in the SHEDLAA includes the following wording:
- ‘Re-submitted in 2014 and again in October 2015 seeking a larger development area extending further westwards. Not allocated due to the adverse impact on countryside and Medway Valley’.**
10. Our Regulation 19 representations refer to the Council’s suggested landscape and countryside reasons for not allocating the site. We do not repeat these here but do refer to the ‘Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study: Site Assessments’ document (examination document ref. ENV 014 (B)).
11. This document considers the site and identifies it to have moderate landscape capacity to accommodate housing and suggests specific landscape mitigation measures.
12. A Development Framework Plan supports this submission (attached as Annex A) and illustrates how these mitigation measures could be incorporated into a future scheme.
13. The below table lists the mitigation measures mentioned in the Council’s Landscape Capacity Study: Site Assessments document and summarises how these can be provided for in a future scheme.

| Mitigation Measure Referenced in Council’s ENV 014 (B)  | Development Framework Plan Response  |
|---|--|
| Retain and enhance the existing field pattern and hedgerows to retain the traditional character and break up the expanse of the site. | The masterplan purposely divides the site into 7 discrete housing parcels so to break up the overall expanse of the site. These account for the existing field pattern and hedgerows and will enable different character areas to be generated. Such character areas can comprise varying densities dependent upon their respective landscape sensitivity. |
| Consider the setting of the listed buildings in North Street.   | Appropriate landscaping and set back distances can be provided at the detailed stage, albeit it is noted that it is the land already identified for allocation that has the most direct relationship to the neighbouring listed buildings in any event.  |

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| <p>New housing should respect the village vernacular of Barming in terms of scale, density, type and materials.</p>                              | <p>It is anticipated that a gross density comprising a maximum of 25 dwellings per hectare would be provided.</p> <p>The scale of development would be predominantly two to two and a half storeys in height, consistent with the two storey scale found along North Street.</p> |
| <p>Maintain and enhance the screening hedgerows, in particular as a buffer to existing housing and to define the new urban edge to the west.</p> | <p>The western side of the site is purposely proposed as a landscape buffer and open space so provide a sensitive edge to the wider countryside to the west.</p>   |
| <p>Maintain the rural character of North Street, retaining the existing hedge where practicable.</p>   | <p>This can be reflected in the detailed landscape strategy and could be a policy requirement in any new policy allocation.</p>  |

14. On the basis of the foregoing, including having regard to the context of our Regulation 19 representations, there is no reason why a future scheme could not incorporate the suggested landscape mitigation measures and such principles are reflected in the initial Development Framework Plan.
  
15. We have illustrated the site's boundary and the Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value boundary on Plan WBP1 (forming Annex B). This clearly illustrates that the proposed scheme would follow the existing western settlement line, defined by development at North Pole Road to the north and Cedar Drive to the south. The existing screening on the site's western boundary would be retained and reinforced to form a comprehensive landscape buffer.
  
16. The proposed site would not therefore extend beyond the settlement's natural western development limit defined by development to the north and south. It follows that the site represents a logical extension to the settlement naturally contained by development that extends to a similar extent as that already located to the north and south of the site. It will not therefore result in significant adverse effects upon the character of the countryside.
  
17. In terms of the scheme's impact upon the Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value, the site's relationship to this designation is illustrated on Plan WBP1.

18. Existing development is located between the site and the Valley and it follows that any possible available views would be set within the context of existing residential estate development. The scheme would not result in significant adverse effects upon the landscape quality of the Medway Valley Landscape of Local Value.
19. Should additional site allocations be necessary due to certain relevant parts of the plan being found unsound, the site can be allocated for approximately 250 dwellings in a manner that does not result in significant adverse landscape harm.

**Qn14.6 What is the site area and is has a site plan been submitted which identifies the site?**

20. The site comprises a total 10.24ha. A proposed Development Framework Plan is appended to this document as Annex A.

**Qn14.7 What type, and amount of development could be expected and at what density?**

21. As per the attached Development Framework Plan, it is anticipated that up to 250 residential dwellings could come forward on the site alongside open space, play space and landscaping. This would comprise a gross density of approximately 24 dwellings per hectare. This capacity includes the land proposed for allocation under Policy H1(23).

**Qn14.8 When could development be delivered and at what rate?**

22. The site is available for development now and could be delivered over an approximate 3 to 4 year build period.
23. In so far as the site is greenfield, it does not suffer from any abnormal constraints and is controlled by a national house builder such that delivery can be prompt. It is therefore deliverable within the present 5 year period.

**Qn14.9 What evidence is there of the viability of the proposed development?**

24. Our client is confident the scheme is viable and a policy compliant affordable housing provision provided.

**Qn14.10 Has the site been the subject of sustainability appraisal and does the Representer have any comments on its conclusions?**

25. Yes. The site has been considered under site ref. HO-113 in the SA.
  
26. For the reasons set out above and as detailed in our Regulation 19 representations, it is considered the site does not result in significant landscape harm and could be allocated accordingly.
  
27. The site forms a natural extension to land already identified as appropriate for development in the Council's submission policy H1(23) and existing built form abutting the site's northern and southern boundaries.

**Qn14.11 What constraints are there on the site's development and how could any adverse impacts be mitigated?**

28. As discussed in our response to question 14.5, the reasons the Council's rationale for omitting the site from the proposed allocations appears to relate to the purported impact of housing in this location upon the countryside and Medway Valley.
  
29. For the reasons stated, the scheme would not have significant adverse effects upon either of these elements and can be mitigated in a manner consistent with the Council's Landscape Capacity Study.

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