



Adriana Gonzalez
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Our ref: MWB/HM/31048

Friday 29th November 2024

Dear Adriana,

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 241567
LAND TO THE EAST OF LONGWATER ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD, BERKSHIRE

On behalf of Catesby Strategic Land Limited and Stonebond Properties (Guildford) Limited (The Applicant), I am pleased to enclose a set of revised planning drawings which have been prepared in response to comments submitted by consultees in respect of the above application.

This letter and its enclosures explain the scope and nature of the proposed changes and should be read in conjunction with the originally submitted Planning and Affordable Housing Statement. It also provides an update to the reports and plans submitted with the original planning application, with reference to accompanying technical addendums where relevant.

Proposed Amendments

The proposed development has been revised primarily in response to the comments made by the Landscape and Tree Officer on the original layout.

These amendments have sought to improve the integration of the development with the southern edge of Finchampstead and its relationship with the emerging Country Park to the south by shifting the built form northwards, resulting in a wider buffer between the southern-most plots and the southern boundary. Of particular note is the removal of the southern internal access road which has allowed for a wider area of public open space and a more intimate relationship between the principal elevations facing towards the open countryside, which provides increased opportunities for natural surveillance and avoids vehicular activity in this part of the site. The number of units in this part of the site has also reduced from 13 to 6 in order to provide a more appropriate transition towards the open countryside beyond. The total number of dwellings has been reduced from 40 to 38 as a result.

It has been necessary to keep the pumping station near to the southern boundary to retain the regulatory separation distance from the nearest dwellings, therefore this feature has been carefully landscaped to ensure that it assimilates into the landscape over time. Vehicular access to this pumping station will also be required but can be differentiated from

the main vehicular routes with a different landscaping treatment which can be agreed via condition. This route can also be used by pushchairs and wheelchair users to access the more landscaped part of the site away from the residential areas.

The southern boundary vegetation will continue to be retained and reinforced with native plant species to ensure that the natural screening along this boundary is managed in perpetuity, with the attenuation basin planted with marginal and native scrub vegetation along the edges for additional habitat opportunities and visual enjoyment. The remainder of the green spaces will be planted with amenity grass and species rich meadow grassland.

The proposed layout has been further enhanced by loosening the arrangement of streets and plots within the site, reducing the number of dwellings from 40 to 38 units, and setting back development from key views, such as the approach from the main entrance and the internal access routes running in a north-south orientation. In tandem, the amount of hardstanding has been reduced considerably and increased opportunities for more defined green infrastructure routes have been sought to allow for a multi-functional landscape to thrive. Careful thought has also been given to the treatment of surfaces with narrower roads leading northwards and differing surface treatments in the southern part of the site to soften the transition to the open countryside. As a result, the development has become less formal in its appearance and better reflects this edge-of-settlement location.

There are no changes proposed to the height, massing and design of the proposed units. However to reflect the layout changes outlined above, revised street scenes have been submitted in the revised drawing pack (see ref. Coloured Street Elevations – SE.01 B).



Amount and Mix

The number of units proposed within the site has reduced from 40 to 38 new homes, to be comprised of at least 60% affordable housing, as outlined in the breakdown provided in the table below.

As a result of the proposed changes to the layout of the site, and the resultant reduction in units, there has been a modest increase in the proportion of 2 bedroom units and a decrease in the proportion of 3 bedroom units within the scheme, although it should be noted that numerically the proposed housing mix remains very similar to the mix originally proposed.

The table below demonstrates that the proposal remains broadly in line with local mix needs set out within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, although notably this part of the Local Plan evidence base is now 8 years old and has been superseded by the Affordable Housing SPD which seeks to achieve a slightly different mix of units - 20% 1 bedroom flats/houses, 15% 2 bedroom flats, 30% 2 bedroom houses, 20% 3 bedroom houses and 15% 4 + bedroom houses.

