

22 October 2020

Planning Policy Team  
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

Dear Planning Policy Team

**Site on Whaddon Road, Meldreth (west of The Burtons)  
Late Submission to Greater Cambridge 'Call for Sites' process**

We act for Mill Stream Developments.

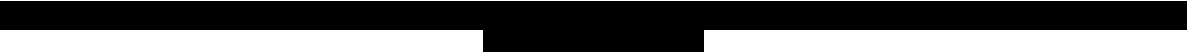
We have been corresponding by email with Mr Graham Holmes, Senior Planning Officer regarding a late submission of a site for consideration under the 'call for sites' process being undertaken by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. Mr Holmes has explained that the joint plan-making authority has held two consultation events: an initial stage (March 2019) and an Issues and Options stage in 2020 and that the next consultation will be the Preferred Options stage taking place during Summer / Autumn 2021. Notwithstanding that both previous consultations are now closed, Mr Holmes has advised that we may wish to submit our client's site for consideration at this stage on the understanding that it will be at the joint plan-making authority's discretion to consider the site as part of the Local Plan process.

We therefore wish to submit the above site for consideration at this stage for consideration through the 'Call for Sites' process as part of preparation of the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The location and extent of the site is shown at **Figure 1** below in addition to the submitted location plan. This representation should also be read in conjunction with the enclosed completed call for sites response form set out on the same template as was issued for the 2019 consultation.

**Background**

The site is located to the west of the village of Meldreth. It extends to 1.1 hectares and was previously in use as a plant nursery. The site was occupied by a number of polytunnels and retail sales of plants were made to the public (the remnants of this use can be seen on the site including a number of former storage containers). The site is L-shaped and is bounded by self-seeded trees and hedgerows on several boundaries as well as existing development. on The Burtons and West Way.

The site is accessed directly from Whaddon Road, with an appropriately sized bell mouth entrance from the main road already in situ. A secondary access to the site will be taken from The Burtons, a neighbouring development constructed in the mid-2000s. The Burtons has a footpath link to West Way, a development of semi-detached houses facing directly on to the road. West Way is accessed



from Kneesworth Road, which has a public footpath along its west side to the crossroads with Whaddon Road, Whitecroft Road and Fenny Lane. Whitecroft Road and Fenny Lane are both lit and have footpaths which can be used to walk into the village. Whitecroft Road serves Meldreth train station, which is within 1,500 metres of the site.

Meldreth is a mid-sized village (defined as a Group Village in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan) and is well served by facilities to serve the day-to-day needs of its residents including a primary school, pub, village shops, post office and a takeaway. It also has a church and village hall. Meldreth has good public transport links including a railway station on the London to Kings Lynn line, with regular services to both Cambridge and London. The village is also served by a number of bus services including the no.15 service from Royston to Haslingfield and the no.127 service from Royston to Guilden Morden.

*Figure 1: Extent of site as promoted*

### **Form of Development**

Our client wishes to promote the entire site or, alternatively, part of the site for residential use including a minimum of 50% affordable homes across the entire site or 100% affordable homes on the partial site. Two indicative masterplan layouts have been developed by our client's architect which illustrate potential alternative development options for the entire or partial site as follows:



Option 1 (Figure 2 below) shows a 78-dwelling scheme on the entire site utilising the existing accesses through The Burtons and the existing bell-mouth along Whaddon Road. The layout reflects the existing constraints to deliver a sensitive proposal that is organised around a sequence of spaces rather than simply arranging buildings within the space. The masterplan provides a balance of small terraces, semi-detached houses and detached houses, offering 64 houses, 3 bungalows (85%) and 11 flats (15%). The houses are two, three and four-bedroom whilst the flats are one and two bedroom. The proposed tenure split would be 50% affordable housing 50% market sale with 20 houses for affordable rent, 19 for shared ownership including 11 flats, and 39 houses for market sale.

**Figure 2: Option 1 indicative Masterplan (entire site)**

Option 2 (Figure 3 below) shows an alternative 30-dwelling scheme wherein 21 dwellings would be accessed using the existing access from Whaddon Road and 9 additional dwellings are to be accessed from The Burtons. The masterplan layout includes residential properties primarily comprising 19 x 2-bedroom houses with 2 x 2-bedroom bungalows proposed alongside 8 x 3-bedroom houses and 1 x 4-bedroom house. As set out above, the submission is for all the dwellings to be affordable housing, with a mixture of affordable rent and shared ownership tenure. The partial site is put forward as a rural exception site wholly for affordable dwellings in accordance with NPPF Annex 2 definition.



***Figure 3: Option 2 indicative Masterplan (partial site)***

The indicative mix of dwelling types and tenure split shown on the Option 2 masterplan has been carefully considered having regard to Cambridge ACRE Housing Needs Survey for Meldreth (October 2017). From discussions with officers, our understanding is that, notwithstanding the exception site currently under construction in Meldreth for 5 dwellings, there will remain a housing need for 40 dwellings in the village after this development is completed and occupied.

