



Old Sawmill Lane Crowthorne RG45 6RY

Town and Country Planning Act - Section 55(a)

Construction of two self-build dwellings (outline application with matters of scale, layout and access to be considered)

Planning Statement

Design and Access Statement

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Statement

Biodiversity Assessment



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Town Planning Expert
The Technopole
Kingston Crescent
Portsmouth
PO2 8FA



Site Information

Consultant	Jonathan McDermott
Client	Keith Andrews
Site Address	Old Sawmill Lane Crowthorne RG45 6RY
LA	Wokingham Borough Council
Description of Development	Construction of two self-build dwellings (outline application with matters of scale, layout and access to be considered)
Pathway (PD/Application/Appeal)	Outline Application with some matters reserved

Constraints Review

Flood Risk Zone	1
Contaminated Land	No
Tree Preservation Order	No
Heritage Assets	None
Noise Abatement Areas	No
Explosive Hazard Areas	No
National Landscape	No
Special Protection Area	No
Site of Special Scientific Interest	No
RAMSAR Convention Site	No
Site of Importance to Nature Conservation	No
Article 4(2) Directions	No



Local Policy Requirements

Local Plan/Core Strategy

Core Strategy
Managing Development Delivery (MDD)

Effective Policies in Development Control

CP1 – Sustainable development
CP2 - Inclusive communities
CP3 - General Principles for development
CP5 - Housing mix, density and affordability
CP6 - Managing Travel Demand
CP7 - Biodiversity
CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals
CP17 - Housing delivery

Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy CC02: Development Limits
Policy CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
Policy CC07: Parking
Policy CC10: Sustainable Drainage
Policy TB05: Housing Mix
Policy TB07: Internal Space Standards
Policy TB09: Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups
Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development
Policy SAL04: New open space associated with residential development within and adjoining the Borough
Policy SAL05: Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

SPG/SPD's

Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and its Companion to Sustainable Design and Construction SPD document
Interactive Borough Design Guide
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Parking standards calculation document (Excel document)



Planning History

Relevant History

Reference: 173449

Land to the rear of 5-7 Rowan Drive Crowthorne RG45 6RY
Full application for the proposed erection of a detached bungalow with associated access and parking.

Refused

31 January 2018

Report Date

5 June 2025



1. Introduction

1.1. The site comprises a vacant area of land to the north side of Old Sawmill Lane and within a predominantly residential area comprising a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The site is directly adjacent to No1 Old Sawmill Lane.

1.2. The site is not within a conservation area, a listed building and is outside the exclusion area for new residential development within the Thames Heath Basin Zone of Influence.

About Town Planning Expert

1.3. Town Planning Expert is a general needs planning consultancy formed in 2012 and practising as a Chartered Planning Practice. Town Planning Expert is instructed to submit a planning application for development as set out below.

Our VICTORY © Framework

1.4. Our VICTORY Framework applies a policy, plan lead, approach to development with the intent of gaining planning permission in a manner that complies with National and Local Planning Policy in accordance with S38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Development Proposed

1.5. Planning Permission is sought for the construction of two self-build dwellings with associated amenity space and car parking. In line with the aspiration that this scheme is for self-build this application is the initial outline consent for the principle of development, scale, layout and access. The remaining considerations of appearance and landscape are left to the end self-builders of each house as reserved matters.

Executive Summary

1.6. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) provides a legal definition of self-build and custom housebuilding. The Act does not distinguish between self-build and custom housebuilding and provides that both are where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. Relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period. In this instance the applicant seeks permission for a self build plot for themselves with sufficient land to provide two other self build plots alongside.

1.7. As such this statement will demonstrate that there is no overriding reason why planning permission cannot be granted in this case.

2. National and Local Development Frameworks.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in response to the Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the Planning system consultation on 12 December 2024 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, updated in February 2012, revised in July 2021, updated in September 2023 and revised in December 2023.

