

Ref: SB/JF6078/02/WrexhamCBC (30Sept2023)

FAO Matthew Phillips
Planning Service
Wrexham County Borough Council
16 Lord Street
Wrexham
LL11 1LG



16 November 2023

Dear Matthew

**BELLWAY HOMES LIMITED (NORTH WEST)
RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF ACCESS, APPEARANCE LANDSCAPING.,
LAYOUT AND SCALE FOLLOWING OUTLINE APPROVAL ON LAND TO NORTH OF HOLT ROAD,
WREXHAM**

Further to the submission of the above application, the completion of the consultation period and our recent meeting to discuss the application, I am writing as promised to provide clarification and amendments to the application. Accordingly, this letter is accompanied by the following plans and documents:

- BHNW146_PL02 rev E Planning Layout;
- BHNW146_PL02 rev E Planning Layout (Colour);
- BHNW146_BT01 rev C Boundary Treatment Plan;
- BHNW146_HS01 rev B Hard Surfacing Plan;
- BHNW146_ML01 rev B Materials Plan;
- BHNW146_WM01 rev B Waste Management Plan;
- BHNW146_EV01 rev B EC Charging Point Plan;
- BHNW146_MC01 rev B Management Company Plan;
- Housetype Pack rev B;
- Separation Distances Study;
- APD/BHNW146/SC01 rev A Sections;
- H22-0032_001C rev C Landscape Masterplan;
- Drainage Plans: 509-APP2 rev H Site Appraisal (Drainage / Levels);
- Drainage Plans: 509-APP5 rev C Section Through Basin;
- Internal Highways Visibility Provision ref. CBO-0769-001; and,
- Swept Path Analysis: Small Rigid Goods Vehicle ref. CBO-0769-002.

These supersede:

- BHNW146 LP01 Rev A Location plan;
- BHNW146 BT01 Rev A Boundary Treatments;
- BHNW146 EV01 Rev A Electric Charging Point;
- BHNW146 HS01 Rev A Hard Surfacing;
- BHNW146 ML01 Rev A Materials;
- BHNW146 PL02 Rev A Planning Layout;
- BHNW146 WM01 Rev A Waste Management;
- BHNW146 PL02 Rev A Planning Layout Colour;
- HT01 House Type Pack 2023 (15 pages);
- H22-0032_001A Landscape Masterplan;
- H22-0032_002 Detailed Plot Landscape Plans (Sheet 1 of 2);

- H22-0032_003 Detailed Plot Landscape Plans (Sheet 2 of 2);,
- PL01 G Planning Layout Fire Tracking;
- Highstone Design Plan H22-0032-002B Detailed Plot Landscape Plan 1 of 2; and
- Highstone Design Plan H22-0032-003B Detailed Plot Landscape Plan 2 of 2

Open Space

We welcome acknowledgement that the proposals exceed the policy requirement in terms of open space provision.

Since the meeting, the applicant has continued discussions with Nick Adamson (Strategic Assets Lead) to discuss the land transfer. Nick has advised that Wrexham County Borough Council (the Council) is considering accepting the transfer, but that this cannot be confirmed until internal surveys have been undertaken and approvals have been sought. In order to assist with members / the committee process, Nick has agreed to have a discussion with Matthew Phillips and look to agree some wording that confirms that the Council accepts the land transfer in principle, subject to caveats around surveys and approvals. We understand that you will be able to present a position at planning committee that WCBC are comfortable with taking the land.

In terms of a discussion of a fallback position should that not be the case, then we would be opposed to having any condition attached to the permission. This outcome is already considered under the terms of the Unilateral Undertaking [UU] (third schedule, part 2). This requires that if neither party accepts the transfer, the land shall be retained by the Owner and will be maintained for the use for sports and/or recreation. In this scenario, we would simply seek to integrate it into the site open space to be managed and maintained by the Management Company. We would propose that the grass would be kept mown to facilitate informal sports activity and recreational use (e.g. dog walking).

Interface Distances

At the meeting we discussed in detail various interface distances and where improvements could be sought or additional justification provided. Since then, APD has undertaken a detailed Separation Distances Study (SDS), as well as preparing site sections which are submitted in support of the application alongside this letter. The SDS has been undertaken having regard to the proposed finished floor levels and existing / proposed boundary treatments. It is considered to provide an accurate depiction of the relationship between the existing and proposed dwellings in the locations discussed at the meeting. The SDS also includes written commentary which sets out why the relationship between existing and proposed dwellings is considered to be acceptable in all instances.

