



Planning Statement incorporating Design & Access Statement

Planning Application on behalf of Oakbridge Homes

Demolition of existing redundant structures and Erection of 9 dwellings with associated parking and amenity space and a new access from Station Road
Land adjacent 54 Station Road, Ashwell

DLA Ref: 2018/222
July 2018

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is submitted on behalf of Oakbridge Homes to support a planning application for the development on land adjacent to 54 Station Road, Ashwell. The application proposes 9 new detached dwellings comprising six, 3-bed houses and three, 4-bed houses. There is a collection of abandoned pig sheds in the south western corner of the site which would be demolished as part of the development.

1.1.0 Scope

This document comprises an overarching Planning Report. Sections 2 considers the physical, economic, social and historical context of the site, setting out the relevant planning history in section 3, and the identifying the relevant local, regional and national planning policy framework in section 4. Section 5 sets out the details of the proposal and Section 6 details the consultations undertaken prior to the submission of the application. All these sections inform the evaluation of the proposal in Section 7 against the identified planning policy framework. The overall conclusions are set out in Section 8 and which are summarised below at paragraph 1.2.0.

1.2.0 Summary

It is proposed to develop the site for 9 dwellings, with a new access from Station Road.

1.2.1 There is a need to increase the rate of housebuilding, both nationally and locally, and Government policy sets out to promote this, for example through the presumption in favour of sustainable development that runs through plan-making and decision-taking.

1.2.2 The site is within the settlement boundary where new development is acceptable in principle. The design and landscaping of the site has been carefully considered to ensure that the character of the Conservation Area is preserved.

1.2.3 The site is well located in terms of public transport and access to local facilities and services. The proposed access and level of parking are considered acceptable in terms of highway safety.

1.2.4 The development would have significant public benefits, by providing housing, which would outweigh the less than substantial harm to heritage assets.

1.2.5 The proposals represent sustainable development and have economic, social and environmental benefits.

2.0 SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1.0 Location

The report site is adjacent to 54 Station Road, Ashwell. It is sited on the western side of Station Road and north of Ashwell Street on the eastern edge of the village.

2.2.0 Application Site

To the north of the site is 54 Station Road, to the south is Ashwell Street with residential development and agricultural land beyond. To the east is Station Road with residential properties beyond and to the west is the substantial rear garden of a dwelling on Ashwell Street. The site has a frontage along Station Road of approximately 100m and is circa 60m in depth. The site is rectangular although a small area in the south western corner is excluded from the site. There are some abandoned pig sheds in the south western corner of the site which are in a poor state of repair.

2.3.0 Context

Ashwell has one Conservation Area, covering much of the central part of the village, and numerous listed buildings. The parish church of St Mary is Grade I listed. To the north of the village the grounds of Ashwell Bury are designated as a historic park and

garden. To the south-west of the village lies the Arbury Banks Scheduled Ancient Monument.

2.4.0 Proposals Map

The site is within the proposed settlement boundary of Ashwell and is also within the Conservation Area.