2.2. The policies in this Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. However, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the

publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given). The relevant sections of the NPPF are set out below:

Introduction

- 1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date plans should be seen as a priority in meeting this objective.*
- 2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.*
- 3. The Framework should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes). General references to planning policies in the Framework should be applied in a way that is appropriate to the type of plan being produced, taking into account policy on plan-making in chapter 3.*
- 4. The Framework should be read in conjunction with the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, and its planning policy for waste. When preparing plans or making decisions on applications for these types of development, regard should also be had to the policies in this Framework, where relevant.*
- 5. The Framework does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects. These are determined in accordance with the decision making framework in the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are relevant (which may include the National Planning Policy Framework). National*

policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

Achieving sustainable development

7. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.

8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

9. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination*

7 The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 189) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

8 This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.

Decision Making

39. Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible

Pre-Application engagement and front-loading

40. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

41. Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.

42. The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.

Determining Applications

48. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

49. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

Planning conditions and obligations

56. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.

57. Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Agreeing conditions early is beneficial to all parties involved in the process and can speed up decision making. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification.

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

63. Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

73. Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:
a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan

policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;

b) seek opportunities, through policies and decisions, to support small sites to come forward for community-led development for housing and self-build and custombuild housing;

c) use tools such as area-wide design assessments, permission in principle and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward;

d) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes; and

e) work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.

84. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or

e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

i. is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

ii. would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the

defining characteristics of the local area.

Promoting sustainable transport

109. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve:

a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;

b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places;

c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;

d) realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;

e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and

f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.

110. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

111. Planning policies should:

- a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;*
- b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;*
- c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;*
- d) provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans);*
- e) provide for any large scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support their operation, expansion and contribution to the wider economy. In doing so they should take into account whether such development is likely to be a nationally significant infrastructure project and any relevant national policy statements; and*
- f) recognise the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation airfields, and their need to adapt and change over time – taking into account their economic value in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs, and the General Aviation Strategy.*

112. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- a) the accessibility of the development;*

- b) the type, mix and use of development;*
- c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- d) local car ownership levels; and*
- e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.*

113. Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code⁴⁸; and*
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.*

116. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative

impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

117. Within this context, applications for development should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;*
- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;*
- c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;*
- d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and*
- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.*

118. All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a vision-led transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.

Making effective use of land

124. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a

way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

125. Planning policies and decisions should:

a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;

b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)⁵⁰; and

e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions – including mansard roofs – where the development would be consistent with the prevailing form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple upward extensions unless there is an exceptional justification.

127. Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land.

They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:

a) it should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and

b) in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.

128. Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:

a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework; and

b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

129. Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;

b) local market conditions and viability;

c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to

promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;

d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

130. Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:

a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;

b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and

c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).

Achieving well-designed places

131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

132. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.

133. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.

134. Design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Landowners and developers may contribute to these exercises, but may also choose to prepare design codes in support of a planning application for sites they wish to develop.

Whoever prepares them, all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes.

135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁵¹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

137. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests.

Applicants should, where applicable, provide sufficient information to demonstrate how their proposals will meet the design expectations set out in local and national policy, and should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

138. Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. The National Model Design Code is the primary basis for the preparation and use of local design codes. For assessing proposals there is a range of tools including workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for a Healthy Life. These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.

139. Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*

140. Local planning authorities should ensure that relevant planning conditions refer to clear and accurate plans and drawings which provide visual clarity about the design of the development, and are clear about the approved use of materials where appropriate. This will provide greater certainty for those implementing the planning permission on how to comply with the permission and a clearer basis for local planning authorities to identify breaches of planning control. Local planning



authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) and Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016

2.3. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) provides a legal definition of self-build and custom housebuilding. The Act does not distinguish between self-build and custom housebuilding and provides that both are where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals.

2.4. Relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period.

2.5. At the end of each base period, relevant authorities have 3 years in which to permission an equivalent number of plots of land, which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding, as there are entries for that base period.