In summary, full consideration has been paid to the comments made by officers. Detailed justification has been provided including details sectional drawings to demonstrate the interfaces between buildings. It is considered that the interface distances are acceptable.

Drainage Basin

At our meeting, you requested that we provided you with cross sections of the drainage basin. This letter is accompanied by a sectional drawing through the basin (ref. 509-APP5 rev C).

Biodiversity Enhancements

At the meeting we discussed our approach for securing biodiversity enhancements as part of the new development. You outlined it would be helpful if we could clarify our approach in writing.

A detailed landscape strategy was developed to ensure that an appropriate approach is taken to protect existing landscape elements such as boundary trees, whilst providing a wealth of new habitats and enhanced biodiversity across the site.

A rich palette of native and ornamental shrub, scrub, tree, and hedge planting has been created and woven through the development to deliver an attractive housing development that will assist in boosting wildlife populations in the local area. An area of over 1,000 sqm of native buffer planting is proposed within the new development, alongside 72 new trees within front gardens and public open space. The landscape strategy has also considered the site boundaries and interfaces with neighbouring gardens to include native species planting that will create a suitable buffer for existing residents whilst providing valuable wildlife corridors, food source and shelter for birds and insects.

A study of existing tree and shrub species in the local area was undertaken to ensure that the planting specified will flourish in this part of Wrexham. This approach will ensure that the proposals complement the existing character of the area whilst boosting the biodiversity benefits of the scheme. This approach will also contribute to the new development being an attractive, healthy, and desirable place to live.

It should also be noted that the landscaping plans have been updated (see attached) to introduce a new hedgerow along the interface between the site and the transfer land. Consequently, there have been some minor tweaks to the layout / boundary treatments plan as the knee rail has been removed. These are reflected on the updated Landscape Masterplan (ref. H22-0032_001C rev C) and Boundary Treatments Plan (ref. BHNW146_BT01 rev C) submitted alongside this letter.

It has also been noted that since this reserved matters application was submitted, the Welsh Government has published an update to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which introduces a 'step-wise' approach for minimising damage and securing enhancements for biodiversity within new development. We have reviewed the requirements of the step wise approach and are confident that the granting of outline planning permission confirmed that the proposals will have no adverse impact on biodiversity and that no specific mitigation is required in respect of biodiversity. In terms of securing net benefits for biodiversity, we consider this to be demonstrated through the Landscape Masterplan and commentary above. Therefore, the proposals are considered to comply in full with the updated Chapter 6 of PPW.

Affordable Housing

The proposed scheme comprises of 18no. affordable housing units, which meets the requirements of the UU (25% rounded down to the nearest whole number of the total dwellings on site).

Further to our discussion at the meeting, you requested confirmation in writing of the proposed tenure split. I can confirm that the applicant has been in contact with the Council's Accommodation Project Officer who has provided a suggested tenure split of 70% rent and 30% shared ownership. The applicant has also been in contact with a number of Registered Providers [RPs] regarding this tenure and their current preference would be for a mix which is weighted to intermediate. A list of all RPs active in Wrexham has been provided by the Council and the applicant intends to formally market the affordable units to the full list.

Following receipt of any granting of reserved matters approval, the applicant intends to enter into negotiations with an RP and dispose of the units in accordance with the terms and restrictions of the signed UU.

Highways – Response to Councillor Comment

It was advised at our meeting that a Councillor had raised concerns in relation to the proposed access, and specifically its proximity to the existing pedestrian crossing on Holt Road. Whilst access was not a

matter for determination at outline stage, the proposed access was debated at length during the consideration of the application and the subsequent appeal. Condition 6 of the OPP restricts access from anywhere other than Holt Road. Bearing in mind the extent of the site boundary in relation to the highway on Holt Road, there is no other general location where the site access could be taken from.