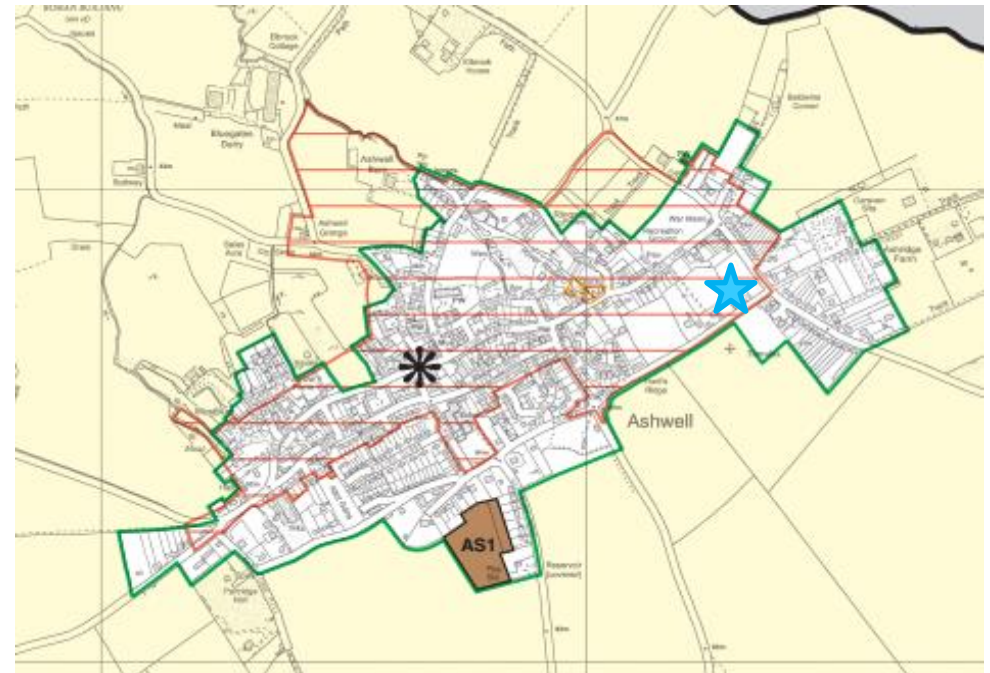


Figure 1 - Extract from draft Proposals Map (site identified by blue star)

2.5.0 **Accessibility**

The site is easily accessible by public transport. A bus stop is located approximately 75m north of the site on Station Road and is served by the number 90, 91 and 202 bus routes with services to Letchworth. The nearest railway station is located at Ashwell and Morden approximately 2 miles from the site and provides frequent access to London and Cambridge amongst other locations.

2.6.0 **Local Services**

The village of Ashwell has an existing population of approximately 1,800 people and is relatively well supported by a number of key local services, including a school, shops, public houses, village hall and church, all of which would be around a kilometre from the report site. The walking distance to these local services and facilities is set out below.



| | Local Facility | Approximate distance from report site |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Bus Stop | 75m |
| 2 | The Three Tuns Pub (with accommodation) | 470m |
| 3 | St Marys Church | 900m |
| 4 | Ashwell Stores | 780m |
| 5 | Ashwell Village Hall | 1200m |
| 6 | Ashwell Primary School | 910m |
| 7 | Pharmacy | 595m |
| 8 | Ashwell Garage | 280m |

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1.0 Application Site

3.1.1 The relevant history of the application site is summarised in Figure 3.1.0 below.

| LPA Ref | Proposal | Outcome |
|---------------|---|--|
| 17/00613/PRE | Pre-app Enquiry – Residential Development | Advice received, summarised in section 6 |
| 14/02744/1TCA | Remove one Ash tree (T1). Pollard one Ash tree at approximately 6 metres | Permitted |
| 08/03023/1TCA | Crown lift and reduce height of one Sycamore tree by up to 30% in 52 Station Road; reduce one Walnut tree by 30% in 54 Station Road; remove damaged branches and reduce one Ash tree by 30% to side of 54 in Townsend Field; remove lower branches and dead limbs from 2 Walnut trees in Townsend Field; crown lift to maintain shape and reduce height of seven Lime trees by up to 30% to side of 54 in Townsend Field. | Permitted |

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.0 National Policy / Guidance

Achieving Sustainable Development- in particular, paragraphs 6 to 8; The presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraphs 11 to 16); Core Planning Principles (paragraph 17); and Sections 6 (Delivering a wide choice of quality homes), 7 (Requiring good design), 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) and 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

4.2.0 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations 1996 (Saved Policies)

| Policy No. | Title |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6 | Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt |
| 55 | Car Parking |
| 57 | Residential Guidelines and Standards |