2.6. Wokingham have not published either part of their register (sites or number of self builders seeking a site). [Livedin.co.uk](https://livedin.co.uk) track self build registers for council's and have published Wokingham's cumulative scores at <https://livedin.co.uk/tools-and-guidance/self-build-registers/wokingham> . At present there are 600 persons registered and 217 cumulative permissions granted and as such the need outstrips available supply.

Local Policy

2.7. The relevant policies are located within the 2010 Core Strategy (CS) and the 2014 Managing Development Delivery Plan (MDD).

2.8. Para 11d of the Framework specifies that a LPA will be considered ‘in presumption’

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination

7 The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 189) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

8 This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.

2.9. The published Five-Year Land Supply Position at 31 March 2024 confirms that Wokingham have a 1.7 year supply of dwellings which is far below the required 5 years Housing Land

Supply required. The requirements of para 11(d)(8) are therefore met and the LPA is considered to be 'in presumption' for the purposes of the weight associated with local policy.

2.10. The site is not in any of the policy areas identified under para 11(d)(7) of the Framework and so there is no clear reason for refusal set out within the framework that would assist the council in refusing this application under local policy.

2.11. Notwithstanding the reduction in weight applied to the Local Plan the applicant has provided their reasons why this development complies or otherwise with the noted policies. Where there is crossover between the Core Strategy (CS) and Managing Development Decisions (MDD) these are dealt with together and denoted accordingly.

2.12. In order to assist the LPA the applicant has colour coded the assessment of policy. Green indicates full compliance, orange indicates partial compliance in favour of the scheme and red indicates little to no compliance.

Policy	Comment	Compliance
CP1 – Sustainable development Policy CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Policy CC02: Development Limits	The proposal would comply with the three pillars of sustainable development and would be located within a settlement boundary. Given this the requirements of policies CP1, CC01 and CC02 are complied with in full.	
CP2 - Inclusive communities Policy TB09: Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups	The proposal complies with the broad thrust of CP2 and TB09 and provides the Council will an opportunity to meet its duty to approve self-builder sites.	
CP3 - General Principles for development	As will be discussed further within this statement the proposal complies with the requirements of CP3.	

CP5 - Housing mix, density and affordability Policy TB05: Housing Mix	The site is below the 5 unit/0.18ha threshold within CP5 The proposal provides for two family homes within reflects the mix in the area and complies with policy TB05.	
CP6 - Managing Travel Demand Policy CC07: Parking	The proposal includes parking sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed residents with sufficient additional space for cycle storage and refuse storage. The requirements of CP6 and CC07 are therefore met.	
CP7 - Biodiversity Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development	The site is considered to be BNG exempt under the self-build and custom build applications exemption.	
CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Policy SAL05: Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area	The site is in excess of 400m from the nearest protected site and as such the applicant seeks to comply with the requirement to deliver avoidance measures by contributions. Policy CP8 and SAL05 are complied with in full.	
CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals	The scale of development in this case reflects the scale fo development in the surrounding area and is therefore compatible with policy CP9.	
CP17 - Housing delivery	The proposal provides for two houses towards the total target of 623 dwellings per annum as provided under policy CP17.	

Policy CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction	The requirements of Policy CC04 are noted however these requirements are considered to be wholly out of date in that Code for Sustainable Homes is no longer a recognised standard and that the base level for building regulations is well above Code 4. Given this the development can meet the requirements of this policy.	
Policy CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks	The proposal does not exceed the trigger threshold within CC05. As such this policy has no further effect.	
Policy CC10: Sustainable Drainage	The requirements of policy CC10(2) are noted and will be dealt with at reserved matters stage. In the interim the flood risk map is provided demonstrating that the site is within FRZ1.	
Policy TB07: Internal Space Standards	The requirements of policy TB07 are noted albeit are now out of date following the publication of the National Floorspace Standards. Nevertheless this development is capable of complying with these standards.	
Policy SAL04: New open space associated with residential development within and adjoining the Borough	Policy SAL04 is unaffected by this proposal.	