It is acknowledged that the proposed mix does not align with the target mix set out in the SPD. However it is noted that the SPD is reflective of the housing needs information from the Housing Register for the borough as a whole at the time of its publication (July 2013). Up to date information has been sought from WBC regarding the current waiting list for affordable housing in Finchampstead. As of September 2024, it was confirmed that only 6.5% of applicants sought 4 bedroom properties, with the greatest need being for 2 and 3 bedroom homes (49%) followed by one bedroom homes. The proposed mix of primarily 2 and 3 bedroom homes is therefore deemed to be appropriate for the local context, both in terms of housing need and the semi-rural nature of the site which offers limited opportunity for 1 bedroom units.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	TOTAL
Market	0	7	10	1	18
Market %	0% (0%)	39% (33%)	55% (58%)	6% (8%)	100%
Market SMHA	5%	30%	45%	20%	100%
Affordable	3	3	5	1	12
Affordable %	25% (25%)	25% (38%)	42% (31%)	8% (6%)	100%
Affordable SHMA	30%	35%	30%	5%	100%
Additional Affordable	0	3	5	0	8
All Dwellings	3	13	20	2	38
All Dwellings %	8% (10%)	34% (30%)	53% (55%)	5% (5%)	100%

All Dwellings SHMA	15%	30%	35%	20%	100%
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Landscape

An addendum to the Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared by EDP and is enclosed with this submission. The addendum has been prepared to specifically address the comments made by the Landscape and Tree Officer in response to the original application and demonstrates where relevant how the revised layout has sought to address the concerns raised.

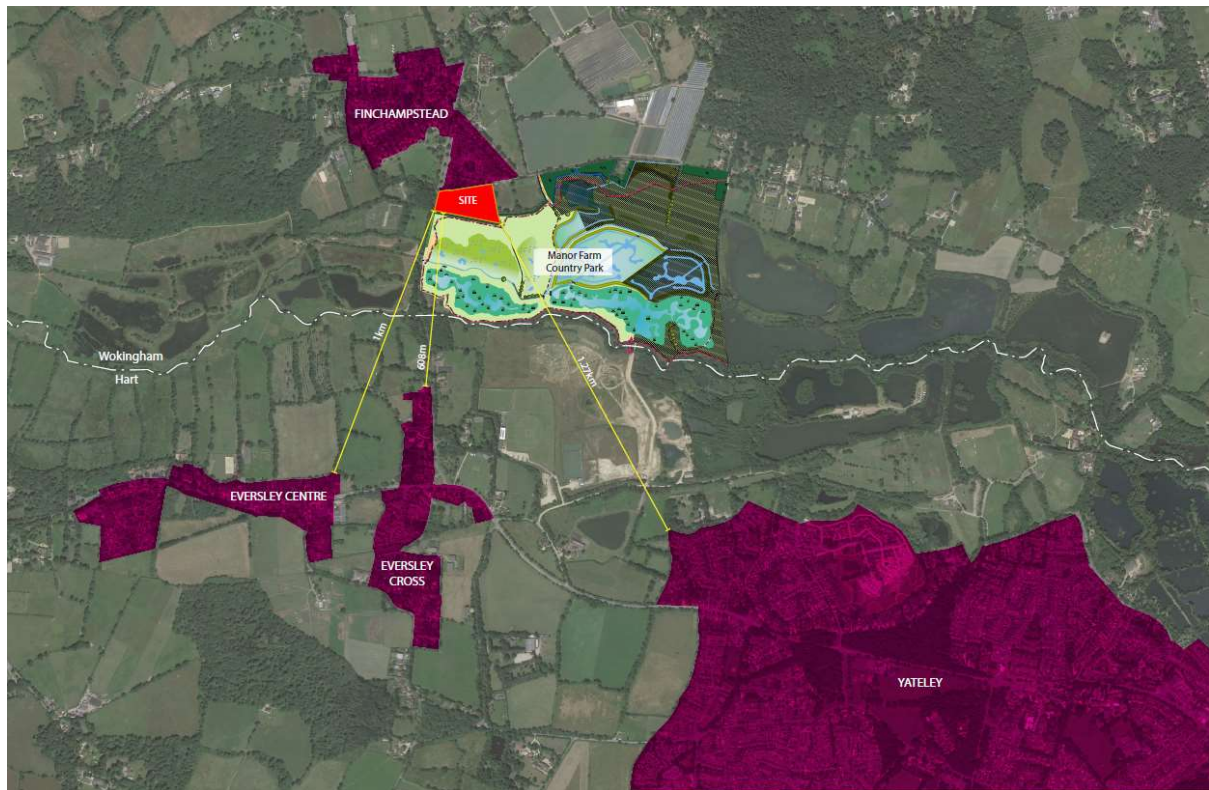
The addendum concludes that through the proposed changes to the layout of the site, there will be a material improvement to the appearance and character of the development as it relates to its edge-of-settlement location and its function as the southern most extent of the village before the emerging Blackwater Country Park to the south.

