



11 August 2021

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Dear Alistair

**LAND BEHIND BROADFIELD, WIVENHOE, COLCHESTER  
PLANNING APPLICATION LPA REF: 210965- RESPONSE TO DESIGN COMMENTS**

On behalf of our client Taylor Wimpey we write to respond to the design comments from yourself and the Urban Design Officer, which we received on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This letter should be read alongside the enclosed design document prepared by JCN Architects.

Taylor Wimpey maintain that they have proposed a high quality and attractive policy compliant residential scheme that will deliver modern homes, they know people will want to purchase and reside in. Their aim is to ensure that this high level of quality and attractiveness is delivered from the outset and maintained over the lifetime of the development.

JCN has responded to the detailed comments made by CBC, one by one, in their updated design pack to demonstrate that this ambition can be achieved. To keep our response concise, I have not repeated here their content, and have focused this supporting letter on the two points you make on sense of place and the newest version of the NPPF.

1. Sense of Place

I note in your comments the need to achieve local distinctiveness on the site to help develop and create a sense of place. To prepare their response to this, JCN has provided a more detailed analysis of the character of the immediate local area in their updated pack. This shows that the site is surrounded by development to the west which evolved in a piecemeal manner and has limited distinct or repetitive features, in particular those which are considered to be fully reflective of the traditional Essex vernacular. We feel that the immediate area does not fully depict the best of traditional Essex and doesn't particularly create a distinct sense of place. Notwithstanding this, our designs and material choices are sensitive to the nearby vicinity and will create a quality residential space with its own character.

Taylor Wimpey's proposal takes cues from the character beyond the immediate local area and addresses the need to reflect to the wider Essex character which is clearly sought in the Essex Design Guide (EDG) and Core Strategy Policy UR2. The plans demonstrate that traditional features, such as building forms, chimneys, a range of bricks/roof tiles, brick features, a range of render, a range of weatherboarding, varying window designs and features, varying roofscapes, porches and dormers are to be incorporated across the scheme, which are considered to reflect traditional Essex architecture as per the EDG- and will be delivered to a high quality.

On this basis, our client disagrees with you that this could be an "anywhere" development as great care has been taken by JCN and Taylor Wimpey to design an attractive scheme which responds to its setting and



enhances the local character. Hopefully you will agree that the revisions enclosed in the JCN pack further refine the scheme and create a well-designed place which reinforces the local distinctiveness.

## 2. NPPF

### *Building Beautiful*

We note that you reference the NPPF in your most recent comments, notably the recent inclusion of the word beautiful, which has been added in five paragraphs (8b, 73c, 125, 126, 128) in relation to planning new places. MHCLG has confirmed that this should be a “high-level statement of ambition rather than a policy test”, which I concur with due to the very subjective nature of the word “beautiful” and no clear definition/threshold being explained in the Framework’s glossary. Given the extensive nature of the pre-application discussions and subsequent design iterations discussed with CBC, we consider that the end scheme submitted is well designed, is beautiful and will be a safe place, as sought by the sustainable development objective of the NPPF (paragraph 8).

We note your comments that the NPPF endorses the use of design guides or codes which are consistent with the principles of the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. Paragraph 128 explains that these guides or codes should be a “*local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design.*”. You point out that the National Design Guide notes that the several design characteristics could assist in achieving this aim; JCN has demonstrated how these have been met in their design document.

Locally, the adopted Essex Design Guide (EDG) sets out clear guidance for residential development, including advice on traditional building forms in detail. This guidance needs is reflected in the design, layout and composition of the proposal. The document by JCN demonstrate this, as to the application drawings.

### *Trees*

Whilst also on the new NPPF, you reference trees in the urban area and the important role which they play. We absolutely concur with this comment we also need to be conscious of the practical delivery with other technical needs. Due consideration needs to be afforded to the latter sentences of paragraph 131 which seeks to “*ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.*”. JCN demonstrates in their document where the tree planting is proposed and explains that other locations have been discounted largely due to creating a transition from the surrounding developments into the proposed scheme. Whilst not all of the streets are technically “lined” the scheme secures the delivery of a significant amount of tree planting, which should not be overlooked.

Full details of tree species can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition, as this level of information is not considered necessary to make the development acceptable at this stage.

## 3. Shared Surfaces

Taylor Wimpey acknowledges the request for shared surfaces being incorporated into the highway layout and has discussed with their in house Engineering Manager if this is possible to include. It has been confirmed that in this instance they will not be able to make this change for the following reasons.

- Primarily, Essex County Council (ECC) do not permit certain lengths of shared surfaces to be street lit and in some cases this has been considered unsafe. The areas suggested are prominent in the development and would be quite long, Taylor Wimpey do not feel that it would be appropriate to not provide street lighting in these locations, given the need to deliver safe places as per the NPPF;
- Shared surfaces are also challenging for the ground workers to construct and maintain safe access with a wide/deep open excavation for the purpose of mains services and the ability to connect plots;
- ECC requirements on material joints and compaction adds design complications, as these will not be uniform across the entire width of the highway. The way Taylor Wimpey has to overcome this to provide

a design variation installing a 5.5m width carriageway and a single 2m footway to ensure segregation for pedestrians and cyclists. On the opposite side to the footway they must account for the 0.5m adoptable strip which has recently been reinstated and again adopted by ECC. Therefore our highway corridor is 8m in width rather than 7m for the shared surface option which overcomes construction and safety issues. Additionally if there are issues with services the customers are impacted lesser by services being within the footway maintaining vehicular access and the ability to divert the footway into the carriageway if required.

- With shared surfaces, maintenances issue are increased as when the carriageway is excavated, either the road is closed to vehicular access to give pedestrian priority or the pedestrians are put into the vehicular route of the remaining 4.5m width (minimum of 1.5m for excavation and barriers etc whilst utility works are undertaken). Taylor Wimpey doesn't consider this to be an acceptable practice;
- For shorter lengths of shared surfaces it complicates matter even further, as ECC Highways could request we remove the basecourse entirely and only reconstruct when all plot connections are made in the carriageway.

Taylor Wimpey has not had any issues to the type of highway proposed and single footway within other recent applications in Essex, so consider that it is not reasonable for CBC to raise an issue in this regard. Therefore ask this this request for a shared surface is not maintained.

#### 4. Summary

We trust the information enclosed within this response addresses the comments that have been raised during the consultation period and that any re-consultation on the revised plans can commence without delay. I look forward to confirmation of receipt, and would be grateful if you could contact me or my colleague Owen Weaver (0207 535 3313) in the first instance if you have any queries or would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely



**Laura Fletcher-Gray**  
Associate Director

Enc. As above

Cc. S. Caslin, Taylor Wimpey  
R. Piggott, Taylor Wimpey