Planning Statement

Proposal:	Erection of 4no. dwellings and associated landscaping
Site:	Land to the east of Becketts, Ashley, Box Wiltshire, SN13 8AQ.
Our Reference:	PS_2455.docx

Land Development and Planning Consultants Ltd. is a Rural Planning Practice based in Corsham, Wiltshire. The Practice was established in 1989 to provide advice and representation on the range of town and country planning issues relating primarily to the countryside, villages and the market towns of Wessex. Clients include individuals, developers, legal and land agencies, commercial and residential developers, local authorities and amenity groups.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Land Development and Planning Consultants Ltd. have been instructed by CMS Architects to prepare a planning statement in support of their planning application on land to the east of Becketts, Ashley, Box.

1.2 The application should be read in conjunction with the following reports and drawings;

1.2.1	LOC01	Location Plan;
1.2.2	LOC02	Location Plan;
1.2.3	PL01_A	Topographic Survey;
1.2.4	PL02	Existing Site Sections;
1.2.5	PL03_A	Constraints & Opportunities;
1.2.6	PL10_A	Proposed Site Plan;
1.2.7	PL11	Proposed Site Section;
1.2.8	PL12	3 Bed Unit Plans & Elevations;

1.2.9 PL13 2 Bed Unit Plans & Elevations;

1.2.10 PL14 3 Bed Unit Plans & Elevations;

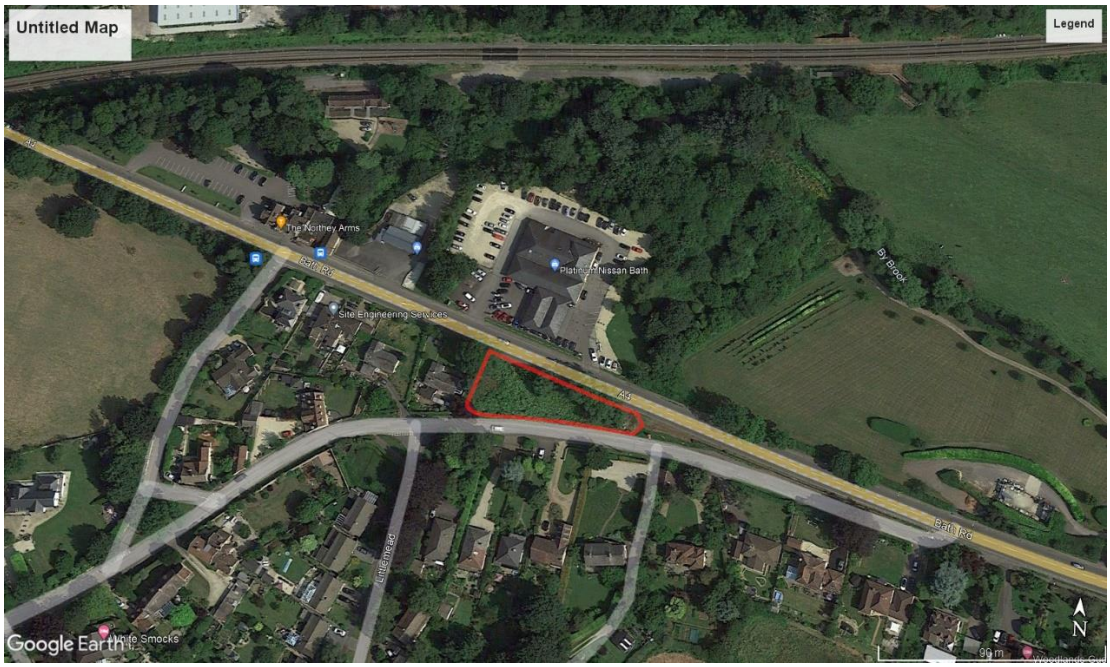
1.2.11 PL15 4 Bed Unit Plans;

1.2.12 PL16 4 Bed Unit Elevations;

1.2.13 Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Ellendale Environmental Limited.

2.0 Site context

2.1 The application site is a triangular plot bounded by the A4 Bath Road to the north and the C168 to the south which forms the spine of the hamlet of Ashley, leading to Doctors Hill and Wormcliff to the south and re-joining the A4 approximately 1.5km to the west.



2.2

2.3 Extract from Google Earth TM.

2.4 It is likely that the southern lane served as an alternative, drier route for London to Bath traffic before the A4 route was formalised alongside the route of the GWR. The application site is shown at the split from the Bath Road in the 1844 – 1888 OS 25" 1st Edition, with evidence of structures appearing on 1894 – 1903 OS 2nd Edition. Becketts and Hillcrest, to the west appear on the plans after 1943, by which time residential

development to the south of the lane has commenced, consolidating the previously sporadic hamlet of Ashley into a more defined outlier to the large village of Box.

