

Design & Access Statement

Proposal for the erection of 19 dwellings
following the demolition of the existing buildings

Ladds Garden Centre
Bath Road
Hare Hatch
Berkshire
RG10 9SB

09 September 2025



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared by Arktec Ltd to accompany a full planning application submission on behalf of our client (the applicant) for the erection of 19 dwellings following the demolition of the existing buildings, at Ladds Garden Centre site off Bath Road in Hare Hatch.

It is prepared in the context of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan (adopted 2010), Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted 2014), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application site is located on the southern side of Bath Road (A4) in Hare Hatch and sits within the designated Green Belt, however it is considered Previously Developed Land (PDL).

The site is conveniently located to the South East of Wargrave and sits in an area where public transport and local conveniences can be enjoyed.

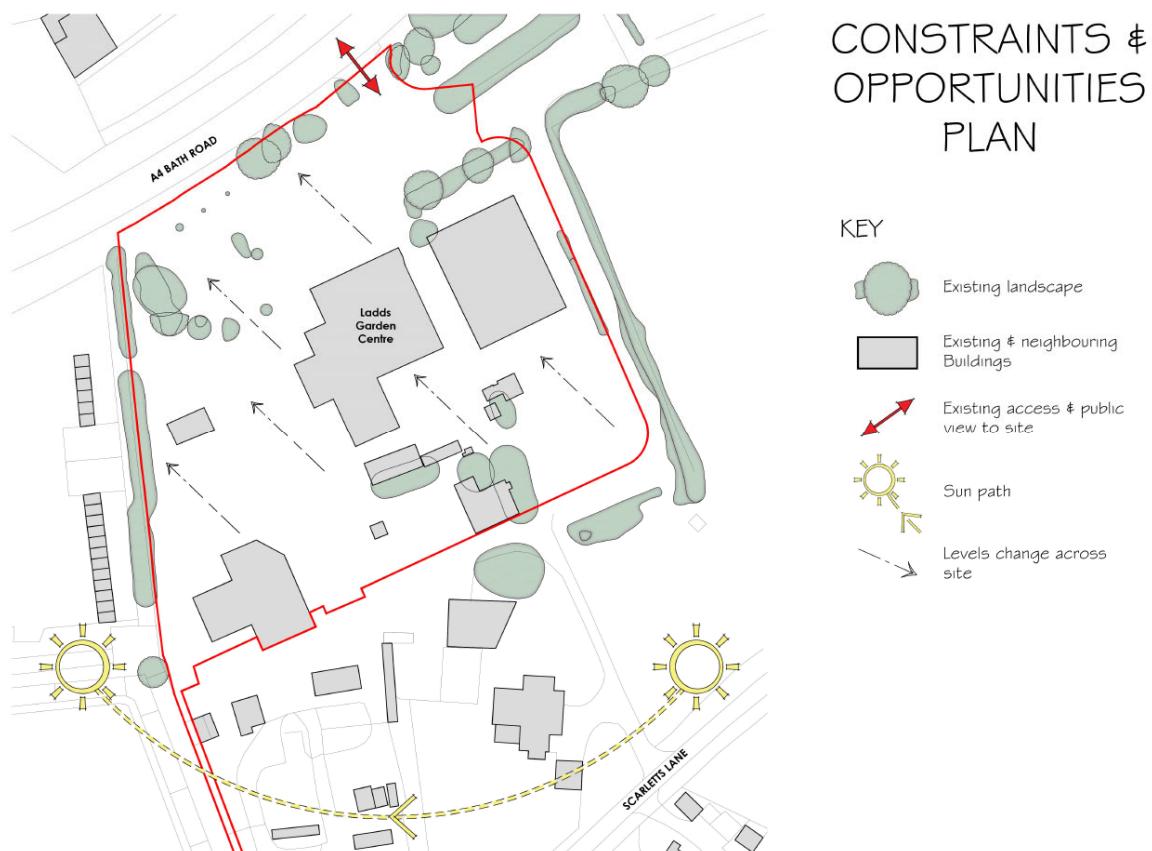
2.0 EXISTING USE

The site currently consists of a number of garden centre buildings, all set within private grounds of 3.42 acres (1.39 hectares), and served by an existing access off Bath Road.