3. The Planning History

3.1. Planning permission was sought and refused for the construction of a detached bungalow on this site in 2017/2018. The application was refused for the following reasons:

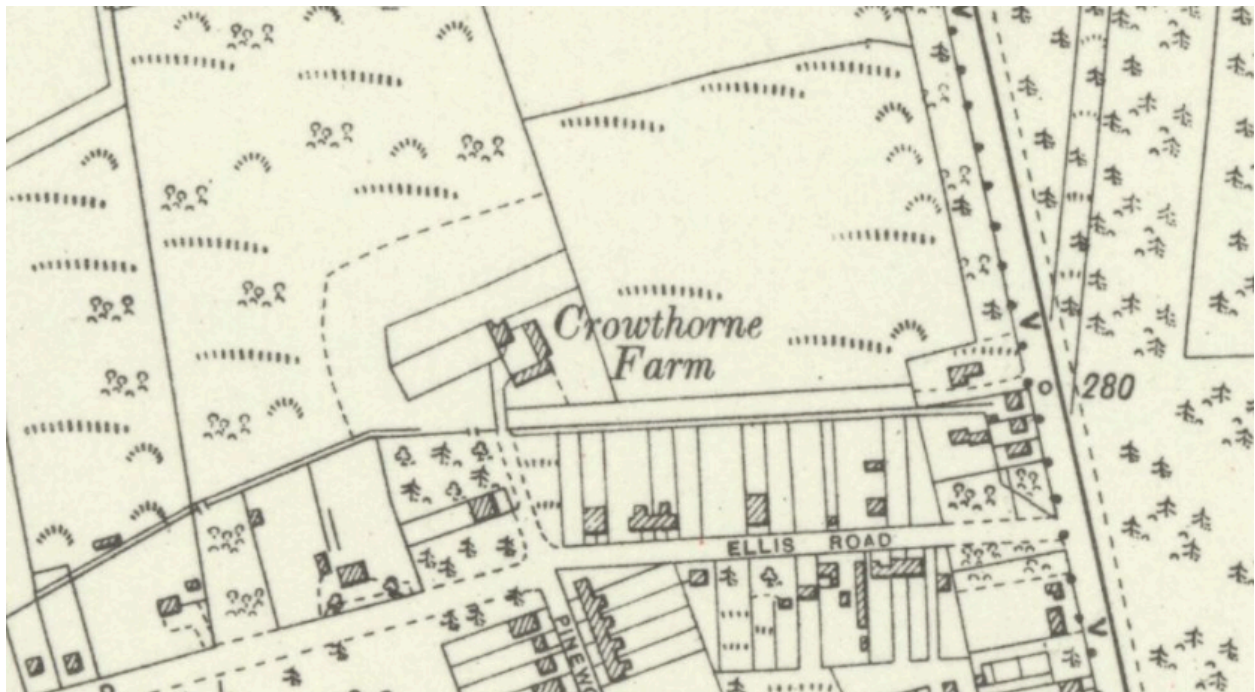
1. The proposal would result in an unsustainable form of development. Whereby the environmental harm resulting from the erosion of the special semi-rural character and potential harm to protected species would not, when applying the tilted balance, be outweighed by the social benefits of the proposal, or the more negligible economic benefits. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the NPPF, and Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy.
2. The proposed development by reason of its siting, scale, bulk and massing would be out of keeping with and detract from the existing open and informal character of Old Sawmill Lane. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, TB06 of the MDD and the Borough Design Guide.
3. Insufficient information has been provided to establish the extent to which protected species would be affected by the proposals, and as such the proposal would be contrary to policy TB23 of the MDD and Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy.
4. The proposal fails to secure mitigation for the adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Accordingly, since the Planning Authority is not satisfied that regulations 61(5) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) applies in this case, it must refuse permission in accordance with regulation 49 of the 2010 Regulations and Article 6(3)

of Directive 92/43/EEC. As such, the proposal conflicts with Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy and NRM6 of the South East Plan Adopted May 2009.