Notwithstanding this, the addendum reaches the same conclusions as the original LVA that the development site does not exhibit any special landscape characteristics that differentiates it from other greenfield sites adjacent to defined settlement boundaries and it does not form an integral part of the wider proposed Valued Landscape in the emerging Local Plan Update. As shown in the graphic below, the new southern edge of the village would remain a considerable distance away from the nearest settlements to the south so there would be no perception of settlement coalescence.

As a result of the benefits of the proposed development as outlined in the submitted Planning and Affordable Housing Statement, in addition to the improvements made to the site layout to address the comments made, the landscape impact of the proposed development would not 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits when considering speculative development in the context of the tilted balance.

The following documents are enclosed:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum
- edp4070_d005-L - Landscape Strategy
- edp4070_d038-D - Landscape Design Rationale



Access and Highways

A Transport Technical Note has been prepared by DTA and is enclosed with this submission. It should be read on conjunction with the original Transport Statement and Travel Plan submitted as part of the application.

The addendum has been prepared to specifically address the comments made by the Highways Authority and demonstrates how the comments have been picked up in the revised layout. The addendum also includes an up-to-date Safety Audit and Designer's Response contained within Appendix B.

In addition to the technical queries, the Highways Authority question the locational sustainability of the site due to its position adjacent to the Limited Development Location of Finchampstead. It is acknowledged that Finchampstead is identified as a Limited Development Location (LDL) which has a basic range of services and facilities but is physically and socially cohesive, likely due to the community facilities available in the locality and the overall size of the village. The adopted development plan accepts that limited development within LDLs would be acceptable, indicating that such sites in LDLs would generally not exceed 25 dwellings and thus suggesting that a medium level of development in LDLs may be appropriate (possibly as a reflection of paragraph 83 of the NPPF which states that *"to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this*

will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby".)

Notably, in Modest Development Locations (MDLs) the sites were expected to generally not exceed 100 dwellings – a significant increase compared to LDLs – despite only a marginal difference by way of shops and services. To demonstrate this, Table 6.1 below provides a comparison between the travel times and distances between the application site and the facilities available in Finchampstead, compared to an edge of settlement location around the nearest Modest Development Location – Finchampstead North (given as a range to reflect various locations around the edge of the settlement boundary). This demonstrates the full extent of accessibility to existing services and facilities within the adopted settlement boundaries of the Local Plan.

It is clear from the below that travel to local facilities is comparable in the majority of cases in Finchampstead and Finchampstead North, with the exception of the ability for some children to access the secondary school on foot albeit with a travel distance of more than 30 minutes. A site within or on the edge of an MDL therefore does not necessarily result in a more accessible development compared to the application site.

Furthermore, ONS data from a National Travel Survey carried out in 2019 demonstrates that out of all respondents only 27% lived within a 15 minute walk or bus ride from a secondary school in Wokingham, whereas 96% respondents were within 30 minutes. This is comparable to the application site which has a secondary school within 25 minutes using the local school bus. Notably this secondary school has a greater level of capacity to accommodate new students than other secondary schools in the local area.

Similarly the average travel time by car to the nearest secondary school in Wokingham was 14 minutes for the respondents, compared to 5 minutes by car from the application site. It is clear therefore that the site is comparable to Borough-wide averages in terms of accessibility to the nearest secondary school.