3.0 CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the initial design process, much consideration was given to the potential constraints and opportunities that exist on the site which ultimately dictated the design parameters of the proposals.

Figure A below demonstrates the site Constraints & Opportunities Plan.



Design consideration was given to the sites constraints and opportunities to ensure that any future development respected such matters.

Figure B below shows the final Concept Plan which informed the design proposals.



As demonstrated above the feasibility concept layout incorporates a loose grain of development with an informal layout arrangement to suit the character of the local area, whilst also providing a better mix of unit sizes and establishing an improved relationship with Bath Road.

Figure C below shows an older Concept Plan (by others) demonstrating how the scheme evolved.



A number of issues were identified with the above feasibility concept layout including:

- Fewer but much larger units impacting housing mix.
- Many existing trees required removal.
- Undesirable front to rear fence relationships.
- Suitable turning space not provided.

4.0 PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to make efficient use of the site and proposes to re-develop accordingly with the erection of 19 dwellings following the demolition of the existing buildings, providing an opportunity for a new comprehensive landscaping scheme and biodiversity enhancements to the site.

4.1 DESIGN

The building design and architectural style of the proposed dwellings have derived from the character of the surrounding area and is considered to be of a style in fitting with this location, respecting the neighbouring properties and local area. Below are some images showing mix of design and materials in the local area.

Blakes Lane - Brickwork, clay tile roof, painted windows, ornate woodwork and porch:



Blakes Lane - White painted brickwork, clay tile roof:



Tags Lane - Slate roof, white walls, sash windows, Georgian window bars:



Blakes Lane - Painted Brickwork, clay tile roof, arched window heads, gable detailing:



4.2 USE

The application site is generous in scale with a total area of 3.42 acres, and therefore offers the opportunity to comfortably accommodate the proposed dwellings which we consider to be acceptable in scale, form and siting with the context of the local area, creating no adverse effect on the neighbouring properties, nor the site itself.

Given the historic use of the application site and the extent of its existing structures, it is considered that the area edged red on the application drawings is deemed to be classed as 'Previously Developed Land' (PDL) given the permanent and substantial spread of existing buildings on the land in question.

4.3 SCALE

The scale of the proposed dwellings has been carefully considered and designed to be sympathetic in design to ensure that the dwellings are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

It is identified that properties in the local vicinity have a mix of building heights, including single-storey properties, two-storey dwellings, and dwellings with room in roof accommodation. The proposed height of the dwellings has been designed to ensure that the proposals are in keeping with the local building skyline maintaining an appropriate balance in height in relation to its surroundings.

4.4 LAYOUT

Our design has had careful consideration with regards to its surroundings, in particular eliminating any potential overlooking issues, with the site retaining substantial existing and new landscape buffers to boundaries and therefore it is considered that the proposal would cause no loss of amenity to any adjoining uses in compliance with local policy.

It is considered that the proposed relationship with the surrounding neighbouring property is acceptable in building separation distances, exceeding both local and national design criteria guidance.

Due to the generous separating distances between the proposed houses and any neighbouring properties, it is apparent that the proposals would cause no adverse impact on the daylight and sunlight to the neighbouring properties in accordance with BRE guidance.

It should be noted that any glazing to the first floor side flank elevation windows that serve en-suite / bathroom accommodation shall be obscure glazed to eliminate any privacy concerns.

Special attention has been given during the design process to ensure that the layout provides a sense of spaciousness within the site itself by providing substantial areas of dedicated Public Open Space (POS) and Local Area for Play (LAP), providing a natural break in development along the northern boundary creating a 'Green Corridor' along Bath Road.

The layout and orientation of the plots have been designed to optimise gardens and views across the site which in turn helps to ensure natural surveillance of the public realm, whilst of course also creating visual interest.

The plots have been specifically designed to have a positive relationship and surveillance to the open space to the north of the site, and given the generous separation distances and the natural landscape buffer between the proposed housing and the neighbouring sites it is considered for the relationships to be acceptable.

The character of the layout has been designed to be sympathetic to this rural location, with emphasis to create a loose grain informal layout arrangement for this semi-rural development.

The design ethos of the proposals has very much been dictated by the need to blend in with the character of this location and therefore it is considered that the proposed layout represents a sympathetic flow of built form and grain of development respecting the site and its surroundings.

Figure D below demonstrates how the proposed dwellings would sit in relation to the application site and the character of the surrounding area.



