

7th March 2025



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Dear Nicola,

LAND WEST OF ASHINGTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, ASHINGTON

REFERENCE: DC/23/0406

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF 152 DWELLINGS, SPORTS PAVILION, SPORT PITCHES AND ALLOTMENTS; WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, LANDSCAPING, OPEN SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

I write in respect of the above planning application which was submitted on behalf of Bellway Homes (South London) Limited, to Horsham District Council (HDC) on the 3rd March 2023 under application reference, DC/23/0406.

This letter has been prepared following our recent meeting and subsequent discussions and sets out details of the proposed amendments to the application scheme in response to consultation feedback which has been received to date. It also provides additional information and amended plans where appropriate.

The revisions to the scheme covered in this letter are:

- Revised Application Description & Reduction in Quantum of Development
- Housing Mix
- Amendments to the Proposed Layout
- Arboricultural Matters
- Access Arrangement at Church Lane
- Noise
- Employment Opportunities
- Management of Forest School Land (Including Management of Pavilion)
- Water Neutrality

The following documents and drawings accompany this addendum scheme. Please note that supporting technical reports have only been provided where required and sought from HDC officers. This has been agreed as part of recent discussions.

- Presentation Site Layout – REF: 062009-BEL-SL-01 Rev E (DHA Architecture)
- Suite of Architectural Drawings (DHA Architecture) (TO FOLLOW)
- Design and Access Statement Addendum (DHA Architecture) (TO FOLLOW)
- Transport Assessment Addendum Note (Motion)
- Flood Risk Assessment – Addendum - REF 2108611-07 (Ardent)
- Tree Survey & Impact Assessment - REF 1780-KC-XX-Y Rev O (Keen Consultants) Tree Protection Plan – REF 1780-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01 Rev G (Keen Consultants)
- Arboricultural Method Statement – REF 780-KC-XX-Y (Keen Consultants)
- Tree Protection Plan – REF: 1780-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01 RevG (Keen Consultants)
- Landscape Masterplan – REF: 033-APA-ZZ-00-LA-L-1000 Rev P03 (Allen Pyke)
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum (Allen Pyke)

Revised Application Description & Reduction in Quantum of Development

This revised scheme seeks to reduce the number of proposed units from 180 to 152, whilst retaining the existing form of the site layout. The application description has therefore been amended to:

“Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 152 dwellings, sports pavilion, sport pitches and allotments; with associated access, landscaping, open space and infrastructure”.

The proposed reduction in dwelling numbers responds to the objections raised by the Parish Council on the quantum of development proposed and now aligns very closely with the dwelling numbers in the site allocation under Policy ASH11 of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

In July 2024, the Parish Council raised the following objection regarding the scale of the 180 unit scheme being *a; Significant contributory factor to the inability of the developer to be able to properly provide the associated community assets (sports pitches, pavilion etc) at a scale appropriate to the community need.* The Parish also added that *a reduction in housing numbers to the level specified in the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. 150) would provide the necessary land to deliver the community assets appropriately.*

In October 2024, Bellway made revisions to the scheme in order to rectify these comments by providing the community assets to the north west of the site as sought by the NP allocation. Through further consultation with Sports England, the layout was adjusted to provide two football pitches (one grass pitch and one MUGA) to the west of the site, positioned alongside to each other. The size of the pavilion also increased in response to the comments raised.

Given the further reduction in number of units proposed by this addendum submission to align with the site allocation, Bellway are hopeful that this will be supported by the Parish Council. The delivery of this site is crucial for the District, at a time where HDC cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and the adopted local plan is out of date. The NPPF presumption in favour applies for this reason, and application proposals accord with the NP allocation.

Housing Mix

In order to ensure that the revised 152 unit scheme is viable in the current economic climate, the housing mix has been amended, whilst retaining the existing split of market and affordable dwellings.

