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Wiltshire Council
Development Management
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

06 September 2024

Our Reference: 227617

Dear Steven

PL/2023/11188 - Outline Residential Planning Application
Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common,
Melksham SN12 7QS

Further to our recent discussions with respect to consultation responses, and feedback from Design West, we write to formally submit updates to the application covering the following, as further explained below:

- Minor adjustment to the red line to accommodate the requested change to the A3102 junction arrangement.
- Amendment of the A3102 junction arrangement, to a ghost island priority junction, with an accompanying Transport Update Note
- Updates to the parameter plans, and clarifications with respect to the Environmental Statement (see enclosed EIA Technical Note), to align with the above.

Following post-submission advice from Wiltshire Council's Sustainable Transport Team, the proposed primary vehicle access onto the A3102 Sandridge Common Road has been amended, changing it from a roundabout to a ghost island priority junction. The Transport Update Note, provides detail of all matters agreed with the Sustainable Transport Team, covering the final position with respect to: access strategy; traffic generation and operational analysis; planning conditions and obligations.

As a consequence of the amended junction arrangement, there has also been a minor amendment to the detailed positioning of the junction, necessitating a minor change to the red line.

To reflect these amendments, the following is submitted, superseding previous plans of the same description:

- Site Location Plan
- Parameter Plans (composite, heights & density)
- Proposed Access Plans
- Illustrative Masterplan, Landscape Masterplan and Concept Plan

A full updated submission Document List is attached.

We can confirm that no other changes have been made to the scheme, noting the absence now of any objections from the statutory technical consultees.

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Additionally, we would wish to highlight the positive response from the Design Review Panel, including with respect to the mix of uses, quantum of development, and access arrangements. We were pleased to understand their view that, *"The applicant has clearly demonstrated, in the view of the panel, the potential of the site to provide high quality residential development. We look forward to seeing more substantive proposals when a reserved matters application is under consideration."*

Their comments have been carefully considered and are addressed also as an appendix to this letter.

You will understand that we are keen for the Council to now determine the application and are mindful of the recent appeal decision which identifies that Wiltshire Council can only demonstrate a 3.85 year housing land supply (Ref: PL/2022/09842 / Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/24/3340811). We have already provided an indication of delivery rates and can confirm that subject to a positive resolution in October and decision before April 2025 (allowing for drafting and signing of the s106 agreement) the site could contribute 125 homes to the five year supply from 1 April 2024. Given that the site is a proposed allocation within the draft Regulation 19 Local Plan, and the scheme is generally consistent with the draft allocation provisions, we would hope that the Council can support the scheme and deliver a positive determination of the application.

With this in mind we are currently progressing a first draft of the s106 agreement and would therefore welcome feedback further to my email of the 30 August 2024 on the requests made, including those obligations identified in the Transport Update Note. This will then allow the first draft to be completed and shared for comment.

Bearing this in mind, we would very much welcome the public consultation, including ES consultation, to take place as soon as possible, with comments sought before the end of September. This would then allow the application to be heard at an October committee, which would accord with the agreed extension of time.

I trust the above is acceptable and the attached is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Will Charlton BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI
Technical Director

cc Gleeson Land Ltd

Design Review Panel Response

The application team is grateful for the comments of the Design Review Panel (DRP) and the time / consideration which has been given to the scheme.

Many of the written comments of the DRP regarding the illustrative Masterplan generally note that they are given to help the planners engage with future Reserved Matters (RM) applications, to achieve a high-quality development. They are not given to recommend changes at this stage with respect to the outline planning application.

We have however considered the comments to determine if there any matters which we might evolve at this stage. Having given due thought we do not propose making any changes to the Masterplan or Parameter Plans for the reasons given below.

Orchard planting

It is not proposed to change this land use typology, with the orchard planting east of the listed building proposed to remain. This was proposed by the Masterplan in order to re-introduce a planted context to the farmhouse which existed between the house and the adjoining fields until the early C20th but has latterly been eroded by extended domestic gardens and outbuildings. Consultation with the Conservation Officer has confirmed that this approach is acceptable with no concerns or objections raised.

Furthermore, the Parameter Plan for the application, whilst noting the use of orchards east of the farmhouse, is not specific in the exact extent of those. The illustrative Masterplan shows our thoughts on how the orchards could be developed but at RM stage it will be possible to look more closely at the exact location, spacing and fruit tree species (including their management) to create an agreed canopy pattern which complements its location. This will include considering in the context of any changes in the planted boundary around the Listed Building and the field hedges of the site.

Allotments

Discussion was had on the day about replacing a small area of proposed dwellings, due south of the boundary to Blackmore Farmhouse, with the allotments. This has been considered by the team but for the reasons below, has not been incorporated.

The proposed provision of dwellings due south of Blackmore Farmhouse (backing onto the employment parcel) has been shown in order to afford a level of overlooking and natural surveillance of the open space and pathway through to Sandridge Common, which will not be provided by allotments (or employment uses on a weekend).

Furthermore, dialogue with the Conservation Officer over proposals south of the farmhouse had previously raised concern of the potential visibility of domestic rear garden clutter. The clutter which can arise from allotments has the potential to be much more visually intrusive than garden clutter and would therefore be against the views of the Conservation Officer.

Space as allotments is also less manageable than public open space, whilst the removal of dwellings in this location would not only mean that the open space and pathway through to Sandridge Common wouldn’t be overlooked, but nor would the area of allotments.

Whilst the illustrative Masterplan shows the allotments in the south east corner of the site, there is scope to consider their re-location within the site's Green Infrastructure at RM stage as the Parameter Plan is not specific about the location of the allotments within the overall Green Infrastructure provision.

Ecology Comments

It is noted that the ecological points raised by Lincoln Garland, who wasn't able to be present at the DRP and therefore didn't see the applicants presentation, are included within an appendix. None of the points raised have been integrated into the main body of the DRP response with many being abstract ecological points.

Given that they don't relate to the 'design review' of the scheme coupled with the fact that the council's Ecologist and Natural England both don't object to the application it is not considered that at this stage the comments need to be specifically responded to.

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September 2024