

PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL
Tracy Harvey – Head of Planning & Building Control

Our Ref: 5/2020/1992
Please ask for: Ruth Ambrose
Direct Line: 01727 866100
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Date: 08/12/2020

Talys Nikan
Woods Hardwick Ltd
15-17 Goldington Road
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MK40 3NH

Dear Sir,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
(Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017)

LAND OFF BULLENS GREEN LANE AT ROUNDHOUSE FARM, COLNEY HEATH

Further to the receipt of your planning application reference 5/2020/1992 as described above, the Council considered it expedient to screen the proposed development in order to determine whether an Environmental Statement is required. The Council has concluded that the proposed development would not require an Environmental Statement.

Attached is a detailed assessment for your information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TH' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Tracy Harvey
Head of Planning & Building Control

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|---|------------|------------------------------|
| Date Application Received | 28/08/2020 | Date of decision: 08/12/2020 |
| Screening opinion for: LAND OFF BULLENS GREEN LANE AT ROUNDHOUSE FARM, COLNEY HEATH | | |

| A - Check list | |
|---|--|
| A1. Is the project Schedule One? | No |
| A2. Is the project identified in column 1 of Schedule Two? | Yes - It is an Urban Development Project |
| A3. Is the project in or adjacent to a sensitive area? i.e. SSSI's, and other such designations. | The site is not within or adjacent to a SSSI, National Park, AONB, World Heritage Site or scheduled monument. The project is not therefore in or adjacent to a sensitive area as defined. It is noted that the site is located within Watling Chase Community Forest |
| A4. Is the project above the exclusion thresholds in Schedule Two? (consideration of the selection criteria in Schedule 3) <i>(i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or</i> <i>(ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or</i> <i>(iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares</i> | Yes – the site area exceeds 5ha (the total site area is 5.25ha) |
| A5. Is the project within the indicative inclusion thresholds in the NPPG (updated 20 07 2017) EIA Annex? Environmental Impact Assessment is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. Sites which have not previously been intensively developed: <i>(i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or</i> <i>(ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or</i> <i>(iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).</i> The NPPG indicates that: Projects listed in Schedule 2 which are located in, or partly in, a sensitive area also need to be screened, even if they are below the thresholds or do not meet the criteria. Sensitive Areas are defined in Regulation2(1) as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites; • National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and • World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments. where "All developments in, or partly in, such areas should be screened." The guidance also indicates that in certain cases, local designations may be environmentally sensitive and may be relevant in determining whether an assessment is required. Projects which are described in the first column of Schedule 2 but which do not exceed the relevant thresholds, or meet the criteria in the second column | No – see below. <i>(i) the area of the scheme is 5.25 hectares.</i> <i>(ii) not applicable</i> <i>(iii) The site is currently vacant and is described as agricultural land. However, the proposal is for significantly less than 1000 dwellings (100 dwellings).</i> The site is not in, or partly in, a sensitive area as defined in the regulations. |

of the Schedule, or are not at least partly in a sensitive area may not be Schedule 2 development. Such projects do not usually require further screening or Environmental Impact Assessment.

B Consideration of selection criteria in Schedule 3

B1. Characteristics of Development

This should be considered in relation to the size of the development, the cumulative impact of other development, the use of natural resources, the production of waste, pollution and nuisances, the risk of accidents having regard in particular to substances or technologies used and the risks to human health.

The proposed development is for the erection of up to 100 dwellings at Land to the south of Roestock Lane and west of Bullens Green Lane. It is cross boundary with 47% within SADC's administrative area, and the remainder within Welwyn Hatfield's administrative area.

The NPPG states: "It should not be presumed that developments above the indicative thresholds should always be subject to assessment, or those falling below these thresholds could never give rise to significant effects, especially where the development is in an environmentally sensitive location. Each development will need to be considered on its merits."

From the information provided as part of the planning application, the site is currently undeveloped and is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The development would therefore be of a greater scale than the existing situation on the site. However, when considered against the indicative inclusion thresholds in the NPPG (updated 20 07 2017) EIA Annex, the proposed development would not comprise more than 1000 dwellings on a previously non-urbanised area. It is also noted that the site area (5.25 ha) would be only marginally above the indicative site area threshold in the regulations.

In terms of potential cumulative impacts, there are no developments of a significant scale in close proximity to the site, within St Albans City and District Council's administrative area.

The site has not been determined as contaminated land under Part 11A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The proposed residential use would not generate non-domestic waste, pollution or nuisance. The proposed residential use would not involve the use of substances or technologies that would risk human health.

B2. Location of the Development

This should be considered in relation to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development, in particular the existing land use, the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area, and the absorption capacity of the natural environment.