In relation to the proposed market homes, the proportion of 2 bedroom homes has remained the same with a reduction in the proportion of 3 bedroom homes and an increase in the proportion of larger 4+ bedroom homes. The mix is largely compliant with the requirements of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for 3 and 4+ bedroom homes however falls slightly short for 2 bedroom homes. The market mix is considered appropriate to the local area and will ensure the scheme is deliverable.

Despite the reduction in the overall number of dwellings, the proportion of affordable homes proposed in the scheme has been maintained at 35% which is compliant with policy requirement as set out in Policy 16 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). The affordable split remains at 70% affordable rented and 30% shared ownership in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017).

House type	Previous Application Scheme 180 dwellings	Amended Application Scheme 152 dwellings
Market		
2 bedroom	27 (23%)	22 (22%)
3 bedroom	52 (44%)	41 (41%)
4 + bedroom	38 (32%)	36 (36%)
Total	117	99
Shared Ownership		
1 bedroom apartments	8 (42%)	5 (31%)
2 bedroom apartments	3 (16%)	1 (6%)
2 bedroom houses	2 (11%)	5 (31%)
3 bedroom houses	4 (21%)	4 (25%)
4 bedroom houses	2 (11%)	1 (6%)
Total	19	16
Affordable Rent		
1 bedroom apartments	14 (32%)	12 (32%)
2 bedroom apartments	8 (18%)	2 (5%)
2 bedroom houses	7 (16%)	8 (22%)
3 bedroom houses	13 (30%)	13 (35%)
4 bedroom houses	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Total	44	37

As set out above, the affordable mix has been amended to reduce the overall number of smaller units and maintain the same number of family dwellings as proposed within the previous 180 unit scheme. This approach was discussed and agreed with officers prior to the updated scheme being finalised.

Amendments to the Proposed Site Layout

The site layout has been amended in order to accommodate the revised housing mix, whilst retaining the existing coverage of development. The infrastructure provision remains unchanged with the grassed sports pitch and MUGA positioned adjacent to the pavilion, associated car parking areas and allotments in the western portion of the site.

The main alterations to the site layout have been made to the central part of the site where an apartment blocks being replaced with houses. The area of the site to the north of the LAP has also been reworked to provide more detached houses, replacing the back to back terraced units.

To the western and northern periphery of the residential parcel, semi-detached units has replaced the detached units. These units have been designed with on-plot parking to the side of dwellings to avoid on-street parking to the front of the units. This ensures that the density of this area is appropriate and similar to that of the previously provided detached units.

In summary, the scheme layout has been amended to remove one of the previously proposed flat blocks which has been replaced by houses. Additionally, house types have been reviewed and, where appropriate, amended to provide a better mix of units. This approach has ensured that the overall residential development parcel and location of internal roads have generally remained the same as the previously proposed scheme. This approach is considered appropriate and ensures that the technical requirements relating to drainage, highways and landscaping remain unaltered.

Trees

Following comments from the Arboricultural Officer dated 5th of February 2025, the layout has been amended to address concerns over development potentially encroaching into tree root protection areas (RPAs).

Officers should note that there are now no significant engineering works in the root protection areas, factoring in a slight change in levels. These are minor works and are at a level that has previously been acceptable to Horsham District, and thus Bellway's consultant team confident that the approach taken to the protection of the relevant oak trees is robust and will ensure their long term future.

The access road to the pavilion building has been positioned further south so that it is clear of the existing tree RPA's. The same quantum of parking dedicated for the pavilion is proposed but 3 spaces have been moved to the northern side of the access road in the form of laybys so that they have minimal impact in terms of RPA encroachment. The shape of the LEAP in this area of the site has changed fractionally is still meets the 400m² area requirement.

By the LAP to the centre of the site, we have pushed the private drives immediately to the north and south of this tree further out of the RPA by circa 1m and 1.5m respectively. The visitor parking space that previously encroached into this RPA has been designed out and relocated elsewhere within the scheme to further assist in freeing up the RPA zone.