The part of the masterplan layout accessed directly from Whaddon Road has been designed in a linear form on the masterplan with dwellings either side of the access road. Dwellings on plots 1, 9, 10 and 11 have been designed such that they front on to Whaddon Road but are setback from the road. The part of the indicative layout accessed from The Burtons is orientated around an area of open space, with two parallel access roads either side. Sufficient space within the development is provided for both soft and hard landscaping, and all the dwellings would be served by private gardens or amenity



space. Car parking is indicatively provided with sufficient space for the proposal to accord with the Council's policy requirements. A turning head is also proposed between plots 8 and 20.

Our client would be willing to discuss the layout of the site in more detail in due course once the principle of development is established in an allocation.

### **Delivery**

Our client, Mill Stream Developments, has an option over the entire site with the freehold owners of the land, Mrs P and Mr S Sole, as confirmed within the accompanying letter dated 21 October 2020. The landowners are willing to deliver either the partial or whole site for housing and the site is available now. Delivery of the partial site as a rural exception site wholly for affordable dwellings is especially certain in the context that our client is working with a local Housing Association on the Option 2 layout

As set out above, Meldreth is a mid-sized village and is well served by facilities to serve the day-to-day needs of its residents. The village has good public transport links to the wider area including a railway station, with regular services to both Cambridge and London and is also served by a number of bus services to more local areas. The site itself is well located such that future occupants of dwellings would be able to walk to the village using the existing path through The Burtons, into West Way and then along the footpath of Kneesworth Road and Whitecroft Road into the centre of the village. A local bus stop is located on Kneesworth Road, just outside West Way, which is served by the number 15 service to Royston. The train station is within 1,500 metres of the site and would therefore be in walking distance for future occupiers. The development is therefore in an appropriate location to access the facilities of the village. The number of dwellings proposed through the allocation would also be appropriate for the size of the settlement itself and would meet a significant amount of the affordable housing need for the village.

The whole or partial sites options are neither so small that they provide no additional benefits nor would they be so large that its impacts are overwhelming or its delivery too slow.

### **Landscape and Impact on Surrounding Countryside**

Although the allocation of the whole or partial site for residential development would result in the loss of a largely open field, this site has been the subject of development previously, and is not considered to be of high agricultural value. The site is physically contained and would relate well to the development in the immediate vicinity. There are no significant long-distance views of the site, and the degree of containment would be retained after development with boundary planting being retained and reinforced and additional planting created where necessary. The site is already bounded on two sides by residential development in the form of The Burtons and the site for Travelling Showpeople to the west. The site is not subject to any specific landscape designation, and no landscape harm would arise as a result of the allocation.

The detailed design of each dwelling has not yet been prepared. However, the intent is to ensure the design of a future development will relate well to the character of the local area. Our client has undertaken a number of developments in the Greater Cambridge area, including sites in Cambourne, Eaton Ford and Willingham. Each of these developments created a high-quality affordable housing development, with varying design and style of dwelling.



The site is not located within the Green Belt and as such the allocation would not affect the purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl.

**Summary**

Smith Jenkins acts for Mill Stream Developments and hereby promotes land at Whaddon Road, Meldreth (west of The Burtons) for residential development. The promotion would be either the whole site for a 78-dwelling scheme shown on the Option 1 indicative masterplan with 50:50 affordable and market sales homes or, alternatively, for the Option 2 partial site scheme for up to 30 affordable dwellings put forward as a rural exception site wholly for affordable dwellings in accordance with NPPF Annex 2 definition.

This representation has explained how the site is physically contained and would relate well to the development in the immediate vicinity. There are no significant long-distance views of the site, and the degree of containment would be retained after development with boundary planting being retained and reinforced and additional planting created where necessary. The site is already bounded on two sides by residential development in the form of The Burtons and the site for Travelling Showpeople to the west. The site is not subject to any specific landscape designation, and no landscape harm would arise as a result of the allocation

The site is not located within the Green Belt and as such the allocation would not affect the purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl.

Land at Whaddon Road represents a sustainable opportunity to deliver residential development with significant benefits and only very limited adverse impacts. The site is well located such that future occupants of dwellings would be able to walk to the village using the existing path through The Burtons, into West Way and then along the footpath of Kneesworth Road and Whitecroft Road into the centre of the village. A local bus stop is located on Kneesworth Road, just outside West Way and the train station is within 1,500 metres of the site and would therefore be in walking distance for future occupiers. The development is therefore in an appropriate location to access the facilities of the village.

In light of the site's overall 'offer' either in its entirety, or partially, for residential use and its deliverability prospects, land at Whaddon Road represents an excellent opportunity to deliver growth sustainably. Our client remains willing to do all he can to assist the Council in ensuring a development fulfils this role. We therefore trust the site will be duly considered at this late stage for consideration through the 'Call for Sites' process as part of preparation of the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

If you have any questions in relation to this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me at this office.

Yours faithfully

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