4.3.0 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011-2031 – Proposed Submission Version

| Policy No. | Title |
|------------|--|
| SP1 | Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire |

| | |
|------|--|
| SP2 | Settlement Hierarchy |
| SP8 | Housing Policy |
| SP9 | Design and Sustainability |
| SP12 | Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape |
| SP13 | Historic Environment |
| T1 | Assessment of Transport Matters |
| T2 | Parking |
| HS3 | Housing Mix |
| D1 | Sustainable Design |
| D4 | Air Quality |
| NE1 | Landscape |
| HE1 | Designated Heritage Assets |
| HE4 | Archaeology |

4.4.0 Supplementary Planning Documents

Vehicle Parking At New Developments, November 2011
Design SPD, July 2011

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1.0 Use

5.1.1 The site is currently an enclosed green space used for grazing which is not publicly accessible. The proposed development is for 9 new dwellings within the site with associated amenity space and parking and a new access from Station Road.

5.1.2 There are some pig sheds on a small part of the site. These structures are abandoned and in a poor state of repair.

5.2.0 Layout

5.2.1 The proposed site layout shows the new access from Station Road located broadly centrally in the western boundary of the site. The internal access road extends from the new access with five houses being provided to the north of the road and four to the south.

5.2.2 The houses would be set back from the access roads with generous front gardens of at least 5m in depth. The driveways which would lead from the main access road to the dwellings would be used for parking. There would also be an area of open space along the eastern boundary of the site providing a visual end stop to the view along the access road.

5.3.0 Appearance & Scale

5.3.1 The overall appearance of the site would be one of a relaxed layout with large areas of green space, comprising of public areas and front gardens.

5.3.2 The dwellings would be two-storey and traditional in design and appearance with pitched tiled roofs and chimneys.

5.3.3 House types A & B are of the same design but have a different materials finish. They are both three bedroom units. The dwelling has a pitched roof with a front projection with a gable facing the access road on house type A, house type B has a hipped roof to the projection. The dwelling also has a tiled roof porch and an attached garage to the side. The house has more floor space at ground floor than first floor, accommodated in a single storey wrap-around element to the rear of the house. The house is finished in brick and render, with house type A only having render to the forward facing gable end and house type B being render at first floor level.

5.3.4 House type C is a larger dwelling, with four bedrooms, but remains traditional in style and uses the same materials pallet. The house is designed to appear as though it has been extended with a subservient element at the first floor over the garage.

The main element of the house is regular in shape with a small front projection with a hipped roof. The house is finished in brick at ground floor and render at first floor.

- 5.3.5 House type D is the same as house type C but has a double garage. The dwelling is also finished in brick at ground floor level with render at first floor.



Extract from Streetscene AA

5.4.0 Landscaping

- 5.4.1 The site has strong landscaped boundaries to the north and east with the western boundary being demarcated by a hedge. The existing trees and hedgerows will be maintained wherever possible, although there will be some loss of planting to provide the new access and associated visibility splays. The proposed site layout also shows the new trees and the large areas of green space which will soften the layout.

5.5.0 Access

- 5.5.1 A new junction with Station Road would be created to allow vehicular and pedestrian access to the site. This would have the appropriate visibility splays and junction geometry to meet the Highway Authority's requirements.
- 5.5.2 Within the site a shared surface is proposed with the driveways to the dwellings leading from it. Pedestrian access to the houses would be provided separately to the driveways.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

A pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Council in March 2017 and a full written response was received on 24 May 2017. The advice received is summarised below.



Site layout on which pre-application advice was given

6.1.0 Principle

The site is not allocated in the Submission Plan and is currently within the rural area beyond the Green Belt being outside the

current defined settlement boundary. However, the emerging plan redefines the Ashwell Settlement boundary such that the site would be included.

6.1.1 The site is within the Ashwell Conservation Area so in accordance with the NPPF, while emphasising a presumption in favour of sustainable development the requirements of Paras 131 - 134 will be the main consideration. This presumption is not limited to development which accords with the development plan but extends to that which is demonstrably economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Or, put another way, development where the benefits in this regard clearly outweigh any harm.

