

By email only to: info@msaarchitects.co.uk

Our Ref: 22/00767/PREAPP

Date: 03.02.2023

Dear Mr. Summers,

Re: Pre app advice reference: 22/00767/PREAPP

Please find my advice relating to your recent enquiry regarding the development of land at Wheathill House, Naylors lane for residential development of 5 dwellings.

Site description

The site is adjacent to the ongoing development at Lakeside School located south of the site. To the north of the site is agricultural land within the applicant's control beyond which is the M6. To the west and east boundaries is agricultural land with a Public Right of Way located in the latter running north to south connecting to Naylors Road.

The application site is located 132m north of Naylors Road. It is located in the Green Belt and previously used as an equestrian training centre and livery yard. It has been vacant since March 2020. Access is provided in the form of a single track off a shared junction with Lakeside School.

The site comprises a detached agricultural building with dual pitch roof formerly used as stabling and ancillary storage. Hardstanding is located immediately adjacent to the agricultural building and is the foundations of a previously approved scheme that was never fully implemented. To the west of the agricultural building is a detached horse walker. To the north of the site is a menage.

Proposal

The proposed development relates to the demolition of the existing stabling, storage area and horse walker and the erection of 5 dwellings. The proposed development would include provision for 2no. two storey detached dwellings located at the western boundary together with 3no. single storey detached bungalows located on the site's southern. The development would be screened by 1.8m brick wall between the properties and together with native species hedging forming the site boundary.

Each property would benefit from two vehicle parking spaces together with 2no. separate vehicle parking spaces located north of the access track for occasional visitors to serve the development as a whole. A private foul drainage system and new swale is to be provided to manage waste treatment and surface water run off respectively.

The access track to the site measures 3.8m – 5.4m in width. The boundary treatment would be akin to that used in the ongoing school development which will include post and rail fence and strengthening of the existing boundary hedgerow. It is noted that no pedestrian access is to be provided.

Response from Consultees



Knowsley Council

Full copies of consultation responses received in respect of the development proposals are set out in Appendix 1 of this advice. A summary of responses received are set out below:

Environmental Health

Environmental Health have reviewed the information submitted in relation to the preapplication request and raise no objection to the principle of development. They do provide the following comments:

- In respect of noise, the sit is positioned close to the M62 and positioned behind a primary and secondary school which is currently being built and not in use at present. The proposed plans for the secondary school include a multi-use gaming area within the playground. A noise assessment for the proposed development is therefore required.
- The site has been previously used as agricultural land and there may be possibility of exposure to previous contamination. If permission is granted a phase 1 site investigation should be submitted prior to works commencing.
- Construction management plan and construction hours will be secured via condition in the interests of residential amenity.

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service

The following comments are made:

- A full Habitats Regulations Assessment would not be required for any future development of the site.
- The buildings requiring demolition could provide habitat for roosting bats on site. A preliminary roost assessment will therefore be required as part of any future planning application.
- The applicant should aim to maximise the biodiversity potential of the new fallow field with native species planting.
- The hedgerows along the access track and site boundaries are supported. Any future application should be supported with the DEFRA Small Sites Metric.
- Development is considered to have negligible archaeological potential and archaeology does not need to be further considered.

Highways

The outline proposal is acceptable in principle. The following comments are made:

- The proposed double length driveways should provide a minimum of 11m in length and 3m in width. The 2.5m x 5m visitor spaces are acceptable.
- Number of residential units should not increase from what is currently proposed due to the proximity of the newly developed Lakeside School and shared access arrangement. Any future proposals which may add further dwellings to the site (or surrounding area), which would utilise the same proposed access route will be received negatively by Highways and are strongly discouraged.
- Further information is required regarding access and services to the site. Information regarding bin collection will be required as KMBC bin collection vehicles will not enter private land and the development site will not be adopted by the Council through any s38 agreements. Naylors Road is also unsuitable for bin storage due to the narrow pedestrian footpaths and its proximity to the entrance of Lakeside school. No bin collections take place currently from this road and as such no precedence is set. More detail is therefore required. For further information or queries regarding this matter, KMBC Waste Services should be contacted by the applicant.