3.2. This application became the subject of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (ref APP/X0360/W/18/3208126). Their decision is attached within the application bundle. In summation the Inspector found that taking all of the relevant considerations and evidence into account even though issues relating to protected species have been overcome there would be harm to the character and appearance of the area.

4. Site, Context and Comparable Forms of Development

4.1. The site formed part of Crowthorne Farm up until approximately 1934 with reference to the Old Sawmill in the name of the Lane stemming from the large amount of woodland removal that was occurring at the time. The lane itself was originally the farm lane with farm buildings sitting on what are now extended gardens within Rowan Drive.



Berkshire Sheet XLVI.NE

Revised: 1932, Published: ca. 1934

4.2. By 1950 much of the urbanisation of Crowthorn had taken place.

4.3. Whilst much of Crowthorne is located within the district of Bracknell Forest this part of the settlement is within the boundary of Wokingham.

4.4. Crowthorne was only a hamlet until Wellington College opened in 1859 and Broadmoor Hospital in 1863. Crowthorne was originally part of the parish of Sandhurst, and acquired its name as the postal authority wished to give it a name to facilitate deliveries from Wokingham, instead of post coming from York Town (which with Cambridge Town became known as Camberley).

4.5. There was a Crowthorne Farm prior to this, and it appeared as a separate holding in the Royal Forest of Windsor in the Domesday Book, although the present farm buildings do not date back to this time.

4.6. The area surrounding the application site is characterised by an overtly eclectic mix of build styles dating from C1930's to C1980's including a wide mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses.

5. The Development Team

5.1. This is a self-build scheme and as such the developer in this case is the owner of the property. They are seeking to develop one of the houses for themselves as a self-builder together with one additional plot to add to the supply of self-build plots within the borough. This will be their permanent place of residence.

6. Alternative Forms of Development Considered

6.1. As stated within planning history section of this statement an attempt has been made in the past to develop this site. There has been no attempt since and the site sits within its own title making it unavailable as garden land. As such there is no alternative form of development available to this site.

7. Constraints to Development

7.1. The site does not include a listed building, it is not within a Conservation Area and there is no constraint outlined at 11(d)(7) which provides a clear reason for refusal in this case.

7.2. The site is within the settlement boundary and as such the principle of development is well established.

7.3. The lane retains its verdant character and as such this remains a possible constraint for development. A tree survey and an ecology survey are provided to support the application.

8. The Social Benefit to Development

8.1. Sustainable development reduces their environmental impact and promotes health and well-being.

8.2. In 2015 the House Builders Federation reported that housebuilding nationally:

- Supports 600,000 jobs
- Contributes £19.2bn a year to the UK economy
- Spends £5.5bn with suppliers, 90% of which stays in the UK
- Generates £1.4bn per year in tax revenues for the Exchequer
- Provides 32,000 affordable homes – worth £2.3bn – built or financed by private house building with a further £1bn paid to local authorities as a contribution to more affordable housing
- Pays £576M towards community facilities including;
- £225M towards education facilities alone - enough to fund 52,000 classroom places;
- £131m in open spaces and community and sports facilities, and
- Generates a £3.8bn spend in local shops and services

8.3. A Sustainable building has the following ten advantages:

- Efficiency in energy use: One of the primary benefits of sustainable building is increased energy efficiency. It can reduce carbon footprints because they use less energy. In

addition, energy-efficient technologies such as double-paned windows and insulation are utilised.