6.2.0 Sustainability

It is considered that this site to be a wholly sustainable location. The emerging plan includes the site within the settlement boundary and classifies Ashwell as a Category A Village with a school, shops and facilities and in easy reach of a mainline station. In this regard an appropriately scaled scheme is likely to be regarded as having convenient access to a range of services and facilities without the need to heavily rely on private transport. The advice stated: *"In summary I would characterise opportunities for mixed mode access to services and facilities as*

reasonable for a rural location and therefore marginally positive socially and environmentally.”

6.2.1 In visual amenity terms it may be considered that there are no positive environmental benefits of developing this site as this is a long established field with mature trees and boundary vegetation. However, the site is already bordered by development so there would be little harm occasioned by an appropriately designed and landscaped development scheme in visual impact terms.

6.2.2 The local school is close to capacity and there may be problems with patient registrations at the Ashwell surgery. If this is the case a scheme of 9 new dwellings might give rise to a degree of social harm.

6.2.3 A scheme for 9 dwellings should be characterised economically as a positive benefit in terms of housing delivery and a boost to the local economy.

6.3.0 **Conservation Area**

If it is assumed that the development of this site would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset (Ashwell conservation area) then it would be incumbent on the Authority to weigh this harm against the

public benefits of the proposal. It is acknowledged that a modest scheme of housing on this site would deliver some public benefits in terms of an increase in housing supply. The site is screened from main public views by the vegetation along Station Road/Ashwell Street and there are limited views into the site from the gap to the side of 54 Station Road.

6.3.1 The Council’s Conservation Officer has not been formally consulted at this stage. However, a brief comment regarding the significance of this land within the Conservation Area setting was sought and it is concluded that the residential development would not be inappropriate provided that:

- landscaping is retained and enhanced (including significant trees);
- layout retains a relatively loose knit form of development and
- boundary landscaping to the road frontage should be maintained/enhanced to safeguard the public views of the site.

The considerations are likely to centre on the detail of the application such as house design, layout, materials and landscaping.

6.4.0 Urban Design & Landscape Architect comments

'The site is within the village boundary and also within Ashwell Conservation Area. The site appears to be a garden area, laid to grass with mature trees and hedging surrounded by residential development which is mainly two storeys and a mix of semi-detached and detached. Access would need to be off Station Road and would require the loss of some of the boundary vegetation to accommodate sightlines. The retention of the other existing vegetation is important for screening, creating a sense of place for the development, the setting of the Conservation Area and the character of Station Road. Additional planting could strengthen this. Residential development is acceptable in landscape and urban design terms and a mix of detached and semi-detached and short terraces would reflect surrounding residential development. The density of the proposed development would reflect surrounding areas. Layout should ensure that hard surfacing for access and parking is kept to minimum. Further guidance can be found in the Design SPD (2011) available on the website.'

6.5.0 Housing Mix

The mix of housing and its design would need to reflect the prevailing character of this village location as identified by the Urban Design and Landscape Architect. Given this site is within the Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset, its setting

and the character of the countryside, need to be considered as part of the design approach.

6.6.0 Ecology

The site may have significant ecological value given its current use and presence of mature trees this should be explored in an appropriate study.

6.7.0 Archaeology

The proposed development area is located within an Area of Archaeological Significance, as identified in the Local Plan. This area covers the historic village of Ashwell and the fields to its south and east. The village likely dates to the late Saxon period, but the Ashwell area has been a focus for human activity for much longer, with a very high density of cropmarks representing likely Bronze Age barrows and later prehistoric and/or Romano-British settlement enclosures. The Extensive Urban Survey for Ashwell notes that Ashwell may have been a Roman religious site, associated with the springs. It also notes that Ashwell Street is likely to date to the Roman period (HER4692) and was in use in the medieval period.

6.7.1 The proposed development is such that it should be regarded as likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest. It is recommended that the results of an archaeological

evaluation of the site are included with any planning application. This evaluation is likely to comprise geophysical survey followed by trial trenching.