Service	Travel time from application site	Travel time from edge of settlement in Finchampstead North
Primary School and Pre-School (Public)	6 minute walk via pavements	2 minute walk – 30 minute walk via pavements
Secondary School / Sixth Form College (Public)	Yateley School – 25 minutes via dedicated school bus or 5 minutes via car (to and from bus stops within 5-10 minute walk from the site) Farnborough Sixth Form College – 50 minutes via dedicated school bus or 16 minutes via car (to and from bus stops within 5-10 minute walk from the site)	Bohunt Wokingham (newly constructed) – 27 minute- 1 hour walk or 10 – 28 minute bus ride
Public house	5 minute walk via pavements	3 minute – 10 minute drive
Community Hall	Less than 10 minute walk via pavements	12 minute walk – 25 minute walk

Sports Club and Fields (cricket, tennis, football)	Less than 10 minute walk via pavements	12 minute walk – 25 minute walk
Local super market	5 minute drive / bus north	2 minute walk – 30 minute walk
Larger super market	5 minute drive south	5 minute – 15 minute drive north
Health Centre / pharmacy	5 minute drive / bus north	2 minute walk – 30 minute walk

Not included in the table above is travel to work which is highly dependent on the nature of employment and the individual. However, to assess the accessibility of each location and individual preferences, a comparison has been made between 2021 Census data responses taken from the two Output Areas covering Finchampstead (a LDL) and an Output Area covering central Finchampstead North (a MDL).

Census data for the two Output Areas covering Finchampstead indicates that 59.6% of working people work from home in and around Finchampstead, which is higher than the Borough-wide and Finchampstead North average (50.9%). This means that the majority of residents in the village will not be commuting to work on a day-to-day basis. 33.1% of working respondents in Finchampstead travel to work in private vehicles, proportionately less than Finchampstead North (46.7%). Just under 2% of people travel to work by public transport (train), notably higher than the Finchampstead North average (<1%) possibly due to the relative proximity of Finchampstead to Crowthorne Station. 3.3% of working respondents walk to work in Finchampstead, compared to just over 1% in Finchampstead North. This indicates that there are people in Finchampstead who work in or around the village.

The data above demonstrates that Finchampstead is comparable to Finchampstead North in terms of travel preferences and outperforms its larger neighbour in terms of less reliance on private vehicles for commuting purposes. For other day-to-day activities, Finchampstead is comparable to Finchampstead North in many respects, and it is noted that the village also contains a sports club and playing pitches not available in Finchampstead North. It can therefore be concluded that the site is as accessible as the nearest MDL which Policy CP9 recognises as being an appropriate location for new development and the overarching development strategy in the Borough.

Moreover, the applicant intends to further improve the accessibility to the site through improvements to the route 145 bus service operated by Thames Valley Buses, which is considered to be appropriate and proportionate to the scale of development proposed. Details are contained within the submitted Transport Technical Note. It is anticipated that the service would be secured via a Section 106 legal agreement.

Overall, in the context of an out-of-date Local Plan and inability to demonstrate a four year supply, it is important to acknowledge that there is only limited conflict with policy CP9. A development of 38 dwellings, reduced from the 40 dwellings originally proposed, is appropriate to the scale and function of Finchampstead, and we have presented evidence to confirm the locational sustainability of the settlement.



Drainage

A Flood Risk Assessment and Conceptual Drainage Strategy Addendum has been prepared by RPS and is submitted with this pack to reflect the revised layout. The addendum should be read in conjunction with the original drainage report submitted with the application.

A response was submitted to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) on 8th August 2024 to address the comments made in relation to the original submission. It is understood from officers that these comments suitably addressed the LLFA's response. It is submitted as part of this pack for completeness.

Ecology and Trees

We have not yet received a response from the Ecology Officer, although a response has been provided specifically on Great Crested Newts in which no objections were raised subject to the inclusion of the referenced informative.

As a result of the revised layout, the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric has been revised and is enclosed with this submission. The on-site baseline of habitat and hedgerows remains unchanged.

The post-development biodiversity value of the site has been calculated based on the latest site layout, as well as the amended Landscape Strategy (see drawing ref. edp4070_d005-L). The resulting predicted post-development habitats were entered into the Biodiversity Metric as illustrated on drawing ref. edp4070_d037-D (Post-development Habitat Plan).

The target condition for newly created habitats remains as previously reported in the original Ecological Appraisal.

The revised Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet pertaining to habitat areas and hedgerow habitat features has been submitted alongside this addendum. The headline results are provided within table below.