The applicant considers that the revised scheme strikes the appropriate balance between delivering the correct number of houses, community infrastructure against ensuring that as much of the existing substantive trees/vegetation on the site is retained/ protected.

The updated Tree Survey & Impact Assessment provides a response to the outstanding tree comments.

Access Arrangement at Church Close

Following comments received from the Parish Council dated 12th of July 2024 and the Arboricultural Officer dated 5th February 2025, the design team has looked at a number of options to address concerns raised regarding the access at Church Close. The position of the access road has shifted as far south from the tree

RPA and listed church wall as possible and has also been reduced in width. We believe this to be the most suitable access arrangement for the scale of development proposed and have sought to avoid encroachment into the RPA and any adverse impact of the Grade II Listed Church Wall.

West Sussex County Council has confirmed in their consultation responses dated 26th July 2024 that there are no concerns with the previous access arrangement. They also agreed that Rectory Lane was not a suitable alternative arrangement.

Whilst the proposed amendments to the access arrangement from Church Close are relatively minor we consider that it provides an appropriate design response to the concerns raised whilst ensuring that the access road is still deliverable within the constraints of the site.

The Addendum to the Transport Assessment provides further details on the proposed access arrangement.

Noise

In relation to the comments made by the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) in October 2023, discussions were held regarding any noise impact from the MUGA and sport pitches on the nearby houses. We have recommended mitigation measures for the proposed dwellings including closed, but not sealed, windows and alternative ventilation. These mitigation measures are designed to control noise from road traffic noise but would also be suitable to control noise from the pitches and MUGA.

The EHO Officer has not made any subsequent comments in their consultee response and a management plan is expected to be the subject of a condition to deal with any noise and lighting impact mitigation measures from the pitches.

Employment Opportunities (Including Management of Pavilion)

The Applicant is willing to discuss appropriate S106 Obligations to ensure the ongoing management and maintenance of the community assets proposed. These could be handed over to the Parish Council once complete or if they decided they do not want to take the space/facilities then they would be managed by the management company set up to cover the site. These details can be discussed during the drafting of the S106 agreement.

The pavilion allows for employment space in the form of offices and functional rooms which can be hired for ad hoc meeting space outside the times it is used for sport. This would provide a flexible facility and support small businesses or people working at home who need extra space for meetings or function. This would ensure the scheme is compliant with Policy ASH9 for the creation of employment opportunities as part of the site allocation.

Management of Forest School Land

The existing use of the nearby area of woodland for the Forest School will be maintained as part of the development. A new pedestrian access to the northern part of the woodland is included within the proposed layout and ensures a safe route along a dedicated footpath to the south of the residential parcel and will lead to an access point on the northern boundary of the woodland.

Whilst this is different from the Neighbourhood Plan route proposed in the site allocation, this route to the woodland is safer and more direct for pupils .

The management and boundary treatment of the woodland area will need to be discussed with the school. It is proposed that the preparation of a management plan for the use of the woodland area as a Forest School is included as an obligation with the S106 agreement. Bellway can confirm that the area of woodland within the application boundary will be secured for the Forest School.

Water Neutrality

In January 2025, it was announced that the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme (SNOWs) scheme is due to launch in Spring of this year. As this site is allocated in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan this site is able to access the SNOWs scheme by way of a proposed Grampian condition.

By utilising the SNOWs scheme as well as targeted offsetting measures, including installing water efficiency measures for homes and the pavilion as part of this scheme, the applicant is confident this scheme will be considered water neutral.

Conclusion

The submitted information and plans show that the applicant is willing to respond positively to consultation and advice from HDC. This should enable a short further consultation period, to allow the application to be heard at the earliest Planning Committee.

I trust that the foregoing is in order; however, if you have any questions or need any further information please do not hesitate to contact Dominic Taylor or myself.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Steele".

Robert Steele MRTPI
Planning Director

cc. J. Goodban, Bellway Homes