6.8.0 **Arboriculture**

A full site survey should be submitted identifying any vegetation of note, including any to be removed. This survey should form part of any biodiversity / ecological management plan.

6.9.0 **Conclusion**

The pre-application advice concluded stating:

“The identified site lies within the Ashwell conservation area and as such there is presumption that this should be protected for its own sake as once lost it would be irreplaceable. However in this case given the nature and scale of the proposed development I consider that there are benefits associated with the scheme which would demonstrably outweigh the harm occasioned to the asset. In my opinion a carefully considered development is unlikely to be injurious to the significance of the heritage asset and I conclude that the modest benefits which might accrue from the delivery of nine dwellings would be sufficient to outweigh any harm. The site is within the Settlement boundary in the emerging plan and is considered to be a sustainable location.”

7.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Based on the analysis set out in Sections 2 to 5, I consider that the application proposal raises the following issues, which I will consider in turn below:

1. Principle
2. Dwelling Mix
3. Layout & Design
4. Highway Safety & Access
5. Trees and Landscaping
6. Planning Balance

7.1.0 **Issue No 1: Principle**

The new housing created by this proposal will help the Council achieve Policy SP8 of its Local Plan which refers to the growing need for housing delivery across the district. This would be in line with the NPPF section 6 and Policy HS3 of the Local Plan, which refers to delivering a wide choice of high quality homes, as it will boost the supply of housing in the area. There is a need to increase the rate of housebuilding, both nationally and locally, and Government policy is set out to promote this, for example through the presumption in favour of sustainable development that runs through plan-making and decision-taking. The site will be within the settlement boundary where new development is acceptable in principle.

- 7.1.1 Policy SP1 of the North Herts Local Plan supports the principles of sustainable development which this proposal seeks to achieve. The emerging Local Plan also states in Policy SP2 that Ashwell is a village in which development will be allowed in the defined settlement boundary. The development will be good design, in line with section 7 of the NPPF and Policy SP9 of the North Herts Local Plan, which is key to sustainable development. In addition to this the development contributes to the natural and local environment by enhancing landscape, therefore achieving Section 11 of the NPPF, Policy SP12 and NE1 of plan the Local Plan. This landscaping will also mitigate against

any potential impacts of air quality during the construction phase of the scheme, thus achieving Policy D4. The scheme also achieves Section 12 of the NPPF, Policy SP13 and D1 of the Local Plan which refers to the conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This is accomplished through making a positive contribution to local character, historic environment and sense of place.

- 7.1.2 Station Road is a relatively straight road which has the benefit of speed restrictions of 30mph passing the site. Visibility is therefore good and it is not anticipated that development of the site would raise any significant highway safety issues. This would achieve Policy T1 of the Local Plan as the development would not adversely impact upon highway safety. The proposal will also achieve the appropriate parking standards in accordance with Policy T2 of the Local Plan.

- 7.1.3 The site is located within the Ashwell Conservation Area. Developments within Conservation Areas must preserve or enhance the character of the area. There is no Conservation Area appraisal for Ashwell, however there is a Village Design Statement which refers to the character of the village. As the dwellings are of high quality design and appropriate in scale it is considered that the proposal would, at worst, preserve the

character of the Conservation Area, particularly given the existing and proposed level of landscaping.

- 7.1.4 The development is in accordance with the North Herts District Local Plan Policy 7 which states in selected villages (which includes Ashwell), the Council will normally permit development proposals if the site lies within the main area of the village as shown on the proposals map.
- 7.1.5 It is therefore considered that the principle of the development is acceptable.

7.2.0 **Issue No 2: Dwelling Mix**

The proposed development contains a mix of three and four bedroom dwellings. It is considered that this is appropriate for the location and is in line with the Council's own evidence.