2.5 During the latter half of the twentieth century a commercial development of 3no. garages was approved to the north of Bath Road, east of the Northey Arms, and south of Bath Road, west of the Box Cemetery. These sites now comprise a bathroom sales office, a car showroom and a 24hour petrol forecourt and shop serving the village of Box, following the closure of the convenience store on the High Street.

3.0 The application site

3.1 The application site is a piece of currently vacant land bounded to the north by the Bath Road and to the south by the C168. Informal access to the site has been from the south via the C168 and it appears that the site has been used for the depositing of builder's materials and uprisings over which scrub and ruderal vegetation have grown; there are scattered trees to the north and west boundaries.

3.2 The planning history comprises;

3.3 N/87/02498/OUT; Outline – one bungalow; Refused 21/21/1987.

3.4 14/05559/FUL; New access, dropped kerb & permeable hardstanding; Refused 29/07/2014.

3.5 14/10068/CLE; Certificate of lawfulness for use of land for storage of plant, machinery and tools; Refused 26/11/2014.

3.6 16/06317/FUL Erection of 2no. dwellings; Refused 06/09/2016.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1 The starting point for the determination of this application is the provisions of the Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise. The relevant Development Plan for this form and scale of proposal comprises Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS).

4.2 It is acknowledged that the application site lies outside of a settlement as defined by Core Policy 1; Settlement Strategy or CP11; Spatial Strategy; Corsham Community Area of WSC. In such locations there is a presumption against new development other than in instances of exceptions, none of which apply to the application site or development, subject of this statement.

4.3 It is also acknowledged that the application site lies within the West Wiltshire Green Belt and within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.4 However, s.38(6) of the Act 2004 confirms that the policies of the Development Plan are only a start point for consideration of development proposals and may be outweighed by material considerations particular to the subject of the application. This statement will assess the material that weigh in favour of development of the application site. Of particular relevance is the National Planning Policy Framework 2021

5.0 Proposed development

5.1 The planning application subject of this statement requests consent for the erection of 3no. dwellings in a terrace arrangement at the western end of the site, together with a detached dwelling on the eastern portion of the site; Drawing 2016-CMS-XX-XX-DR-A-PL10 refers.

5.2 Two points of access are proposed; the western access serving the terrace, comprising 2no. 3-bedroom units and 1no. 2-bedroom unit, and the eastern access serving the detached 4-bedroom unit. Parking provision has been allocated for each of the dwellings in accordance with the prevailing parking standards.

6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 <u>Principle of development</u>

6.2 The current housing supply figures for Wiltshire indicate a supply of between 4.6 years (HLS Statement) and 4.7 years (appeal ref APP/Y3940/W/22/3299162 at Bradenstoke issued in January 2023). However, the above appeal decision confirms that the

shortfall in the North and West Housing Market Area is 4.16 years equating to 537 dwelling units; the above mentioned decision refers to the figures as a 'moderate under supply'.

6.3 Consequently, para.11d of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is engaged, requiring the LPA to consider the proposal against the objectives of sustainable development and other material considerations, only refusing planning permission where any adverse impact of granting consent would *'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'*.

6.4 In this case, there are material benefits to the grant of modest residential schemes in an area where there is a clear shortfall in housing, particularly in dwellings of an affordable scale within the rural area. The proposed scheme will deliver a terrace of three small homes, that will fall within the affordability brackets for the Parish, providing housing opportunities for young families and first-time buyers. The development represents an important contribution to housing options in the policy-constrained Parish of Box, and given the context of the site and the plots, these dwellings will remain of modest scale and therefore affordable into the future.

6.5 <u>Character and appearance</u>

6.6 The application site lies within the hamlet of Ashley, a significant outlier to the larger village of Box. It is bordered to the west by the dwelling known as Becketts, to the south are a range of mid-20th century dwellings, which extend east to a petrol station and shop; north of the Bath Road is a car showroom. The site is enclosed by residential and commercial development, and while described by planning policy as being in the open countryside, the character of the location is defined by surrounding development and the adjacent highway.

6.7 Development of the site would not be seen as an extension of the built form into the countryside, although the site does not fall within the settlement hierarchy set out in CP1 nor comply with the definition of 'infill' contained in CP2 of the WCS.

6.8 A degree of harm could be attached to the loss of an open space within the built form of Ashley, however the contribution that the site makes to the character and quality of the local environment will be limited given the impact of the surrounding development and highway activity, and the scale and appearance of the plot of land itself.