- **Water Efficiency:** Sustainable buildings also conserve water. They use low-flow toilets, showers, and faucets and implement rainwater harvesting systems. As a result, water is saved, water bills are reduced, and local water resources are less strained.
- **Enhanced indoor air quality:** Indoor air quality is improved by sustainable buildings. They use low-emission materials, have sound ventilation systems, and promote healthy indoor air by reducing pollutants and allergens.
- **Durability:** Durable materials are often used in sustainable buildings. The result is both a reduction in waste generation and a reduction in the need for frequent maintenance and repairs.
- **Better Health:** Sustainable buildings promote better health for those who use them. The air quality is better, natural light is encouraged, and green spaces are available. This can lead to reduced stress levels and improved mental and physical health.
- **Increased Productivity:** Sustainable buildings have been shown to increase productivity. A healthier, more comfortable work environment leads to higher motivation and engagement.
- **Cost Savings:** Although Sustainable buildings may have a higher upfront cost, they can result in significant cost savings in the long term. Energy-efficient buildings reduce energy bills, and water-efficient buildings reduce water bills.
- **An increase in property value:** Sustainable buildings are often more valuable than conventional ones. They are in high demand and can fetch a higher rent or sale price.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Environmentally friendly buildings reduce the impact on the environment. They conserve resources, reduce waste, and promote sustainable practices.

- Increased Market Demand: There is a growing demand for sustainable buildings from consumers and businesses alike. As a result, sustainable building technologies and practices have attracted more investment.

8.4. Ultimately, sustainable building offers a multitude of benefits to both individuals and the environment. It promotes energy efficiency, water conservation, improved indoor air quality, durability, better health, increased productivity, cost savings, increased property value, environmental sustainability, and increased market demand.

8.5. To this end modern development on sites such as that as presented by this application assists the government in achieving the 18 global sustainability goals and improves the sustainability of the wider area as a whole.

9. The Principle of Development

9.1. The 2024/25 National Planning Policy Framework changed the focus of national policy to align with the present government's drive to deliver 1.5 million new homes within this parliament. This coincided with ministerial statements on the restoration of mandatory targets for housing allocation and relaxations of control on development within the countryside where it resulted in sustainable housing lead development..

9.2. Indeed the 2025 Framework seeks to look at housing delivery in a more holistic way concluding at para 73 that:

Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:

- a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;
- b) seek opportunities, through policies and decisions, to support small sites to come



forward for community-led development for housing and self-build and custombuild housing;

c) use tools such as area-wide design assessments, permission in principle and Local Development Orders to help bring small and medium sized sites forward;

d) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes; and

e) work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.

9.3. As such the development of this suburban site that is within the settlement for housing lead development would otherwise improve the district's housing stock at a time where it is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.

9.4. The Self-build and custom housebuilding PPG makes clear that relevant authorities must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period. Given the lack of housing land supply generally the LPA it identifies that the LPA will be unlikely to have identified sufficient housing to meet the needs of its own self-build register. The applicant has registered themselves on the self-build register and this site is an opportunity site to grant planning permission for a self-builder to construct their own home. As such significant additional weight is added to the principle of development in that it would allow the LPA to execute their duty.

9.5. There is no direct restriction to development on this site under the CS or MDD planning policies and as such given the presumption status of the LPA it is concluded that the proposal would be in broad compliance with the NPPF and the drive for housing lead development and the benefit that brings outweighs the harm identified by the policies in the CS or MDD that would seek to resist development in this case. Given the specific circumstances of the site and its surroundings it is considered that the proposed development would present an opportunity for a housing lead scheme in a sustainable location and as such the principle of development can be considered acceptable. This weighs heavily in the applications favour within the planning ballance.

10. Site Capacity Assessment.

10.1. This application seeks outline planning permission with matters of appearance and landscape reserved for two self built houses. Matters of landscaping and appearance are reserved in order to comply with the requirement that the end self builder of the individual plots must have significant input in the design and appearance of their own home. Within this site capacity assessment we will therefore reflect upon the scale, amount and layout of the development proposed.

10.2. In terms of scale the plans show a two-storey built form to mimic the two storey scale and massing of the existing houses at Nos 1-4 Old Sawmill Lane. The surrounding area is predominantly two storey in scale and mass and this is not a backland facing site. It is therefore considered that the scale as proposed is acceptable and would reflect the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

10.3. In terms of amount and layout, the scheme proposes two houses configured as two detached units albeit the final detailed design of the proposed houses is a reserved matter. The plot size and layout of each unit reflects the plot size and layout of Nos 1-4 Old Sawmill which adjoin the site and provide sufficient space for external amenity together with bike and bin stores and off street parking for each house. In addition the layout is road facing and presents as a clear addition to the existing street scene Given this the layout is considered acceptable.

