



## ASHWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Office at Bear Farm, 6A Back Street, Ashwell, Baldock, Herts, SG7 5PE  
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Clerk: Jane Porter Deputy Clerk: Laura Brooks-Payne  
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Ms Naomi Reynard  
Senior Planning Officer  
North Herts District Council

BY EMAIL

26<sup>h</sup> February 2020

Dear Ms Reynard,

**Re NHDC Case Ref. 20/00126/FP. Land north of Ashwell Street and south Of Lucas Lane between Hunts Ridge, Ashwell Street, and East Lodge, 22 Lucas Lane.**

This application was considered by the Parish Council at an on-site meeting on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February. Eighteen local residents and an agent of the landowner were also in attendance.

A proposal was made, and accepted, that no firm recommendation could be made to the NHDC Planning Officer as to whether permission should be granted or not without more detailed information on the matters of concern that had been raised.

These included:

1. The lack of detailed sections across the site to show the impact on (i) existing properties, particularly the bungalows in Lucas Lane, and (ii) important views within the conservation area,
2. The absence of any proposals to address the impact of increased vehicular traffic on the unmade Ashwell Street track and on the junction of Ashwell Street and Kingsland Way,
3. The failure of the proposals to address the housing needs of Ashwell residents as evidenced by the survey conducted as part of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Please see below further detail:

Design and layout.

(i) The impact of the height of the two-storey houses has not been adequately covered in the application. It does not include sectional drawings across the site to show the impact on the bungalows in Lucas Lane and on the significant views from the top of the site (see re Conservation Area Statement below).

(ii) There is precedent in several applications in Ashwell where NHDC Planning Officers have required lower roof heights, including one and a half storeys, to mitigate the negative impact on existing properties. The Heritage Assessment (Examination Library NHE1) for site AS1 in the new Local Plan emphasizes the need for this in relation to sloping sites.

(iv) Concern has been expressed that the number of parking spaces is not adequate/not consistent with guidelines.

- (v) Some concern has been expressed that the affordable housing units are clustered together and it has been questioned whether this is consistent with relevant planning guidelines.
- (vi) Some concern has been expressed that the design and layout does not concur with 'secured by design' guidelines.
- (vii) The differing proposals for walls or fences on different parts of the site has been questioned.

#### Highways.

The impact of additional traffic movements from the 24 new houses onto Ashwell Street has not been adequately considered in the application. Ashwell Street is an unmade rural track defined as a BOAT and part of the historic Icknield Way path. It is used by a significant number of walkers, horse riders and cyclists for leisure as well as to access local amenities. Such sustainable modes of transport should be encouraged. In particular it provides a significant route for children to access the school from the Station Road end of the village. There exist already significant concerns that it is increasingly used as a 'rat-run' by vehicular traffic and that this is increasingly a hazard to other users. These concerns should be raised with Highways to inform their proposals for necessary works should the application be approved. Proposals to date from others have included, (i) bollards adjacent to the new access to prevent through traffic along Ashwell Street, (ii) works to the junction of Ashwell Street and Kingsland Way to slow traffic and reduce hazards at this already dangerous crossing point.

#### Conservation Area -Character Statement/Ashwell

(Approved by NHDC Cabinet, meeting 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019; '...to inform the consideration of planning applications.')

The significant view to the north across the site from the existing field gate is included in this document.

Page 13, section 3.3:

'There are a number of significant views within Ashwell Conservation Area as follows: From Ashwell Street looking north across field towards Alder Cottage including the tree coverage within the Conservation Area (KV23).'

As the proposals include closing off the existing field entrance and creating a new vehicle entrance further along Ashwell Street it is questioned whether this significant view would be retained. Also questioned is whether the height of the new houses would block views across the site to the open landscape beyond (see also above re design and layout).

#### Housing need.

The recent Neighbourhood Plan survey has demonstrated the need for smaller, lower cost units and dwellings suitable for elderly people. Data from the census and the ONS support the need for more elderly person's accommodation. Requests to the developer for the inclusion of a much higher number of bungalows were made during the pre-application consultation.

#### Education.

Provision of sufficient places at Ashwell Primary School must be assured.

#### Other infrastructure/services.

The increase in flooding risk to the bungalows downhill from the new houses needs to be adequately assessed and firm assurances given.

The adequacy of the sewerage system to cope with 24 new dwellings has been questioned. The additional impact on the already inadequate provision of GP services is of concern.

Archaeology.

The site investigations carried out by various parties and their subsequent reports have been noted and are commended. The site has been found to be of very significant local importance, and potentially nationally. If permission is granted it is imperative that the relevant statutory condition requiring further work be enforced. Excavations have revealed a Romano-British temple. The field is also the site of a noted WWII aircraft crash that involved the fatality of eight crew of a Wellington. A portfolio of directly relevant information on this has been compiled by the Parish Council. An information board to serve as a memorial to this has been proposed.

Planning obligations.

The Parish Council is to submit the required documentation re the section 106 obligation in support of the New Pavilion Project.

Please contact me if any clarification is required.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Porter (Mrs), Clerk, on behalf of Ashwell Parish Council

Cc District Councillor Tom Tyson.  
County Councillor Steve Jarvis.