- 7.2.1 Ashwell is within the Stevenage Housing Market Area (HMA). The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update, August 2016, shows that within the Stevenage HMA there is a need for 75.9% of new houses to be 3 bed and 13.3% to be four bed, with the need for 2 bed dwellings be 8.2% and 5+ bed dwellings at just 1%. This proposal therefore contributes to the areas of greatest need.

7.3.0 **Issue No 3: Layout & Design**

The layout of the site is loose knit with properties having large front gardens as well as there being areas of public open space and generous landscaping.

- 7.3.1 Policy 57 of the Local Plan refers to the Residential Guidelines and Standards which are considered in turn below.

Guideline 1 – Site and Surroundings

The site would incorporate a unique design, whilst retaining the character of the Conservation Area in which it is situated.

Guideline 2 – Design and Layout

The proposed layout is designed with generous open space which would be overlooked, therefore preventing opportunities for crime. In addition to this it has an attractive design, combined with amenity and practical requirements in a sensible layout.

Guideline 3 – Roads and Footpaths

The schemes layout achieves the following requirements:

- (a) minimise the danger and nuisance from traffic which passes through the new development;
- (b) keep vehicle flows and speeds low in the vicinity of homes;

(c) provide safe and convenient pedestrian routes between homes and to local community facilities;

(d) minimise the danger to pedestrians and the inconvenience to emergency and other services which can be caused by on-street parking;

(e) create safe routes for vehicular movement; and

(f) enable residents' needs for statutory and other services to be met efficiently.

Guideline 4 - Mix of Dwelling Sizes

This development will enhance the character of existing settlements through skilful design. In addition to this it helps fulfil the housing needs of the local area, with a mixture of dwelling sizes.

Guideline 5 - Floorspace

The floorspace for this proposal meets the requirements of the expected occupants and serves their intended purposes. All dwellings exceed the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Guideline 6 – Orientation

The dwellings will receive reasonable levels of sunlight and daylight due to the design and layout of the scheme.

Guideline 7 – Privacy

There are no back to back arrangements within the site. There would be a back to back relationship between plots 6-9 and properties on Walkden's however the distance between the dwellings would be in excess of 50m.

Guideline 8 - Play and Amenity Space

The scheme proposes some public amenity space for residents, as well as having sufficient amenity space in the form of gardens.

Guideline 9 – Landscape

The proposals retain as much existing landscaping as possible within the overall design. The layout relates to the existing landscape features. The development also includes new planting to enhance the landscape of the site and hence the surroundings.

Guideline 10 - Noise

Noise is unlikely to be an issue however the existing and proposed trees along the boundary of the site would minimise any impacts.

Guideline 11 - Car parking and Garaging

This scheme achieves the requirements for car parking and garaging. This point is explored in more detail in section 7.4.0 below.

Guideline 12 - Servicing

The site is within the existing village and is therefore served by standard utilities. The site is arranged to allow service vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear.

7.3.2 The Design SPD includes a section on Ashwell which contains a description of the existing settlement which states: *"Away from the centre density is less and the height of buildings reduce. Some red and white brick buildings represent building from the 19th century. More modern developments have used a wider range of materials and colours."*

7.3.3 The proposals are low density, appropriate for the edge of village location, away from the centre. The dwellings would be two storey in height, in line with existing dwellings on Station Road and recent developments at Walkden's and Philosophers Gate. The houses are traditional in design, which is considered appropriate for the location, but do not seek to replicate historic buildings within the village.

7.3.4 Overall it is considered that the design and layout of the proposals comply with policy 57 and the Design SPD. The development would be appropriate for its edge of village, Conservation Area setting and would preserve the character of the area.

7.4.0 **Issue No 4: Highway Safety & Access**

Policy 55 requires minimum number of parking spaces for each dwelling. The required level is 2 parking spaces for three bedroom houses, and 3 parking spaces for four-bedroom + dwellings. The Council also has a more up-to-date SPD on parking which requires all dwellings of two or more bedrooms to have 2 parking spaces. In addition the SPD includes a requirement for visitor parking at a rate of 0.25-0.75 per dwelling, with the higher rate being used where all the houses have garages. The emerging Local Plan policy contains the same requirements as the SPD.