6.9 It is acknowledged that the site lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, specifically the Enclosed Limestone Valley character type, in particular the Lower By Brook character area. Ashley is identified as a settlement within the character area which is generally defined by the enclosure of valley landform, with development following the valley bottoms, significant woodland on the steeper slopes interspersed with both arable and pastural use. Development of the application site will not conflict or compromise the key characteristics of the AONB in this location.

6.10 While there is a conflict with the spatial strategy of the WCS, the impact of development of the site would be extremely limited in terms of its effect on the character and appearance of the area or the wider landscape.

6.11 Accessibility to services and facilities

6.12 The application site is ideally located to access the local shop that serves Box and its environs, the centre of the plot being only 250m from the service station to the east. 130m to the west outside the Northey Arms public house are bus stops on the Bath Road from which an hourly service travel west to Bath (20mins travel time) and east to Corsham (20mins) and on to Chippenham (40mins). While larger grocery shops would likely result in the use of private vehicles day-to-day needs can be easily accessed on foot or by public transport.

6.13 Within the large village of Box (750m east) are pubs, recreation ground, doctors surgery, pharmacy, primary school, places of worship and a village hall, all accessible on foot via lit pavements, cycle or bus. It is acknowledged that such sustainable means of transport will not be suitable for or convenient for all persons or journey types,

however, there are real and viable options for future occupants of the development to use sustainable transport modes.

6.14 The application site is considered to be an eminently sustainable location for residential development by virtue of its proximity to services and facilities, and therefore result in only a modest increase in private vehicle usage when assessed against other development sites in the 'open countryside'.

6.15 Amenity

6.16 The nearest residential property to the application site is Becketts, to the west, a mid-century bungalow, accessed from the southeast corner of the plot. The rear of the proposed terrace of three dwellings will be 9.3m from the shared boundary, currently a close boarded fence which will be bolstered by hedge planting. Openings to the rear of the proposed dwellings will serve living and dining rooms at ground floor and bedrooms at first floor. The proposed planting and separation between existing and proposed properties will protect the residential amenity of the occupiers of Becketts and of the new development.

6.17 The terrace to the west of the site has been orientated away from the Bath Road to reduce the impact of the highway on future occupiers of the dwellings. Likewise the ground and first floor of the detached dwelling will have no openings in the north elevation. With accommodation over 3 stories, the detached dwelling will have the main living spaces on the lower ground floor, with only high-level windows on the north elevation providing natural light to the kitchen and living room.

6.18 A materials palette has been proposed that reflects the local vernacular, including red brick used in Victorian era properties on the Devizes Road in Box, and natural Cotswold stone. The overall design approach is contemporary, using traditional materials to create clean lines and highlighted by large verge and eave overhangs anchoring the development into the rising site.

6.19 The proposed accommodation has been well considered and the dwellings detailed to limit the potential impacts of the Bath Road, while adequate amenity space and parking has been provided for each of the units.

6.20 Ecology

6.21 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken by Ellendale Environmental Limited which is commended to the Local Planning Authority. General findings are that the site has low suitability to support protected species and no evidence was found of protected species using the site. Recommendations for enhancement of the ecological credentials of the site are welcomed and can be secured by the LPA through an appropriately worded condition attached to a planning permission.

6.22 Drainage

6.23 The expectation is that the site can discharge foul water into the adjacent mains system. Surface water can be discharged to the ground using an attenuation approach; a detailed scheme for the surface water drainage system can be secured through an appropriately worded condition attached to a planning permission.

7.0 Planning balance

7.1 In light of a material shortfall in housing land supply within the northern area housing market, the application site represents a sustainable location for a modest development that will help contribute to rural housing provision in the parish of Box.

7.2 The functional, contemporary approach to the design, will create an understated yet robust corner-site development, using materials that reflect the natural and manufactured finishes of the area.

7.3 The development will meet the economic objective of sustainable development through employment during the construction process and will provide for a modest growth in the village population contributing to the use of local services, shops and facilitities.

7.4 The social objective of sustainable development will be met through the provision of additional housing opportunities in the parish of Box.

7.5 The environmental objective of sustainable development will be met through the proposed biodiversity enhancements to the site that currently contributes little to the ecology of the area.

8.0 Concluding notes

8.1 It is trusted that the local planning authority will be able to support the application in its submitted form. The Applicant would welcome the opportunity to discuss in detail the proposals and to provide further information as required to enable a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken. Please contact the Agent at the earliest opportunity should such details be necessary.