

## The St Stephen Neighbourhood Plan

### Background

1. In August 2022, the St Albans City and District Council (“the Council”) invited McPartland Planning Limited (“MPL”) to consider making a submission about how the scheme accords with the St Stephen Neighbourhood Plan (“the SSNP”) which had been Made the previous month.
2. In fact, eight months earlier, in November 2021, whilst explaining why the draft SSNP should carry little weight, the Planning Statement and Design & Access Statement considered the application scheme against its most important draft policies (particularly D&AS, 5.21, 5.23, 5.24 and 5.28).
3. However, MPL is happy to assist the Council by adding further comment.

### The relevant policies

4. **S1 Location of Development.** Whilst the Policy prefers development within the built-up areas, Item 3 states, in part and in accordance with both Local Plan Policy 1 and the NPPF, that *“residential development which ... demonstrates very special circumstances ... will be supported”*, particularly when, as at Addison Park, it includes affordable housing and smaller units of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom houses.
5. **S2 Dwelling Mix.** The evidence of housing need supporting the SSNP appears to be out-of-date or incomplete. It can be noted, however, that the SSNP offers full support to a scheme, like Addison Park, delivering 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom properties.
6. **S3 Character of Development.** Item 1 doesn’t apply. The proposal is considered to comply with Item 2 because appropriate and extensive landscaping and screening can be provided. The 2- and 2.5-storey dwellings will not be unduly large and the density is considered to provide an appropriate balance between making the best use of land and delivering a high-quality environment.
7. **S5 Design of Development.** Whilst Scale, Layout, Appearance and Landscaping are Reserved Matters, the vision for the Site at this Outline stage is to deliver a high-quality of design which

balances the three objectives of sustainable development and seeks to reduce energy consumption and climate effects. At the Reserved Matters stage, all the criteria in Items 1 and 2 can be taken into account.

8. **S6 Minimising the Environmental Impact of Development.** At the Reserved Matters stage, under Layout and Landscaping, detailed proposals will seek to minimise environmental harm and increase biodiversity.
9. **S10 Green Infrastructure and Development.** Addison Park will introduce extensive landscaping and tree planting and will open up public green space into what is currently private agricultural land.
10. **S11 Improvements to Key Local Junctions and Pinch Points.** Following detailed discussions with Hertfordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, the scheme will deliver significant improvements to both Chiswell Green Lane and the roundabouts on Watford Road (the Chiswell Green Lane and Tippendell Lane junctions).
11. **S12 Off-Street Car Parking.** Items 1 and 2 aren't considered to apply. The Indicative Proposed Site Layout Amended demonstrates sufficient off-street car parking can be delivered.
12. **S13 Bus Services and Community Transport.** The Transport Assessment Addendum (May 2022), and Travel Plan set out the specific support that will be provided to local public transport. This includes direct financial payments as set out in Paragraph 2.71 and Table 2.7 of the TAA.
13. **S14 Provision for Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding and S15 Improving the Bridleway Network.** In addition to the creation of a new public footpath (supported by the St Albans and District Footpath Society, the Ramblers Association and Hertfordshire County Council), the Addison Park proposal includes improvements to local public footpaths and bridleways and enhancement to the local cycle network as set out in details in the Transport Assessment and Transport Assessment Addendum.
14. **S16 Community Facilities.** No community facilities will be lost as a result of the scheme. Indeed, as set out in the NPPF, the existing facilities in Chiswell Green and the Parish as a whole, are likely to be enhanced by the additional households: *“Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local*

services” (para 79). The “local services” include, of course, health, education and social care, all of which rely upon the essential local workers for whom the affordable homes at Addison Park are being provided.

15. **S17 Leisure Facilities for Children and Teenagers.** Play areas are included in the Indicative Proposed Site Layout Amended in accordance with Policy 70 xi of the Local Plan, whilst the draft S106 includes significant contributions to other leisure facilities in the area.
16. **S24 Broadband Communications.** Correspondence with and plans from Openreach and Virgin are included in the Utilities Assessment (“UA”) within the Application documents (part 3, Appendix F). The UA confirms (part 1, para 3.1):

*“Openreach will deploy FTTP, free of charge, into all new housing developments of 20 or more homes. Openreach’s FTTP infrastructure is open to all communication service providers to encourage greater adoption and customers can benefit from the faster speeds of up to 1Gbps. Openreach will supply all of the materials such as ducts and joint boxes required to build and install the network free of charge, however, it is the responsibility of the developer or their appointed contractor to install the on-site ducts and joint boxes to Openreach’s specification. An asset map showing Openreach infrastructure within the area of the proposed development site is included in **Appendix F.**”*

## **Conclusion**

17. As set out above, the proposal can be seen to be in general accordance with the relevant policies in the SSNP.

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