7.4.1 All the dwellings would have at least one parking space within a garage and one on the driveway. The driveways of plots 1 to 7 are either long enough or wide enough to accommodate more than one car, so visitors can park on the driveway of the property they are visiting. Visitors to plots 8 & 9 would be able to park on the access road. It is considered that the proposal contains sufficient parking provision to ensure that there is no overspill onto the highway outside of the site.

7.4.2 The new junction would be designed and constructed in accordance with the highway authority's requirements. Adequate visibility splays can be achieved as Station Road is

relatively straight in the vicinity of the proposed new access and is subject to a 30mph speed limit.

7.4.3 Overall it is not considered that any issues of highway safety would arise from the proposals.

7.5.0 **Issue No 5: Trees and Landscaping**

The site is within a Conservation Area and therefore all the trees within the site are protected from being removed without permission. The significant landscaping to the boundaries of the site contributes to the character of the site and the Conservation Area and therefore as much of the landscaping as possible is to be retained. There will have to be some removal of trees and planting to provide the new access. The application is accompanied by an arboricultural report which addresses the impact on existing trees in detail.

7.6.0 **Issue No 6: Planning Balance**

Paragraph 15 of the NPPF is clear that *“development which is sustainable can be approved without delay.”* The NPPF also provides guidance on what constitutes sustainable development stating in paragraph 7 that sustainable development has three strands:

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

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

● an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate

and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.”

7.6.1 In this case it is considered that the proposal has economic benefits by providing much needed housing, jobs during construction and after construction due to an increase in population. Existing facilities and services will benefit from an increase in population and higher spending.

7.6.2 Social benefits arising from the development would comprise the provision of housing in an area of demand, the mix of housing proposed allowing people to move up the property ladder, which could in turn make smaller dwellings available.

7.6.3 The proposal would give rise to environmental benefits by locating housing within an existing settlement which has a good range of facilities and services and is served by public transport. Any potential adverse impact of developing the site would be mitigated by additional landscaping and biodiversity measures as appropriate.

7.6.4 In respect of the Conservation Area and potential archaeological remains within the site, it is not considered that the harm that would result would be substantial. The NPPF advises at paragraph 134 that *“where a development proposal will lead to*

less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.” The public benefits of providing housing in a sustainable location which would have economic, social and environmental benefits are considered to outweigh any harm to the heritage assets.

7.6.5 Overall Ashwell is a Category A Village with a school, shops and facilities and in easy reach of a mainline station, it is a sustainable location served by public transport. The scheme has economic, social and environmental benefits which are considered to outweigh any harm which may arise from the proposals.

7.6.6 This view was shared by the Planning Officer at the pre-application stage who concluded that:

“there are benefits associated with the scheme which would demonstrably outweigh the harm occasioned to the asset. In my opinion a carefully considered development is unlikely to be injurious to the significance of the heritage asset and I conclude that the modest benefits which might accrue from the delivery of nine dwellings would be sufficient to outweigh any harm. The site is within the Settlement boundary in the emerging plan and is considered to be a sustainable location.”

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.0 This report relates to a planning application for demolition of existing redundant structures and erection of 9 new houses on land adjacent to 54 Station Road, Ashwell.

8.1.1 The proposal is promoted in the following circumstances:

- The application site is within a category A village, with a good range of facilities and is served by public transport – the principle of development is therefore acceptable.
- The proposals constitute sustainable development and have economic, social and environmental benefits.
- The development would have significant public benefits, by providing housing, which would outweigh the less than substantial harm to heritage assets.
- The proposed dwelling mix is in line with the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment update.
- The design and layout of the proposals are acceptable and in accordance with Local Plan policy 57 and the Design SPD.

- No adverse impact on highway safety would result from the development.
- As much existing landscaping as possible would be retained and new planting is proposed.