The site is currently open land, located in the Metropolitan Green Belt and is identified as agricultural land.

The proposed development site is not a classified or protected area defined by National Legislation, nor is it an area in which environmental quality standards have already been exceeded.

The site falls within Flood Zone 1. Groundwater is particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is within Source Protection Zone 1 and very close to the groundwater abstraction for the public water supply. The Environment Agency and Local Lead Flood Authority are both content with the applicant; flood risk assessment and drainage strategy, subject to the imposition of planning conditions on any grant of planning permission.

The site falls within the sand and gravel belt, as identified in Hertfordshire County Council's Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016. The site also falls within the sand and gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area within the Proposed Submission Minerals Local Plan, January 2019. The adopted Minerals Local Plan Policy 5 (Minerals Policy 5: Mineral Sterilisation) encourages the opportunistic extraction of minerals for use on site prior to non-mineral development, where the quantity of minerals to be extracted would justify such an approach.

B3. Types and Characteristics of the Potential Impact

The likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, with regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in regulation 4(2), taking into account—

- (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (b) the nature of the impact;
- (c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
- (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- (e) the probability of the impact;
- (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Section 4(2) states:

“4(2) The EIA must identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development on the following factors—

- (a) population and human health;
- (b) biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under Directive 92/43/EEC(1) and Directive 2009/147/EC(2);
- (c) land, soil, water, air and climate;
- (d) material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape;
- (e) the interaction between the factors referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d).”

Magnitude and Spatial Extent, Nature, Transboundary Nature of Impact, Intensity and Complexity

The proposed development would result in an intensification of the use of the site as it is currently open agricultural land. The site is located close to existing residential development and there would be impacts due to the additional residential uses proposed. The height, proximity to any defensible landscaped boundaries and overall visual impact of the proposed dwellings are being considered as part of the planning application.

The magnitude of the visual impact of the development could be assessed through the submission of a LVIA (submitted within the planning application submission).

There is the potential for impacts on ecology and biodiversity, given the location of the site and the presence of trees and vegetation adjacent to and within the site.

In regards to the potential for ecological impacts, whilst there may be impacts, the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre does not hold any records of notable ecological significance for either the application site or its immediate surrounds. This matter is capable of being dealt with via an ecological assessment submitted as part of the planning application.

There are no trees known to be subject to a TPO within or adjacent to the site, however, the impacts relating to this can be dealt with as part of the assessment of the planning application. Any impacts are likely to be local in scale.

Due to the size of the development, the proposal may have impacts on surface water drainage within the locality. The applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy which have been accepted by both the Environment Agency and the LLFA.

Traffic is most likely to have an impact on the wider area. The site proposes to gain access via Bullens Green Lane. The proposed development would result in changes to traffic movements to and from site. A Transport Assessment has been submitted with the application.

There is an identified footpath running through the site which the planning application identifies as being retained as part of the site access plans.

The site is in close proximity to a Grade 2 Listed building (Roestock Cottage).

The site is not within or adjacent to any areas classified or protected by National Legislation, or within or adjacent to any areas of particular environmental sensitivity. Any impact on the Metropolitan Green Belt, landscaping, flood risk and drainage, heritage assets, air quality, land and ground water contamination issues, and ecological issues would need to be considered as part of a planning application.

It is not considered that the site context is environmentally sensitive to the proposed use, or that the site is particularly environmentally sensitive or contaminated.

Probability of impact and possibility of effectively reducing the impact

Due to the factors outlined above, it is not considered that the probability of environmental impact would be of a nature as to require an Environmental Statement. Any smaller scale, local impacts can be adequately considered and any mitigation identified by way of evidence and assessments submitted as part of the planning application.

Onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact

Any operational impacts of the development of the site for the development proposed could not be reversed. Construction impacts would be temporary.

Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development:

No relevant proposed or consented developments have been identified.

C. Conclusion

It is considered that, although the development proposed would marginally exceed the indicative inclusion thresholds in the NPPG (updated 20 07 2017) EIA Annex, the NPPG is clear that it should not be presumed that developments above the indicative thresholds should always be subject to assessment.

On the basis of the above assessment, having regard to the purpose and the amount of development proposed, the proposal would not be of more than local importance, would not be in a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location in terms of designations and would not be unusually complex or have potentially hazardous environmental effects. The proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the environment other than what can be considered under the normal planning process.

Therefore taking into account the material submitted with the planning application, and notwithstanding any issues that may arise from the submission of that information and the responses of consultees, the development is unlikely to result in the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

For the above reasons it is determined that an Environmental Statement **is not** required for the above development.

This Screening Opinion has been adopted by St Albans District Council.



Date: 08/12/2020

Tracy Harvey
Head of Planning & Building Control