10.4. Turning to amenity impact, the adjoining property to the east (No1 Old Sawmill Lane) does not feature any primary windows to its side elevation facing the site and the position of the proposed dwellings is such that the development would not give rise to a deleterious impact in terms of light, outlook or privacy to this adjoining property.

10.5. To the rear of the site the nearby properties at Nos 3a, 5 and 7 Rowan Drive would have a back to back separation from the proposed properties of 22m at the minimum (No5). Given this separation it is highly unlikely that the two storey houses in the position proposed would give rise to a deleterious impact in terms of light, outlook or privacy to these adjoining properties.

10.6. Facing the site and on the opposite side of the road No5 Old Sawmill Lane would be the closest effected property. Any view onto the front of this property would be onto the public facing

part of the building, through a substantial tree canopy and over some 27m. Given this it is also highly unlikely that the two storey houses in the position proposed would give rise to a deleterious impact in terms of light, outlook or privacy to these adjoining properties.

10.7. As such it is the case that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed development and without an impact on the amenity of the adjoining or surrounding properties. This weighs heavily in the applications favour within the planning balance.

11. Appearance Assessment

11.1. The design given at this stage is indicative as the self-builder application process requires that the end builder has significant design input in the fit and finish of the end property. The design given at this stage is merely a suggestion of a scheme that would reflect the appearance of the adjoining houses on this side of the road. It is not a consideration for assessment at this stage. This therefore has neutral weight within the planning balance as it is not offered for consideration.

12. Access Appraisal

11.1. The vehicular access that serves the existing site would continue to be utilised to serve the proposed dwellings and there would be sufficient room to provide the additional off road parking provision and as such the proposal would not cause a severe risk in terms of highway safety contrary to local or national policy.

11.2. In addition the proposed amenity space provides more than ample opportunity to provide for secure cycle storage for the houses.

11.3. As such the matter of access is considered wholly acceptable and this also weighs heavily in the applications favour.

13. Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Statement

13.1 .The requirements of the Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) are noted. As this development is for a self-build scheme the proposal would fall below the level for which obligations are required.

13.2. As the development is a self-build scheme the developer enjoys a 100% exemption from CIL and Form 5 will be presented with the reserved matters application to formalise this position.

13.3. The absence of such contributions carries a neutral weight in the planning balance as the exemptions are set out within local and national policy.

14. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

14.1. The proposed development is exempt from the requirement to promote Biodiversity Net Gain under the The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 which states:

8.—(1) The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which—

(a)consists of no more than 9 dwellings;

(b)is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and

(c)consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding.

(2) In this regulation “self-build or custom housebuilding” has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015(1).

14.2. The absence of a BNG contribution a neutral weight in the planning balance as the exemptions are set out within The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

15. Conclusion

15.1. Within the planning balance the following considerations give weight to the proposed development:

- The proposal is acceptable in principle and allows the LPA to fulfil its duty in respect of approving a self-build scheme.
- The proposal is within an established settlement where the principal of housing is acceptable.
- The proposal would be visually acceptable in relation to the site and its surroundings.
- The proposal would not have an impact on the amenity of adjoining or surrounding occupiers..
- The proposal would have an appropriate access to and from the highway.

15.2. In addition the documentation submitted show that:

- The proposal would not give rise to an impact on any protected species.
- The proposal would not give rise to an impact on protected trees.

15.3. The above, in light of the presumption status of the LPA, weigh heavily in favour of the application.

15.4. Whilst the application is not required to provide for a CIL Payment or an improvement in terms of BNG this does not weigh against the application as these are exemptions that have been provided for by Central Government.

15.5. Therefore within the planning balance the application is considered acceptable. The applicant looks forward to working with the LPA in order to bring this scheme forward.