Knowsley Council

- Swept paths will also be required for the development. A swept path showing a fire engine entering the site in a forward gear, turning around on the site, and exiting the site in a forward gear will be required. A fire engine will need to be able to get within 45m of all parts of each dwelling. Furthermore, a swept path showing a large car and a delivery vehicle passing each other on the access road will be required. The passing point may be utilised. This is to ensure that vehicles are not reversing long distances on to Naylor's Road or around the entrance point of Lakeside School.
- Liverpool City Council will need to be consulted as to this proposal. Naylor's Road forms part of their adopted highway boundary and they will need to be satisfied as to the proposed access arrangements.

National and Local Planning Policy

Development Plan Policies

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires development proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies relevant to the development proposal consist of the following:

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy 2016

- Policy SD1: Sustainable Development
- Policy CS1: Spatial Strategy for Knowsley
- Policy CS2: Development Principles
- Policy CS3: Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution
- Policy CS5: Green Belt
- Policy CS7: Transport Networks
- Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

Policy SD1 sets out the Local Planning Authority's approach to the delivery of sustainable development within the Borough and mirrors the approach taken in national policy with regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy CS2 sets out the Local Planning Authority's approach to design principles relevant to future development. In particular, it seeks to promote good quality design and ensuring development respects its setting taking into account relevant design requirements and best practice.

Policy CS3 sets out the housing target over the plan period 2010 to 2028 and requires provision to be made for 8,100 new dwellings at an annual average of 450dpa. It also seeks to ensure appropriate housing is delivered in terms of tenure, type and size to support the re-balancing of the housing market sector to meet the borough's housing needs.

Policy CS5 relates to development in the Green Belt. It is broadly reflective of the approach taken in national policy and states that inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt except in very special circumstances in which the harm to the Green Belt associated with harm to its openness, visual or recreational amenity would be clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Policy CS7 relates to the borough's Transport Networks. It requires new development to be located and designed to prioritise accessibility and sustainable modes of transport through a choice of walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy CS19 requires development to provide quality design and accessibility in new development and requires development proposals to respond to and integrate positively with the characteristics of the immediate surroundings, complement and enhance existing green infrastructure and features of local importance whilst seeking to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers and to avoid unacceptable impacts on existing and future residents.

Knowsley Unitary Replacement Development Plan

- Policy G6: Conversion or change of use of existing buildings in the Green Belt

Policy G6 relates to proposals for the conversion or change of use of existing buildings in the Green Belt subject to meeting all criteria attached to the policy. In particular, it states (amongst others) that proposals should not have a materially greater impact than the present use of the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it and that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and major reconstruction would not be necessary to accommodate the proposed development. All building work should be in keeping with its surroundings and respecting local building styles and materials

Consideration of development proposals as submitted

Green Belt and Principle of Development

Paragraph 149 of the Framework states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include (amongst others) the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

In this regard, only the first limb of paragraph 149(g) applies as currently proposed. Saved Policy G6 of the adopted UDP states proposals for the conversion or change of use of existing buildings will be permitted provided they meet all the following criteria listed under the policy. Policy G6 requires that proposals do not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it and that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and that major reconstruction would not be necessary to accommodate the proposed development.

It is accepted that the site is previously developed land located within the Green Belt and therefore has potential for redevelopment in accordance with paragraph 149(g) set out above.

The Planning Statement submitted as part of the suite of documents considers that the proposed development would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The table set out on page 14 of the Planning Statement sets out that there would be a reduction in overall volume of -19m³.

The applicant considers in spatial terms that the proposed development would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development as illustrated by the table on page 14 of the Planning Statement. The existing outbuilding occupies a footprint of 36.8m (l) x 12.6m (w). It measures 3.87m at the eaves and 5.59m at its highest point. In total it provides a volume of 2,721.8m³. This is less than the 2,874m³ volume stated in the Planning Statement. It is therefore assumed that the exercise area is therefore included in this calculation. During the site visit it was observed that the exercise area was in a state of disrepair and is not considered to be of substantial construction. As such, it is the Local Planning Authority's view that this should not contribute to the volume contributions.

The Planning Statement considers that there would be no adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt in visual terms. Whilst the position of the proposed dwellings would be roughly within the footprint of existing structures and would be screened by public vantage point at the school, it is the Local Planning Authority's view that the development would appear highly prominent in terms of vehicles passing on the M62 together with the vantage point from the Public Right of Way located to the east.