The proposals carefully consider the scale and form of the site, as well as existing and proposed landscaping and ecological opportunities. It is considered that the proposed site integrates well within this area, respecting the neighbouring properties, the site itself, and the wider landscape.

4.5 AMOUNT

It is proposed for the site to consist of 19 dwelling houses, comprising of 15 houses (detached and semi-detached) and 4 apartments all of which designed to sit sympathetically in this rural location with subtle roof forms and traditional pitched roofs.

The proposals incorporate a strong mix of accommodation consisting of 3No. four bed units, 12No. three bed units, 2No. two bed units and 2No. one bed units.

The proposal of 19 dwellings on this application site which consists of a site area of 1.39ha results in a housing density of 13.6dph (dwellings per hectare) which is of course considered a low development density, suitable for this application site and in keeping with the character of the local settlements.

The proposal provides a suitable amount of built form in terms of size and number of units with a low development density in keeping with the surrounding area therefore considered acceptable in planning terms and designed to be built to exceed Nationally Described Space Standards.

Home offices (study) are provided where possible to encourage 'working from home' and subsequently helping to reduce traffic movements, and are specifically designed to be under the 7.5m² space requirement (upper floors) in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Accommodation Schedule

Plot No.	House Type	Tenure	Gross Internal Area	
			m ²	ff ²
1	1 Bedroom Apartment	Private	50.02	538
2	1 Bedroom Apartment	Private	50.02	538
3	2 Bedroom Apartment	Private	63.31	681
4	2 Bedroom Apartment	Private	63.31	681
5	3 Bedroom House	Private	169.28	1,822
6	3 Bedroom House	Private	158.73	1,709
7	3 Bedroom House	Private	161.35	1,737
8	3 Bedroom House	Private	165.84	1,785
9	3 Bedroom House	Private	161.35	1,737
10	4 Bedroom House	Private	198.48	2,136
11	3 Bedroom House	Private	159.69	1,719
12	4 Bedroom House	Private	198.48	2,136
13	4 Bedroom House	Private	198.48	2,136
14	3 Bedroom House	Private	159.55	1,717
15	3 Bedroom House	Private	169.70	1,827
16	3 Bedroom House	Private	159.69	1,719
17	3 Bedroom House	Private	169.28	1,822
18	3 Bedroom House	Private	158.73	1,709
19	3 Bedroom House	Private	161.05	1,734
Total			2,776.34	29,885

Built Form Volume Comparison

It is recognised that the most accurate way of comparing existing and proposed built form within the Green Belt is by way of volume calculations. The proposed development volume is circa 11,647m³, which only results in a small increase of circa 11.3% when compared to the existing (original) built form volume which is understood to equate to 10,460m³.

When including the extant permission within the existing figures (11,362m³) the proposals would only result in an overall increase of 2.5%. There are also many other structures (containers etc) on site equating to 706m³ which have not been included.

This is of course a significant material consideration when balancing up such size comparisons, especially given that the proposals provide the opportunity to better consolidate the built form and 'open up' the landscape of the site.

Figure E below demonstrates the 'existing' built form which exists on site (shown in Red) with the extant permission (shown in light red) and other structures (containers etc) shown in green.