	Habitat Units	Hedgerow Units
On-Site Baseline	21.36	0.86
On-Site Post Intervention	10.13	2.27
Total Net Unit Change	-11.23	1.17
Total % Net Change	-52.59%	+165.21%
Trading Rules Satisfied	No	Yes

This has resulted in a slight betterment of habitat loss on the site than the previous proposals (-56.5% previously) and a betterment in hedgerow units (+37.9% change previously). Nonetheless, there is still a loss of habitat units which the Applicant will commit to delivering a net gain in biodiversity via an off-site solution to create/enhance habitats to generate the unit shortfall. The offsetting scheme will be submitted and approved as



part of the BNG Plan (that is required as a standard pre-commencement condition to any applicable planning application) to be determined by the WBC.

This position is consistent with the previously submitted layout which was accompanied by a letter from Bio Diverse (dated 20th August 2024) confirming that the residual BNG can be provided at their mitigation site in Wolverton.

Otherwise, EDP's conclusion within the Ecological Appraisal remain the same. In light of the embedded mitigation and subject to the full implementation of the additional measures summarised within the Ecological Appraisal, the proposed development is capable of compliance with relevant planning policy and legislation and can deliver net benefits for wildlife and biodiversity.

An addendum to the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared by EDP and is enclosed with this submission. The addendum has been prepared to address the comments made by the Landscape and Tree Officer regarding the relationship between the proposed development and the trees on the boundaries of the site. In response, the design team has worked hard to reposition the units and surrounding hardstanding as far as possible away from the eastern boundary trees (resulting in the requested buffer of 19.2m) and the conclusions of the original AIA report have been revised accordingly. It is concluded that the Landscape and Tree Officer's comments are addressed.

Energy and Sustainability

A Sustainability and Energy Statement Addendum has been prepared by Icení and is submitted with this pack. The original document has been updated to reflect the revised layout, with the updated energy assessment results contained within paragraph 5.42 – 5.45.

A response to the comments by the Sustainability Officer was submitted to officers on 20th August 2024. For completeness, the Sustainability and Energy Statement has also been updated to address these comments¹. The remainder of the report remains unchanged.

Conclusion

For completeness, the table below provides a list of all application documents and confirms how they have been affected by proposed changes to the site layout. Any unit numbers or layout extracts contained within 'unchanged' documents are superseded.

Original Submission Document	Status	Revised / Additional Document
Air Quality Assessment	Unchanged	
Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Updated	Addendum Arboricultural Note
Archaeology and Heritage Assessment	Unchanged	

¹ See paragraphs 4.19, 4.25, 5.29, 6.4

Original Submission Document	Status	Revised / Additional Document
BNG Metric	Superseded	BNG Metric v2
Design and Access Statement	Updated	Design and Access Statement Addendum
Ecological Appraisal and BNG Assessment	Unchanged	
Flood Risk Assessment and Conceptual Drainage Strategy	Updated	Flood Risk Assessment and Conceptual Drainage Strategy Addendum
Draft Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan	Unchanged	
Landscape and Visual Appraisal	Updated	Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum
Lighting Impact Assessment	Unchanged	
Mineral Resource Assessment	Unchanged	
Noise Impact Assessment	Unchanged	
Odour Assessment Technical Note and Odour Assessment	Unchanged	
Off-site BNG Mitigation Information	Unchanged	
Phase 1 Ground Desk Study	Unchanged	
Plot by Plot Schedule	Superseded	Plot by Plot Schedule – Rev B
Planning and Affordable Housing Statement	Updated	Planning Addendum
Statement of Community Involvement	Unchanged	
Sustainability and Energy Statement	Superseded	Sustainability and Energy Statement Addendum
Transport Statement	Updated	Transport Technical Note
Travel Plan Statement	Unchanged	
Utilities Report	Unchanged	
Drawings		
CGI.01 – East Street View	Superseded	CGI.03 – Southern Edge View