Viewpoint taken from M62.

Very Special Circumstances

The applicant considers that there are Very Special Circumstances (VSCs) that would outweigh any harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and has sited principles established in caselaw relating to fallback as material consideration.

Reference is made to application (Ref: 09/00141/FUL) approved in June 2009 for the demolition of a Nissan hut/stable building and the construction of an indoor exercise area and storage immediately north of the existing outbuilding. It is understood that work started on the site through the installation of hardstanding base and remnants of this structure remains. The applicant considers it is a viable alternative if a future application was refused for residential development.

Paragraph 5.37 of the Planning Statement states that if this building were to be constructed in accordance with approved plans, it would significantly increase the footprint and volume

of development on the site which would impact on the openness of the Green Belt and that the proposed residential development would result in a significant reduction in footprint when considering the fallback option which is a VSC to which it is considered by the applicant would outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness.

Whilst it is accepted that the footprint and volume would increase if the stable hut was erected, it is an agricultural building that is considered appropriate development within the Green Belt and would not appear out of place within its rural setting. Accordingly, it is not considered that VSCs exist.

As currently proposed, the Local Planning Authority consider the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it would fail to sympathetically respond to its agricultural setting and would have a prominent visual impact on its wider setting. This is discussed in further detail below.

Design

The proposed development would provide 5 residential dwellings comprising of 3no. bungalows and 2no. two storey detached dwellings.

The two detached properties would occupy a footprint of 13.9m in width by 12.3m in length at their widest points and are of stepped design to provide different perspectives in relation to the various elevations. The proposed roof would be of gable construction measuring 4.2m at the eaves and attaining a maximum height of 7.6m at the principal elevation together with a rear 3 gable roofs located at the rear. Each elevation would include large, glazed panels at the front and central rear gable.

The bungalows would be of similar design measuring 11.9m in width and 12.7m in depth at their widest point. They would support a gable roof measuring 2.5m at the eaves and 5.9m at their highest point and incorporates one gable roof at both the front and rear elevation.

The proposals comply with the interface distances as set out in the Amended New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2018).

Beyond the brief reference made to character and appearance of the countryside at section 7 of the Planning Statement it is unclear how consideration has been applied to the design concept of the site within its existing agricultural setting. It is considered that the use of materials comprising modern brick, large glazed panels and overall contemporary design concept as currently proposed fails to respond to the character and appearance of the local vernacular. The proposed development is considered too suburban in style and fails to reflect the agricultural buildings on the holdings that are within the surrounding area. The typical design features of the surrounding holdings are typically broken up by different building styles typical of rural farmscape e.g. sheds, outbuildings, cottages, farmhouses etc.

The Local Planning Authority does not dispute there is an opportunity to develop the site for residential development but it must be appropriate due to its location in the Green Belt and its wider setting. The Local Planning Authority considers that development of a 'cottage' style development occupying the same footprint as the existing outbuilding and stabling facilities that are faced in similar materials that would be found in an agricultural setting. Indeed, these considerations were applied towards the design concept of the recent development of Lakeside School immediately adjacent to the site which is faced in a variety of materials

including accents of render, brick, metal sheet and timber clad which respond to the rural landscape. Given the proximity of the site to the Lakeside School it is recommended that a design led approach is taken to mimic the built form and the use of materials to ensure that any future development positively responds to its agricultural setting within the Green Belt.

Further consideration should be given towards space around the buildings, so that the potential amenity area is more like a farmyard/courtyard setting and focus on the detailing to mimic this character. Such a design led approach if correctly undertaken would provide developmental context which is more appropriate to the Green Belt setting, that is greater than what the current layout provides at present.

The Local Planning Authority considers that development of a 'cottage style' development occupying the same footprint as the existing outbuilding/stabling facilities faced in materials similar to that of the recent development at Lakeside School would be more appropriate i.e. metal sheet roof, cladding would be more sympathetic. If this approach is taken, it is further advised that the quantum of development is reduced to 3no. dwellings

Hedgerow and Tree Planting

The wider setting will see the gardens with pasture-based meadows. These would also be typically framed by native hedgerows and scattered trees.