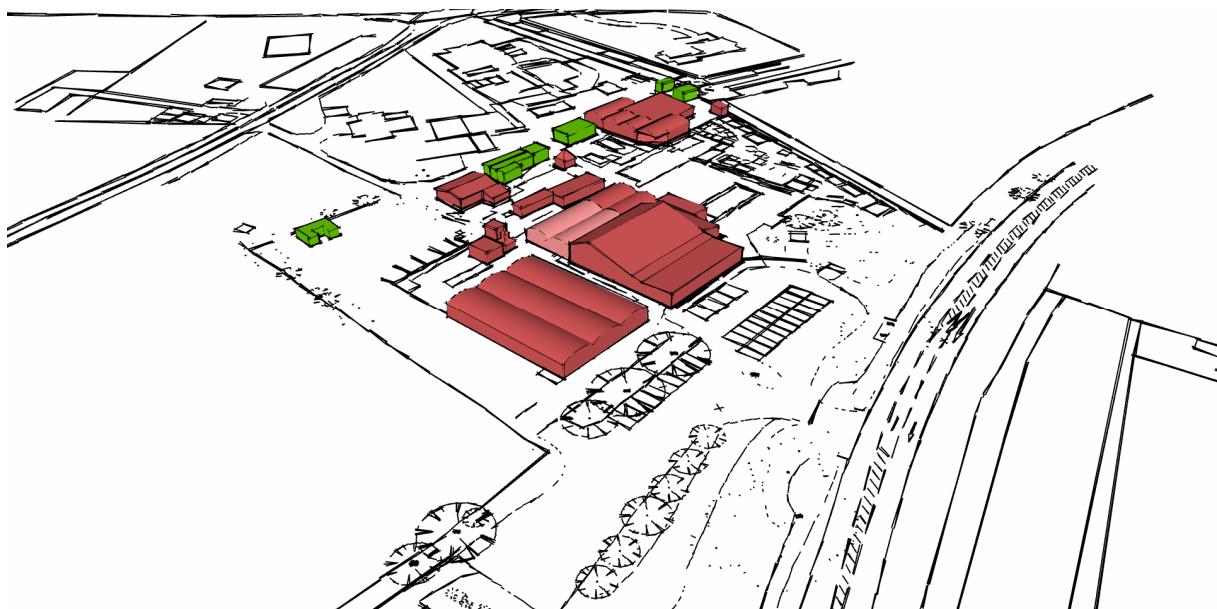
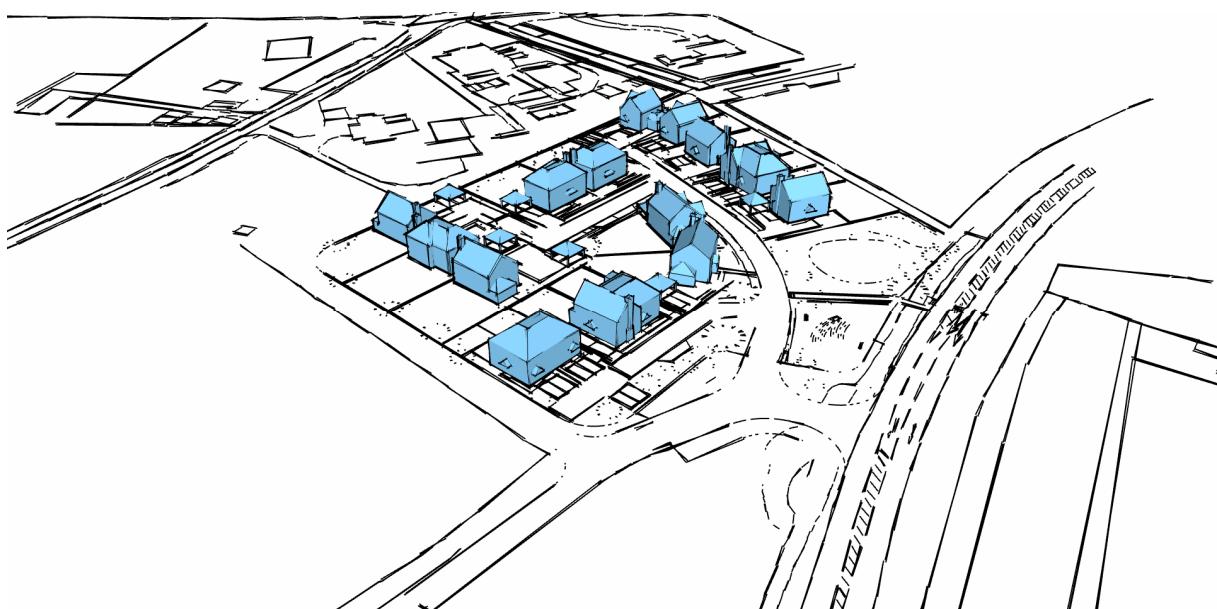


Figure F below demonstrates the modest 'proposed' built form (shown in Blue).



4.6 LANDSCAPING

Careful consideration has been given with regards to the proposed landscaping of the site to ensure that our proposals soften the appearance of the site itself, maintaining the wider landscape and associated views.

The proposed landscaping scheme will ensure that there is a softness approach to the design, which will enhance the overall aesthetics of the site, whilst still reinforcing the dwellings boundaries, with additional soft landscaping provided for both aesthetic and privacy reasons, consequently enhancing the sites landscaping.