Original Submission Document	Status	Revised / Additional Document
Garden Shed 01 - Floor Plans and Elevations - GS.01.pe A	Unchanged	
Garden Shed 02 - Floor Plans and Elevations - GS.02.pe A	Unchanged	
House Type A1.2 - End Terrace - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A1.2-END.pe A	Superseded	House Type A1.2 - End Terrace - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A1.2-END.pe B
House Type A2.2.2 - End Terrace - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.2.2-END.pe A	Removed	
House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 1 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-1.pe A	Superseded	House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 1 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-1.pe B
House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 2 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-2.pe A	Superseded	House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 2 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-2.pe B
House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 3 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-3.pe A	Superseded	House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 3 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-3.pe B
House Type A2.7 - End Terrace - Option 4 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-END-4.pe A	Removed	
House Type A3.3 - Detached - Floor Plans - HT.A3.3-DET.p A	Removed	
House Type A3.3 - Detached - Option 1 - Elevations - HT.A3.3-DET-1.e A	Removed	
House Type A3.3 - Detached - Option 2 - Elevations - HT.A3.3-DET-2.e A	Removed	
House Type A3.3 - End Terrace - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.3-END.pe A	Superseded	House Type A3.3 - End Terrace - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.3-END.pe B
House Type A3.6 - Detached - Option 1 - Elevations - HT.A3.6-DET-1.e A	Superseded	House Type A3.6 - Detached - Option 1 - Elevations - HT.A3.6-DET-1.e B
House Type A3.6 - Detached - Option 2 - Elevations - HT.A3.6-DET-2.e A	Superseded	House Type A3.6 - Detached - Option 2 - Elevations - HT.A3.6-DET-2.e B
House Type A3.6 - End Terrace - Option 1 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.6-END-1.pe A	Superseded	House Type A3.6 - End Terrace - Option 1 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.6-END-1.pe B
House Type A3.6 - End Terrace - Option 2 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.6-END-2.pe A	Superseded	House Type A3.6 - End Terrace - Option 2 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.6-END-2.pe B
House Type A3.6 - Detached - Floor Plans - HT.A3.6-DET.p A	Superseded	House Type A3.6 - Detached - Floor Plans - HT.A3.6-DET.p B
House Type P4.13 - Elevations - HT.P4.13.e A	Superseded	House Type P4.13 - Elevations - HT.P4.13.e B

Original Submission Document	Status	Revised / Additional Document
House Type P4.13 - Floor Plans - HT.P4.13.p A	Superseded	House Type P4.13 - Floor Plans - HT.P4.13.p B
-	New Plan	House Type A1.2 - Mid Terrace - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A1.2-MID.pe A
-	New Plan	House Type A2.2.2 - End Terrace - Option 1 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.2.2-END-1.pe A
-	New Plan	House Type A2.2.2 - End Terrace - Option 2 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.2.2-END-2.pe A
-	New Plan	House Type A2.7 - Detached - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A2.7-DET.pe A
-	New Plan	House Type A3.6 - End Terrace - Option 3 - Floor Plans and Elevations - HT.A3.6-END-3.pe A
Location Plan - LP.01 A	Unchanged	
Affordable Housing Layout - AHL.01 A	Superseded	Affordable Housing Layout - AHL01 B
Boundary and Dwelling Material Layout - BDML.01 A	Superseded	Boundary and Dwelling Material Layout - BDML01 B
Parking Plan - PP.01 A	Superseded	Parking Plan - PP01 B
Proposed Site Layout - SL.01 A	Superseded	Proposed Site Layout - SL.01 B
Proposed Site Layout (Colour) - CSL.01 A	Superseded	Coloured Site Layout - CSL01 B
Refuse Collection Plan - RCP.01 A	Superseded	Refuse Collection Plan - RCP01 B
Street Elevations - SE.01 A	Superseded	Coloured Street Elevations - CSE.01 B
edp4070_d005-H-Landscape Strategy	Superseded	edp4070_d005-L-Landscape Strategy
edp4070_d038-A-Design Rationale	Superseded	edp4070_d038-D-Landscape Design Rationale
edp4070_d037-B -Post-development Habitat Plan	Superseded	edp4070_d037-D-Post-development Habitat Plan

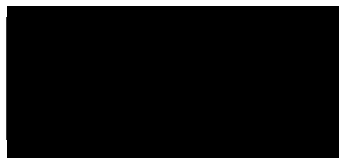
In reflection of the reduction in units referenced above, the description of development will require an adjustment, as set out below:



"Erection of 38no. dwellings (Use Class C3), together with associated outdoor space and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, parking, access, and associated works."

I trust the proposed revisions address the comments raised by consultees on the original plans. However if you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Bewsey MRTPI

Director

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