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Delivered by Email & Post

Jonathan Imber
East Staffordshire Borough Council
The Maltsters
Wetmore Road
Burton upon Trent
DE14 1LS



Our ref: MJGQ_2000
Your ref: Gnosall



Dear Jonathan

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND OFF BRAMSHALL ROAD, UTTOXETER -
REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION PURSUANT TO REGULATION 5 OF THE TOWN &
COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2011**

We write on behalf of our client Gleeson Developments Ltd in respect of the proposed residential development on land at Roycroft Farm to the south of Bramshall Road, Uttoxeter (I refer to site plan enclosed). We have now reached an agreed Masterplan for the site and therefore feel now is the ideal time to submit an EIA screening request.

Under the terms of Article 5 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, we hereby formally request a Screening Opinion from the Council as to whether the proposed development constitutes EIA development as defined in the Regulations, thereby requiring the submission of an Environmental Statement (ES).

It is our opinion that the proposal **does not fall** within Schedule 1 of the Regulations. However, the proposal would be considered to fall within Schedule 2 (due to the size of the site), which identifies types of development which may require an EIA. The Regulations state that an EIA is required for Schedule 2 projects if there are likely to be significant effects on the environment.

In our view, a level of judgement needs to be applied to determine whether significant effects from a development are likely. The main factors we consider to be relevant are:

- Location of a development – the more environmentally sensitive the location, the lower the threshold at which significant effects will be likely. Conversely, if the location is not sensitive, there will be a higher threshold at which effects become significant.
- Characteristics of development – significant effects are more likely to occur if the proposed development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, the site has not previously been developed, or the types of impact associated with the development are of a markedly different nature to current site uses.

- Characteristics of the potential impact – an EIA is more likely to be required if the site is currently contaminated or contamination is likely to arise, or where there is an unusually complex or potentially hazardous effect that warrants more robust consideration before a decision is made.

Having considered the proposed development in this context, it is our opinion that the proposals are **not likely** to have significant environmental effects.

In accordance with Regulation 5(2) we enclose a site location plan and set out below a brief description of the nature and purpose of the proposed development and its possible effects on the environment to enable the Council to issue its screening opinion.

The site

The Roycroft Farm, (Bramshall Road) site is 8.01ha (19.78 acres) in size and is located to the west of Uttoxeter town centre. The site is bounded by Bramshall Park to the east and open fields to the west. To the south of the site is Picknall Brook, beyond which there is a railway line and to the north is Bramshall Road.

Description of Development

The development proposals comprise a residential development of up to 140 dwellings and associated access and landscaping. The development is likely to include a mix of house types and sizes. The building heights will be no greater than 3 storeys. The site will be accessed directly off Bramshall Road as shown on the enclosed site layout plan.

Determining whether EIA is required

In accordance with the EIA Regulations it needs to be determined whether the development is:

- Schedule 1 development – in which case EIA is necessary; or
- Schedule 2 development – in which case EIA is necessary if the development is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The proposal does not meet any of the categories of development in Schedule 1 of the Regulations for which EIA is always required. It does, however, fall within the descriptions of development in Schedule 2 of the Regulations; namely Category 10(b) 'Urban Development Projects' and exceeds the site area threshold of 0.5 hectares.

Accordingly, it is necessary to consider whether the development is located in a 'sensitive area' as defined by the Regulations and whether it is likely to have any significant environmental effects.

Sensitive Area

The Regulations define sensitive areas as being:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- National Parks;
- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- Designated European sites.

On the basis of the above, the site is not categorised as a 'sensitive area'.

Potential Significant Effects on the Environment

Although the site is not located within a 'sensitive area' as set out above, to enable the Council to come to a decision based on robust information, the proposals have been considered against the criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments set out at Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

Schedule 3 Selection Criteria

The criteria can be broadly summarised as:

1. The characteristics of the development (e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated);
2. The location of development (e.g. the existing use and the environmental sensitivity of the location);
3. Characteristics of the potential impacts of development (e.g. extent of any impact, its magnitude and its duration or frequency).

In assessing the potential impacts of the proposed development and the significance of any potential effects, we have taken proposed mitigation measures into account.

The characteristics of the development

The proposed development is for residential development of up to 140 dwellings with access off Bramshall Road. Whilst the site is currently undeveloped, it lies to the south of a residential area and is bounded by Bramshall Park to the east.

