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Our ref: TDK/Stevens
Your ref:

23rd June 2025

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Dear Ms Dew,

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 4-5 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS AT LAND NORTH EAST OF HIGH GABLES BUCKWORTH ROAD ALCONBURY WESTON (LPA REF: 25/00890/PIP)

I am writing on behalf of the Applicants in response to consultation responses received from statutory consultees during the consultation period, which has recently expired

The main purpose of this letter is to respond to concerns raised by the Archaeology Officer and residents. It should be noted that there are no objections from Environmental Health and the Highways Authority.

The comments raised below should be considered in the context of the following National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in respect of the scope for Permission in Principle applications:

*"The scope of permission in principle is **limited to location, land use and amount of development**. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission-in-principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage."*[1]

<u>Response to Statutory Consultee Comments</u>

<u>Archaeology</u>

The Archaeological Officer has raised some concerns due to the perceived presence of ridge and furrow earthworks (CHER 00777) within the site area, and as a result, recommends that the Permission in Principle application not be supported There are a number of points that the Applicant would like to raise in respect of these comments.

Firstly, as shown in the site photograph below, subtle undulations in the grassland that could indicate ridge and furrow earthworks are not strongly pronounced at ground level. Therefore, any subsequent Technical Details application could be supported by a desk-based assessment to ascertain the presence and significance of any ridge and furrow within the application site area. If it was deemed that ridge and furrow was a significant feature on the site, then a development scheme could provide an opportunity to preserve ridge and furrow on the remainder of the paddock land. The application site represents approximately 20% of the 2.65ha paddock land it sits within. The wider paddock consists of significant areas of high and medium risk of surface water flood risk, so it is not developable, and as such, will ensure the protection of any identified archaeological ground works on the wider site area.

Moreover, a proposed scheme could also be designed showing the earthworks undeveloped, with the opportunity to create an appropriate buffer zone and landscape features. Moreover, the pond referred to

[1] Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

Revision date: 15 06 2018 See previous version

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in the Archaeological Officer's response is positioned outside of the site area and can be preserved as part of any subsequent proposal.



Furthermore, it is worth noting the following relevant DEFRA guidance that states:

"Increasing productivity of land

You need a screening decision before you increase the productivity of 2 hectares (ha) or more of uncultivated land or an SNA.

Increasing productivity includes (but is not limited to):

- *disrupting the soil surface by ploughing, discing, harrowing or rotovating."*[2]

The application site area is less than two hectares, and as such, it would be possible for the Applicant to plough the site area without requiring an EIA screening decision, and this should be considered as a fallback position.

We would respectfully suggest that the potential archaeological interest at this stage does not preclude the principle of development outright. Rather, it is more appropriate to be addressed at the Technical Details stage, in line with national planning guidance and precedents for sites of similar character.

Response to Resident Comments

Location

In response to concerns raised about the location of the application site, it is acknowledged that the application site is considered to be outside but well-related to the built-up area of Alconbury Weston. The site adjoins the existing built-up area, and the proposal will develop a well-enclosed site, which has a residential context and is more related to the village than the open countryside.

In terms of the concerns about the relative sustainability of the application site, the Council's previous assessment for an outline application for the erection of up to 15no. dwellings in the village at Land North Of Butchers Close (21/02027/OUT). The following section of the Officer's Report (paras 7.19 to 7.23) is directly applicable to this application site, and states the following:

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changing-uncultivated-semi-natural-and-rural-land-when-you-need-permission/check-if-you-need-a-screening-decision#:~:text=You%20need%20a%20screening%20decision%20before%20you%20increase%20the%20productivity,ploughing%2C%20discing%2C%20harrowing%20or%20rotovating

7.19 In terms of part d, it is recognised that Alconbury Weston itself has very limited services and amenities within the village with the recently refurbished White Hart Public House being the only notable local service. The nearest bus stop is approximately 175m from the site to a route operated by Dews Coaches between Huntingdon and Peterborough. The nearest stop for the more regular hourly bus service between Peterborough, Huntingdon, St Ives, and the villages in-between operated by Stagecoach is approximately 1.2km to the north-east.

7.20 However, the village is well connected to Alconbury which is less than 1 mile from the application site and can be accessed via cycling and walking. Alconbury village has a wider range of services and facilities including a sports and social club with playing fields, a convenience store and post office, a primary school, and public house.

7.21 Less than a mile east of the centre of Alconbury is the entrance to Alconbury Weald which can be accessed from Alconbury Weston via bus, cycling and walking and is approximately five years into its estimated twenty year construction phase for "Up to 290,000 sqm of employment floor space, including data storage and a materials recovery demonstration centre and up to 5,000 dwellings, including sheltered/extra care accommodation; a mixed use hub and mixed use neighbourhood facilities, including retail, commercial, leisure, health, place of worship and community uses; non-residential institutions including primary schools, nurseries, a secondary school and land reserved for post 16 education provision; open spaces, woodlands and sports provision; retention of listed buildings; new vehicular access points from Ermine Street and the A141, with other new nonvehicular access points; associated infrastructure; reserve site for a railway station and ancillary uses; and associated demolition and groundworks." Alconbury Weald already has a primary school, enterprise zone, café/restaurant and playing areas, with the delivery of a second restaurant and playing areas with the delivery of a secondary school and retail shop expected within the next few years.

7.22 As Alconbury and Alconbury Weald are accessible via sustainable transport modes and are both within two miles of the site, the services they can offer should be considered in relation to this development proposal."

The above assessment within this previous Officer's Report is directly applicable to the Application Site, given that Alconbury and Alconbury Weald are accessible via sustainable transport modes and are both within two miles of the site, the services they can offer should be considered in relation to this development proposal.

Flood Risk

Concerns have been raised about flood risk, including an objection from the Alconbury Brook Flood Group. However, the site is located in Flood Zone 1, which represents the lowest risk of flooding. While there is some risk of high surface water flooding within the wider site area, the indicative layout plan shows that the dwellings are proposed to be located within an area of low surface water flood risk, and an attenuation basin is proposed. The Alconbury Brook Flood Group response welcomes the proposed attenuation basin, however they express disappointment that further details are not provided within the submitted Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage Appraisal. This document was originally prepared as part of the Council's Land Availability Assessment Consultation, and although not required as part of this PiP application, it has been resubmitted to assist the Officer with assessing this application.

The Applicant agrees with the Alconbury Brook Flood Group that the development of this site provides an opportunity to reduce flood risk. In line PiP guidance, further details will be provided as part of any subsequent Technical Details application.

Other Matters

Comments relating to housing mix, highway and local infrastructure impact, and environmental impact are not related to 'location, land use and amount of development' and, as such, where appropriate, will be considered as part of any subsequent Technical Details Application.

Housing Delivery

The NPPF places considerable emphasis on sustainable development and highlights the delivery of new housing as a national priority. It is an important material consideration in planning decisions. As outlined in the Planning Statement, HDC is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Nevertheless, the NPPF requires that Local Planning Authorities provide a 'minimum' of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement. It is considered that the Council still have a 5YHLS deficit, and as such, NPPF paragraph 11d) is engaged. The delivery of additional housing should be given substantial weight. As outlined in the Planning Statement, the proposals' benefits, including the delivery of housing, would outweigh any identified harm and conflict with the development plan.

I would be happy to arrange a phone call once you have had the opportunity to review the contents of this letter. In the meantime, I request that a copy of this letter be uploaded to the application planning portal.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Kilvert MSc MRTPI
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For and on behalf of Brown & Co - Property and Business Consultants LLP
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