The proposed gardens will provide a generous area of private amenity space in accordance with associated design standards and requirements.

It is proposed for the existing landscaped boundaries to be reinforced to provide buffer with the surrounding area.

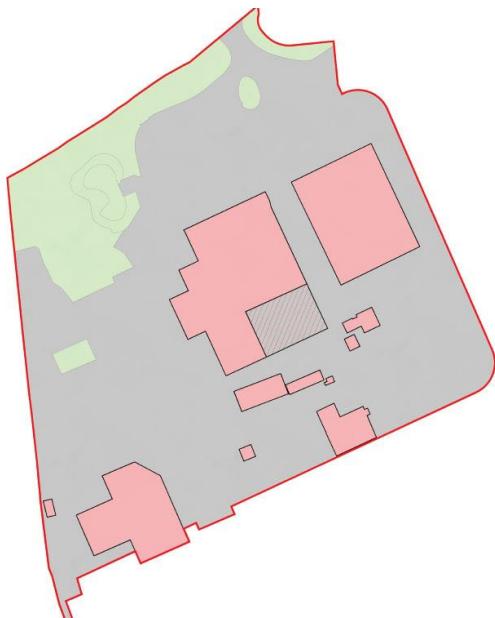
The proposals include for substantial areas of Public Open Space (POS), Local Area for Play (LAP) and understorey planting, with the addition of a significant number of proposed new trees, with new areas of mixed native hedges, new mature mixed shrub planting and a biodiversity SUD's pond, all of which providing a pleasant landscaped environment.

Landscaping Comparison

Our proposals result in a significant increase of 389% in the amount of landscaping proposed, based on the proposed landscaping being circa 8,576m² when compared to the existing landscaping equating to 1,753m². This is of course a huge benefit to the site enhancing its openness within this rural location, which will also naturally help with the sites Biodiversity Net Gain and substantially reduce site runoff.

Figure G below demonstrates the 'existing' built form (shown in Red) with limited landscaping (shown in Green) that exists on the site when compared to the 'proposed' built form (shown in Blue) with much more open green landscape.

Existing Landscape



Proposed Landscape



Built Form Footprint Comparison

The proposals also bring a significant reduction in built form (footprint) of 36%, with the proposed building footprints being circa 1,702m² when compared to the existing buildings which equates to circa 2,664m², which is of course another material consideration when balancing up such size comparisons.

With the above in mind it is considered that the proposals are appropriate in size (volume and site coverage) when compared to the existing buildings, resulting in a reduction in built form (footprint) which is of course considered acceptable in planning terms for such re-development sites, and given the well considered design put forward it is considered that the proposals fully adhere to planning policy guidance and bring about environmental improvements to this application site.

4.7 CHARACTER APPEARANCE

The appearance has been dominated by the need to blend in with the adjacent properties and the local area, and in our opinion the sympathetic nature of the proposals will certainly enhance the surrounding area and street scene, and of course the site itself.

The external elevations of the proposals will consist of traditional materials to match local vernacular, with the most influential local character taken from existing nearby housing settlements, where the local architectural character is rather mixed in architectural style.

When developing the design proposals, much consideration has been given to ensure that the proposals sit well within the wider landscape and as such special attention has been given with regards to the architectural design theme, including architectural detailing and the proposed materials to ensure that the proposals put forward align with such requirements and of course provide a suitable sympathetic design for the site.

Our design proposals incorporate the following design aspects to ensure a sympathetic design;

- Maintenance of landscape gaps between the proposals and the neighbouring sites ensuring that suitable gaps are maintained to protect the character of the area, with the addition of landscaping to ensure that there is a soft landscape feel to the site itself.
- Suitable low housing density and size of dwellings in keeping with the character of the area, and of course respecting the size of the site itself.
- Proposed open carports and garages generally 'set back' from the main building lines to ensure that these appear subservient and sympathetic in design.

- The design has ensured a blend in style with the local character, ensuring that the eaves and ridge heights are comparable with other property in the local area.
- Electric vehicle charging points (EVCP's) unobtrusively placed externally on the side elevation of the carports / garages / houses.
- Architectural design theme, typical of the local architecture incorporating the following design features;
 - Traditional facing brickwork and decorative detailing, with areas of weatherboard cladding.
 - Traditional hand made plain clay roof tiles (with bonnet tiles), and slate tiled roofs.
 - Traditional gable and hipped roofs with traditional detailing.
 - Chimney detailing.
 - Traditional 'set back' flush casement and sash window detailing.
 - Solid oak & lead standing seam porches.