Residential uses do not result in any significant emissions or waste, and do not involve processes, which will introduce new pollutants, significant noise or any hazardous materials to the area. It is therefore our view that the characteristics of the development will not give rise to any likely significant effects on the environment.

The location of the development

Schedule 3 of the Regulations indicates that when assessing the environmental sensitivities of an area, particular regard must be had to:

- Existing land use;
- Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area;
- Absorption capacity of the natural environment.

Existing land use

The site comprises a grassland field. It is proposed to retain the existing hedgerows and trees wherever possible or provide replacement planting within the proposed landscaping on the site

Natural resources

The proposed development would result in the loss of grassland. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the proposals would not have materially adverse (or positive) impacts on natural resources in the area such that it would require EIA.

Natural environment

Schedule 3 lists a number of natural environments, the absorption capacity of which should be paid particular attention:

- i) Wetlands – not applicable
- ii) Coastal Zones – not applicable
- iii) Mountain and forest area – not applicable
- iv) Nature reserves and parks – not applicable
- v) Classified areas – not applicable
- vi) Areas where environmental quality standards are exceeded – not applicable
- vii) Densely populated areas – the site is located to the south of a residential area and the proposed development will be of a character and density that is in keeping with the pattern and density of surrounding land uses.
- viii) Landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance – the site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no listed structures on the site. There are no listed buildings or conservation areas in the immediate surroundings of the site.

The characteristics of any potential impact

Schedule 3 of the Regulations requires potentially significant effects to be considered having regard to:

- The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population)
- Any trans-frontier effects
- The magnitude and complexity of the impact
- The probability of impacts
- The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts.

We consider that a 140 dwelling development is of a scale which can only be considered to be local in nature. The development is similar in nature to the surrounding uses and will not have any complex, hazardous or significant environmental effects which would mean the site and the area is not suitable for this type of development in environmental terms. There will be no trans-frontier effects arising from the development and the nature of effects likely to arise are considered further below.

We consider the following matters to be relevant to the environmental considerations of the proposals and the characteristics of any potential impact on these matters are set out below.

- Ecology;
- Highways and transportation;
- Air quality;
- Noise & Vibration;
- Archaeology;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Ground conditions.

Ecology

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Gleeson Developments Ltd to carry out an initial ecological appraisal at the site in March 2013. To fulfil this brief an ecological desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey were undertaken.

The ecological desk study revealed seven nature conservation sites with non-statutory protection within a 2 km radius of the survey area. The nearest non-statutory site is Gendall's Coppice Site of Biological Interest, and is located 680 m from the survey area. The desk study also provided records

of protected and notable species, including bats, water vole, brown hare, hedgehog, badger, polecat, otter, common lizard, amphibians, birds, white-clawed crayfish, terrestrial invertebrates and bluebell.

At the time of the survey, the site was predominantly comprised improved grassland fields, many of which were grazed by sheep. Species-poor intact and defunct hedgerows are located on most field boundaries and contained scattered trees, many of which have features which could provide potential habitat for roosting bats. Scattered trees and a bridge are also located near to Picknall Brook in the south of the site. A group of farm buildings is located in the north-eastern part of the site, adjacent to Bramshall Road. The buildings may provide features for bats. Other habitats recorded on site include scattered scrub, fence, wall, dense scrub and hard-standing.

The key ecological features on site in relation to the works proposed are the scattered trees, species-poor hedgerows and three badger setts. The hedgerows provide connectivity and are included in the UK BAP and Section 41 of the NERC Act. They provide suitable nesting habitat for birds, foraging opportunities for bats, and habitat for hedgehog, badger, polecat and reptiles. The scattered trees are notable due to their maturity and bat roosting features. They provide suitable nesting habitat for birds and foraging and roosting opportunities for bats. It is also considered the building, grassland, scrub and running water provide potential habitat for water vole, polecat, otter, amphibians and white-clawed crayfish.