The specific location of the access was determined having regard to wider considerations such as the need to achieve the requisite visibility splays and the internal configuration of the site having regard to its boundaries. It is important to note that the access as proposed under the current reserved matters application was found to be acceptable by both the Council's highways officers and the Inspector during the course of the appeal. Paragraph 23 of the appeal decision states:

"...The Council's highways officer does not take issue with the safety of the access arrangements, including the adequacy of the visibility splays that can be achieved to allow vehicles to emerge safely onto this section of the highway. I am satisfied that an acceptable access could be secured at reserved matters stage."

Dealing specifically with the concern raised by the local member, this was considered and addressed as part of the design process. The access was designed to achieve a 20m offset from the junction centre line to the crossing stop line. This accords with best practice guidance contained within LTT 2/95 although this is only guidance and doesn't preclude a shorter distance from being acceptable. Indeed, there are examples in the immediate locality of the site where a 20m offset has not been achieved (e.g. between the junctions with the Asda service yard and residential development further down Holt Road to the south-west).

Overall, the proposed access has already been confirmed acceptable by the Council, it accords with best practice guidance, and we do not believe there are any valid safety concerns in respect of its proximity to the pedestrian crossing.

Highways – Consultation Response

Since our meeting, we have been provided with additional detailed highway comments. Detailed comments are provided below from our highways consultant.

Access off Dean Road

References are made within the highway response regarding access off Dean Road although this lies outwith the application boundary. Furthermore, reference is made to the fact that the building located in this part of the site remains in active use as a Social Services Family Centre. However, this is no longer the case and the building is vacant. In any event, the legal obligation requires the applicant to seek to transfer this land to the Council. Further details on this are provided under the 'Open Space' heading above.

There are other references to this elsewhere in the response, including requests for the applicant to extend the footway from Plot 16 across the transfer land. Even if this was shown on the plan, it would still need to extend beyond the red edge to make a link with the Dean Road entrance and therefore could not be delivered by this application. Furthermore, there is no obligation within the UU for the applicant to provide such a link and our position is that it is a matter for the Council once the land has been transferred.

The applicant would be happy to discuss a footpath connection into the site through the transfer land in due course should this be something the Council wishes to propose. However, it is not considered to be a matter for this application.

Access to Holt Road

This point is also considered under section 'Highways – Response to Councillor Comment' section above. The previous access drawing (prepared by ITP) that accompanied the outline application, was confirmed acceptable albeit was not formally approved. An updated General Arrangement drawing reflecting the previously accepted design will be submitted shortly for formal approval under this reserved matters application. This will form the basis of future discussions between the Council and the applicant on a Section 278 (S278) Agreement.

S278 Issues

There are a number of requests for additional detail as part of the application. These include further information on levels, potential retaining walls etc. However, it is considered that these matters do not affect the acceptability of the access in principle and should be further considered in due course, through negotiations as part of the S278 Agreement following the granting of reserved matters approval. It is considered sufficient information has been provided to confirm an acceptable access can be achieved for planning purposes.

Widening of Footway

There is a request for the applicant to widen the existing cycleway/ footway on Holt Road to 5m. This is located outside of the application boundary and the proposed intervention has never been identified either at the outline stage or previously as something that was considered necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. The required works would be significant in nature and the applicant considers that if required, such works should have been secured previously by way of a planning obligation or condition.

Furthermore, it is unclear if the proposed intervention is even deliverable. It appears as though third party land would be required to facilitate the suggested widening works, including land falling within the curtilage of No. 33 and 34 Holt Road. Bearing this in mind, any widened route would only cover an extremely short stretch of pavement which would not deliver any wider benefits. As such, the applicant does not consider this suggested intervention to be necessary, justified or deliverable.

Active Travel

It is suggested that contact should be made with the Council's Active Travel Team although the applicant has not been made aware of any formal comments issued by this team as part of the consultation process. The application has been submitted to the LPA and due consultation process has been undertaken. No specific issues have been listed, but should there be any minor issues then these could be secured under a suitably worded condition.

Layout

The consultation document outlines many detailed observations. These have been incorporated wherever possible and provided within the updated suite of plans (please refer to the summary of amendments below). However, there are certain instances where we have not acceded to the Local Highway Authority (LHA) requests. These are covered below.