Our design proposals incorporate the characteristics of the local area, with the proposals incorporating 'high quality' external materials providing a soft material palette which is considered to enhance the aesthetics of the site and provide well presented properties.

Figure H below shows an example of the proposed architectural design theme (plot 10).



Figure J on the following page shows an artist watercolour illustration of the application proposals.



4.8 ACCESS, PARKING & REFUSE STRATEGY

The existing access off Bath Road (A4) will be retained to serve the proposed development.

The site is designed to incorporate sufficient car parking (with provision for EVCP's) and vehicular turning to serve the proposed dwellings in accordance with Highways advice received.

All units will have allocated parking spaces in accordance with the Council's parking standards, plus 3 additional visitor spaces.

The provision of cycle storage will be provided within the associated garages or within dedicated cycle storage lockers located within the gardens of each plot.

Waste and recycling bins will be stored on a dedicated area of hard standing within the curtilage of each plot and on collection days brought to the kerbside or bin collection point (ready for collection).

Please refer to the accompanying Transport Statement for further details.

4.9 NATIONALLY DESCRIBED SPACE STANDARDS

In accordance with the requirements of local policy, the proposed scheme is designed to conform with and exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Please refer to accompanying architectural planning drawings and accommodation schedule.

4.10 BIODIVERSITY

It is understood that the proposals have no impact on protected species and provide an enhancement to both biodiversity net gain and ecological habitats in accordance with local policy and government guidance.

Please refer to the accompanying Ecology Report for further details.

4.11 ARBORICULTURE

Our proposals have been prepared in strict accordance with specialist arboriculture advice, and therefore it is considered that the proposals put forward would not be detriment to any retained trees on the site, nor put future pressure on the loss of trees.

Please refer to the accompanying Tree Report for further details.

4.12 FLOOD RISK & DRAINAGE STRATEGY

The development lies within 'Flood Zone 1' an area that is considered 'low probability' of flooding, and the proposal will incorporate SUDS methodology, by disposing of as much storm water drainage on site as possible.

Please refer to the accompanying Flood and Drainage Strategy for further details.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The application drawings have considered the necessary sustainability measures required both during the design and construction stages of the project, and particular attention has been drawn to the following sustainable aspects:

- Energy consumption.
- On-site renewable energy generation.
- Water management.
- Flood risk management.
- Waste, recycling and composting facilities.
- Air, noise and light pollution.
- Responsibly sourced and recycled materials.
- Site waste management.
- Electric vehicle charging points (EVCP).
- Orientation of windows.
- Water consumption.

The proposed dwellings have been designed to maximise the use of well insulated materials within its construction and it is intended that the development will utilise energy efficient appliances and incorporate water saving devices (where possible).

In conclusion, the proposal has been designed to ensure that sustainability is maximised throughout the construction of the project and that once complete, the design remains sustainable for future occupiers.

Our proposal provides a sustainable development in both design and construction terms.

Please refer to the accompanying Energy Statement prepared by specialists.

6.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This site provides the opportunity to replace the existing garden centre buildings with a sympathetic low density housing development of 19 dwellings, with proposals that are considered in keeping with the character of this local area, respecting its surroundings.

The site consists of a generous plot with ample space for the proposed dwellings that would have no adverse impact on its neighbours, nor the wider landscape.

When viewed from all viewpoints, the proposed dwellings appear a logical form of re-development that respects the character of the local area, therefore it is considered that the new homes would make a positive contribution to the character of this area, having a high architectural quality and a traditional design which reflects local character in terms of scale, density, layout and access.

Given the existing condition of the site with the ad hoc sprawl of built form that currently exists on the application site, it is considered that the proposals will create a better feeling of openness within this rural and Green Belt setting by better consolidating the built form with a sympathetic design, respecting the character of the local area.

The proposal will provide additional housing and will result in a more efficient and effective use of the land.

On conclusion, it is considered that the proposed dwellings would preserve the character and appearance of this area in compliance with both local and national policy, whilst respecting the existing buildings that are proposed to be replaced.