The boundary features suggest that hedgerow will be strengthened by native species. The hedgerows should be 60% Crataegus, 15% ilex, and the rest made up of native species. It is strongly recommended that the use of Ligustrum is avoided as this does not form compact hedges. The layout should also focus on climax tree species in and along the hedges e.g. Quercus sp, Carpinus betuls, Fagus sp, Tilia corda. In addition smaller trees like Acer Campetre and fruiting trees would also be considered acceptable.

Sustainable Urban Drainage System

Consideration should also be given to introduce SuDS to collect surface water into rain gardens and feed into the proposed swale, which will make the scheme more environmentally sustainable which is currently being missed from the scheme. Given the climate agenda, it is recommended that a more creative design approach is taken rather than relying on engineered solutions like the inception tank to propose more environmentally sustainable solutions.

Parking arrangements

The Local Planning Authority's guidance set out in Ensuring a Choice for Travel Supplementary Planning Document advises the following standard should be followed within the curtilage of each dwelling house:

Number of bedrooms	Number of car parking spaces
2-3 bedrooms	2
4+ bedrooms	3

Each dwelling would accommodate 2 vehicle parking spaces together with an additional 2 visitor parking spaces serving the wider development. Whilst this falls below the standard

set out above, it is considered acceptable given the relatively small nature and isolated location of the proposed development

Cycle storage

The Ensuring a Choice for Travel Supplementary Planning Document advises the following requirements:

C3 Dwelling house	
1 bedroom	1 (allocated) 1 (communal)
2 to 3 bedrooms	2 (allocated) 1 (communal)
4+ bedrooms	4 (allocated) 2 (communal)

Each of the dwellings will need a secure covered means of cycle storage which is not represented on the plans submitted. In addition, further provision is required in respect of the 4-bedroom properties and communal facilities.

Bin Storage

The public realm must be compatible with efficient and effective service provisions. To facilitate and encourage responsible management of waste it is important that the design of the development is such that future occupiers can recycle in a convenient way.

The Local Planning Authority support the fact that sufficient space is provided for bin storage out of public view. However, further discussion must be undertaken with KMBC Waste Services as recycling vehicles will not enter private land and it would appear impractical for residents to manoeuvre waste bins down a 130m+ access track. Equally the location of bin storage facing the public highway would appear prominent and would not be supported.

Conclusions

The Local Planning Authority does not consider that the current proposals positively reflect the site's local surroundings and would result in a very suburban style development which is out of keeping with its current agricultural status as land located in the Green Belt. Notwithstanding this, the site provides an opportunity for appropriate development on previously developed land and the Local Planning Authority is willing to positively work with the applicant to ensure appropriate development is delivered on site and would welcome the opportunity to consider revised plans on this basis ahead of any formal planning application being submitted.

Any future planning application should be accompanied by a suite of supporting information. The Local Planning Authority would expect the following documents to accompany any future submission:

- Completed application forms.
- Application fee of £462 for each dwellinghouse.
- A Location Plan on an Ordnance Survey Base Map at 1:1250 or 1:2500 scale with the application site edged in red.
- Existing and proposed floor plans and elevational drawings at 1:50 or 1:100 scale.
- A Site Plan at an appropriate scale of 1:500 or 1:200.



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- Planning Statement which identifies the context and need for the proposed development and how it accords with relevant national and local planning policy. It may be useful if the Planning Statement also included details of design considerations and materials used together with details of access arrangements due to the shared access point.
- An Ecological Assessment describing the proposal together with desk study and field survey.
- A Noise Assessment given the proximity of the site to the neighbouring Lakeside School.
- A Land Contamination Desk Study to examine the likelihood of the presence of land contamination associated with its former use and potential risk to the proposed development.

The advice given here does not indicate any formal decision by the Council as Local Planning Authority. Any views or opinions are given without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application and are based on the details submitted, site observations and other available information sources. A formal decision on a proposal can only be given on the submission of a planning application after its full consideration, which will involve consultation with local residents, statutory consultees, and any other interested parties. You should also bear in mind that any subsequent changes to planning legislation or planning policies may affect the advice given. The pre-application process involves engagement by both the Local Planning Authority and potential applicants and, as such, we would welcome further discussions as you consider necessary although protracted discussions may incur additional fees to be advised in advice.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

J Fleming

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Planning Officer

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APPENDIX 1