In order to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation and relevant planning policy, the following recommendations were made in the Extended Phase 1 habitat survey:

- Nesting Birds: Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season.
- Roosting Bats: An initial bat survey should be undertaken on scattered trees and buildings which may be impacted by the proposed development works. An initial bat survey was carried out in August which recommended further bat surveys focusing on the buildings and also the Category 1/1* trees which couldn't be fully inspected by the Initial Bat Survey.
- Bat Activity Survey: If works are to impact hedgerows (i.e. through significant changes in lighting or habitat loss), a foraging bat survey should be undertaken to determine bat use of the site.
- Badger: It is recommended that a badger activity survey is undertaken to determine current activity status and whether any additional setts are located within 30 m of the proposed development area. A Badger Survey was undertaken in August and one live sett identified close to the driveway to Roycroft Lodge. The report suggests the closure of the sett and its replacement elsewhere. This requires a Natural England Badger Development Licence. A proposal for a Badger Mitigation Strategy and Licence Application has already been prepared.
- Reptiles: A reptile survey should be undertaken of suitable habitats within the proposed development site. A Reptile Survey was carried out in August 2013 but no reptiles were found during the field survey. No recommendations for further works are required, but should any reptiles be discovered during the site works, Natural England will be contacted immediately to discuss a way forward.

- **Water Voles:** If works are to impact on areas within 10 m of the watercourse, a water vole survey of Picknall Brook should be undertaken. A Water Vole Survey was conducted during August 2013. Despite the conditions being suitable for water voles, no evidence of water voles was found during the survey. If development works have not commenced within 12 months, it is recommended that a further survey is undertaken.
- **Otters:** If works are to impact on areas within 10 m of the watercourse, an otter survey of Picknall Brook should be undertaken. An Otter Survey was conducted during August 2013. No evidence of otters was revealed during the survey. If no development works have started within 12 months, the consultants recommend that a further survey is undertaken.
- **Great Crested Newts:** A great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment should be undertaken for all ponds identified within 500 m of the edge of the proposed development. There are no ponds on site. A Great Crested Newt Survey was undertaken in May 2013. This showed that one of the ponds was suitable for Great Crested Newts, but this pond is 400 metres from the site and separated by the railway line and Picknall Brook. The survey concluded that it was highly unlikely that if Great Crested Newts were present in the pond, that development on the site would have any impact on present or future populations of GCN's. If a Great Crested Newt is found on site then Natural England will be notified to determine a way forward.
- **White-clawed Crayfish:** If any disturbance to Picknall Brook is anticipated, including siltation or site run-off, a white-clawed crayfish survey should be undertaken. A survey was undertaken during August 2013. The survey has proven the absence of White Clawed Crayfish within Picknall Brook and no further work is recommended. However due to the presence of American Signal Crayfish, if development works are likely to impact upon the watercourse then precautions must be taken to prevent the 'crayfish plague' to spread.
- **Rhododendron and Cotoneaster:** A Method Statement must be developed for the proposed works to ensure that they do not result in the spread of any invasive non-native species.

Highways and transportation

A Transport Assessment prepared Phil Jones Associates in September 2013 concluded that in view of the proximity of the site to various local facilities and the close proximity of the No 4 Uttoxeter town bus route and the ease of pedestrian links into the town, this is a very sustainable location for new houses. The report also concludes that *'the additional traffic flows generated by the development have been assessed in relation to the capacity of the network and the impact is likely to be minimal'*. The proposed development should not therefore raise any highway related concerns in respect of the level of traffic movements generated by the scheme. Furthermore the proposed improvements to Bramshall Road will reduce vehicle speeds to a level which is more compliant with the existing 30 mph speed limit resulting in wider highway safety benefits. A Framework Travel Plan has also been prepared by Phil Jones Associates.

Air Quality

The site is not located within or close to an Air Quality Management area. Furthermore, residential development of this scale would not generate air quality issues during either the construction or occupation phase.

Noise & Vibration

The proposed development itself is not of a scale or nature that will create additional noise and/or vibration nuisance once it is completed. The effects during the construction phase (possibly a period of 2 – 3 years) will be short term and will cease when construction ends. Best practice measures, including restricted hours of working and proper maintenance of plant and machinery, will help to ensure that construction noise does not cause nuisance. The railway line to the south has a local train service with trains passing hourly in both directions. In view of its distance from the site and the infrequency of the trains this is not regarded as a major problem. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not have significant effects in terms of noise.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

A Heritage/Archaeology Assessment was undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in April 2013. No features of archaeological interest were identified. The proposed residential development is therefore not anticipated to have any impact on significant archaeological heritage assets.

Flood risk and drainage

An Initial Flood Risk Drainage and Utilities Assessment was prepared by Weetwood in March 2013. The Flood Zone maps identify the site as falling within Flood Zone 1, but with the lower 5% of the site within Zones 1 and 3. The area of the site earmarked for development is located well above the level of the brook to the south.