Firstly, in terms of the turning heads, these are retained at 22.5m. This is consistent with other current Bellway schemes within the borough, as well as elsewhere across North Wales and North-West England. The submitted scheme was submitted with swept path plan showing a 11.22m long / 2.53m wide refuse vehicle negotiating the scheme. This drawing shows that this vehicle, which is effectively the same size

as the 11.18m long / 2.55m wide refuse vehicle referred to in Wrexham's standard turning head details, can turn within the turning heads of the size shown within the scheme. It is considered that the turning heads as proposed are acceptable.

Secondly, the driveways as proposed fully comply with Local Planning Guidance Note No. 16 (Parking Standards) which confirms that the standard dimensions of 2.4m x 4.8m are acceptable.

Finally, the applicant has introduced a number of new footways and service strips as requested in the LHA comments. Full details of these are set out in the summary of changes below. The siting of Plot 35 has also been adjusted in order to accommodate the requisite visibility splay.

Sewer Easement

Comment is made regarding the suitability of the sewer easement which is a Welsh Water asset. Welsh Water has been consulted on the application and has not raised any concerns in relation to the requisite easements being achieved, or access in the event of maintenance. The applicant is of the view that the existing access could be maintained in the event of maintenance through traffic management measures e.g. temporary lights, one way restrictions and undertaking works in a manner that allowed access to be maintained. This would be a matter for Welsh Water to address at such a time they are undertaking any future maintenance. Accordingly, it is assumed that should they have any concerns these would have been included within their formal response.

Swept Path Details

It is also noted that the highway comments ask for revised plans indicating inbound and outbound movements separately, along with the centreline point of the road. These can be provided. However, we note they then go on to say that:

"It is important that the horizontal alignment of the estate roads does not result in any significant encroachment of the centerline of the carriageway. Particular attention needs to be paid to the 2 no. bends outside plots 27 and 63. Localized carriageway widening maybe required in these locations."

At 11.2 metres long and 2.53/2.55 metres wide, it is common place for the current size of refuse vehicles to encroach the centreline on the most modest of bends in a 5.5 metre wide residential estate road. It is also the case that this encroachment will be exaggerated as radii tighten, whilst a refuse vehicle would encroach the centreline even on a straight section of 4.8 metre wide estate road. As a result, refuse vehicles encroach the centreline of residential streets in a large number of instances on the one occasion a week they are in a residential estate. In this context, the requirement for localised carriageway widening in the identified locations will result in what is considered an over engineered solution for this light use.

Therefore, we would request that Wrexham highways revisit this point or provide further clarification as to what would be considered an acceptable encroachment of the centreline. Following that confirmation, we would provide suitable plans to respond to the point.

Construction Traffic Management Plan

I can confirm that the applicant accepts the proposed condition in this regard.

Schedule of Updates

For ease of reference, we can confirm that the following changes have been made to the Planning Layout and other supplementary drawings as appropriate. These should be reviewed in accordance with the commentary and clarifications set out above:

- Siting of Plot 35 amended to accommodate visibility splay;
- Pond position adjusted to suit the temporary bin collection point on the private drive serving plots 35-39 and to accommodate a 1.2m service verge between plots 40 / the entrance to 35;
- Hedge added on the western boundary in lieu of knee rail. It has now been reduced in width to create more space for vehicle turning. A small section has also been removed and an area of grasscrete has been added to assist with a car reversing off the drive of plot 16 (annotated on the Hard Surfacing Plan);
- Footway added from plot 50/51 round to plot 67, connecting with existing footpath;
- Footway added from plot 35 round to plot 25;
- 1.8m service strip added from plot 20 down to the new footway at plot 25;
- Tracking drawing provided for the small rigid goods vehicle using the private drive to plots 28 to 34 as per highway comments.
- PL01 G Planning Layout Refuse Tracking

In terms of re-consultation, other than highways matters, it is considered that the other points addressed in this letter are matters to be considered by the Case Officer. Therefore, it is proposed that any re-consultation should be limited to the LHA. There was an issue with the original comments where it took two months from their drafting to be released to the applicant. We are keen to avoid a repeat of such delays and would suggest that the LHA is given a period of 10 working days from the receipt of this letter and the accompanying documents to comment further. This is considered to be reasonable and is consistent with a typical re-consultation period applied by LPAs elsewhere.

I trust the above and accompanying resubmission pack provides sufficient information to address the various matters raised at our meeting and by consultees. However, should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0161 359 4309.

Yours sincerely



STEVE BUCKLEY