A draft Flood risk Assessment was prepared in August 2013. This concludes that the site can be developed within the requirements of the NPPF and supporting technical guidance, subject to finished floor levels being set 0.15m above adjacent ground levels with the design being implemented in accordance with the FRA. On-site attenuation can be provided to ensure that the site won't cause any risk of flooding elsewhere and crucially, that a separation distance will be retained from Picknall Brook. The developer will ensure that there is no danger of pollution to the brook during or post construction. An illustrative surface water drainage scheme has been prepared for the development which includes swales and a surface water retention pond.

Ground conditions

A Ground investigation is currently underway. However, as this is a greenfield site, there is no known history of ground contamination. Through careful design and mitigation, residential development of the scale proposed would not jeopardise the ground conditions either within or adjacent to the site.

Conclusions

Having regard to the EIA Regulations, it is evident that the proposed development is not a Schedule 1 development, but is considered to fall within those developments listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

The site is not considered to be sensitive, and a review of the site and location indicates that it is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. The proposal has similar characteristics to adjacent land uses. Sensitive receptors, including nearby residents, the water and air environment and ecology, are all either not affected by, or can be protected from, adverse effects using standard and commonly employed mitigation techniques.

The effects, which are likely to arise from the proposed development, have been considered it is concluded that none of the likely effects are considered to be significant enough to warrant EIA.

For the reasons set out above, the proposals are not considered to be of a scale or character that would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment.

Further assessments will be carried out to fully assess the potential impacts of the proposed development and relevant information will be submitted with the planning application. There are, however, no issues considered to be significant enough to require EIA. Normal planning controls and tried and tested mitigation measures can be employed to address any potential impacts.

This letter takes into account the construction and operational phases of development and it is concluded that the proposal does not comprise 'EIA development' as defined in the Regulations. We therefore request that the Local Planning Authority adopts a screening opinion to confirm that no ES is required. In accordance with Regulation 5(5) we look forward to hearing from you within the statutory period.

If you need any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact John Acres or Kathryn Young at this office.

Yours sincerely

John Acres
Director

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18/10/2013



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Project: BRAMSHALL ROAD

Title: SITE LOCATION PLAN

Client: GLEESON HOMES
Status: SUBMISSION

Job No: MJGQ2000
Date: OCT 2013
Dwg No: TA01
Scale: 1:2000
Revision:
Author: ST

Disclaimer

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TURLEYASSOCIATES
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8
1 to 6
Hawthornden
Manor

Malford
Grove

Brikama

18

Village Green
Centred around a group of existing mature Oak trees the village green will provide a focal point and meeting place at the heart of the northern section of the development.

Recreational Route
A continuous pedestrian route is provided around the site and linking through to Bramshill Road Park. This will improve the relationship between the development and the park and provide a recreational route through the development.

Linear Park
The linear park provides a landscaped buffer between the development and Bramshill Road Park. SUDS and wetland habitat are incorporated and linked to existing ditch systems and the proposed detention basin.

The informal design using predominantly wildflower and wet meadow seed mixes will create opportunities for recreation whilst also providing wildlife habitats and enhancing the ecology of the site.

Existing trees and hedges
Where possible existing trees and hedges will be retained. These create a defined boundary to the development and help to integrate the development with its surroundings.

Wetland Habitat
Storage for surface water is incorporated in to a recreational wetland area and a continuation of the wildlife corridor/nature area from Bramshill Road Park.

Recreation Ground

Tennis
Courts

Shelter

Weir

MP.25

KEY

-  EXISTING HEDGEROW & TREES TO BE RETAINED
-  EXISTING HEDGEROW & TREES TO BE REMOVED (either in response to recommendations from pre-development tree survey or to facilitate development)
-  PROPOSED TREES
-  PROPOSED ORNAMENTAL SHRUB PLANTING
-  PROPOSED MOWN GRASS
-  PROPOSED WILDFLOWER & WET MEADOW SEEDING
-  PROPOSED NATIVE STRUCTURE PLANTING
-  PROPOSED PAVING
-  PROPOSED HEDGEROW
-  PROPOSED TIMBER BRIDGE/BOARDWALK
-  PROPOSED FOOTPATH
-  PROPOSED SWALE
-  PROPOSED BENCH

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