

Planning Appeal

Land at Broadfields, Elmstead Road, Wivenhoe, Colchester, CO7 9SF

Appellant: Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/A1530/W/22/3305697

CBC Reference: 210965

Landscape Proof

Summary

Ms Anne Westover BA Dip LA CMLI

Landscape Architect, Westover Landscape

On behalf of
Colchester City Council

Date: November 2022

1 PROOF SUMMARY

- 1.1 I am Ms Anne Westover, Landscape Architect working as Westover Landscape, a business I established in 2013. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and have worked as a Landscape Architect since 1983.
- 1.2 I present this Summary of my Proof of Evidence, in my role supporting Colchester Borough Council, in respect of an appeal made by Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd.
- 1.3 I have been commissioned by CBC to assist with the Planning Inquiry relating to landscape matters associated with the proposed development. I carried out site visits over three days in September, October, and November 2022.
- 1.4 The planning application for housing, Ref 210965 was refused on 14th June 2021 and included Reason for Refusal (RfR) 1 relating to landscape harm and reference to the CBC Local Plan Core Strategy ENV1 (superseded). This has been replaced by ENV1 in the CBC Local Plan 2017 – 2033, adopted on the 4th July 2022 is considered as relevant policy.
- 1.5 I have referred to the NPPF paragraphs 130, 131, and 174 a) in relation to local character, landscape setting, use of trees and valued landscapes.
- 1.6 The Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Policy WIV29 allocates part of the application site as land for residential use, sports fields and open space. The Local wildlife Site (LoWS) was not included within the allocated site. The appeal site includes changes to the allocated site.
- 1.7 In order to establish the likely elements which might comprise a development complying with the WIV29 allocation and the policy conditions I have included a set of parameters and consider these in my assessment of the allocated site. I have described this as a 'WIV29 development'.
- 1.8 **The application site** occupies former farmed land to the north and east of the existing residential area of Wivenhoe. This includes most of the allocated site except for an area, at the southern end, adjacent to the LoWS open space which is part of the LoWS. The application site includes part of the LoWS on its eastern boundary.
- 1.9 Part of the application site is a non-statutory designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS), this also extends to the south and west of the application site. I described why I consider that the local wildlife site can be described as a 'Valued Landscape' in respect to NPPF Para 174 a).
- 1.10 **Three District level landscape character assessment** (LCA x2) and townscape character assessments (TCAx1) form the published character baseline for site.
- LCA B8 Wivenhoe Farmland Plateau
 - TCA HI 'Vine Drive Post 1960s suburbs'
 - The Tendring LCA 7A Bromley Heaths includes land to the north and east of the B1027 and Keelars Lane.

- 1.11 **Landscape Effects** I consider that, taking into account the sensitivity of landscape receptors, the proposed development and the magnitude of change arising from 'a WIV29 development' and from the appeal site development, the landscape effects will range from Major/Moderate adverse to Moderate and Minor adverse.
- 1.12 **Visual Effects** I consider that moderate adverse visual effects are likely to arise from the proposed development in relation to the following residential receptors at properties within the Broadfields residential area and a property on the B1027, accepting some of these effects will arise from a 'WIV29 development' and that there will be some reduction of the visual effects over time.
- 1.13 For recreational receptors at the Broad Lanes sports fields visual will be Moderate adverse accepting that effects may reduce over time subject to a suitable landscape strategy for enhancement. With respect to a 'WIV29 development' the proposed location for open space and sports pitches in the northern part of the site would have created a beneficial outlook for recreational users.
- 1.14 Recreational users of the footpath 14, the open space to the south and the informal footpaths passing through the LoWS area and the south east of the appeal site will experience a range of Moderate to Moderate/Minor adverse effects when the site is in view. Views of a 'WIV29 development' will be available from locations to the south where landform and vegetation do not obscure views. To the east of the site, receptors at both close distance and further afield from footpath 14, will experience the northern part of the appeal site with the visual effects likely to be Moderate to Moderate/Minor adverse.
- 1.15 For road receptors using Brightlingsea Road B1027, Keelars Lane and Elmstead Road views of the development will be experienced ranging from glimpsed views of built form to clear views of the development including the northern part of the appeal proposal. I consider the visual effects on these views as ranging from Minor to Moderate adverse.

2 **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS**

- 2.1 In allocating part of this agricultural landscape for residential development it was accepted that the site allocation would have created a range of landscape impacts and visual effects, some of which would be harmful and adverse. However, the proposed northern residential area will extend housing significantly further north placing it into a more prominent position in the landscape.
- 2.2 I consider that the northern residential development, extending beyond the power lines and into the area allocated for open space and sports fields will result in an urbanising effect on the landscape setting of the northern part of Wivenhoe. The landscape setting is provided by the Wivenhoe Farmland Plateau and Bromley Heaths landscape character areas which encircle the

settlement to the area north and east. The development will result in cumulative adverse harm to this setting when considered against the effects arising from development of the allocated site.

- 2.3 The northern development area will result in built form being visible from both the Brightlingsea Road and Elmstead Road and this replace the views of open countryside which would be largely retained by the open space and sports pitches proposed by the development of the allocation site. The appeal proposal places the sports pitches closer to the Elmstead Road with the area of open space reduced by the additional area of housing.
- 2.4 Rights of way receptors and users of the open space to the south and east of the site, including the LoWS will experience views of the proposal with the northern development adding an additional element of urbanisation and exacerbating the magnitude of change for those views, either as a distant backdrop or as closer views from the informal pathways within the LoWS.
- 2.5 The development will give rise to some adverse visual effects experienced by residential receptors with the northern development resulting in properties in Alexandra Drive and Brightlingsea Road experiencing a change to their outlook over an open landscape.
- 2.6 The proposed development is not compatible with local landscape character and setting as required by policy ENV1. The appeal site will result in a fragmentation of the landscape setting and will result in adverse impacts on the intrinsic character and factors which contribute to the value of the LoWS on its eastern boundary.
- 2.7 I also consider that the effects resulting from the development are such that it will not be sympathetic to landscape character and landscape setting as required by NPPF Para 130 nor will it protect and enhance a valued landscape as required by NPPF Para 174 (a) and also reflected in CBC Local Plan Policy ENV1.
- 2.8 The proposed development does not include any landscape benefits which persuade me to consider that the landscape and visual harm arising from development of the application site as proposed development should be set aside.

Anne Westover CMLI
Landscape Architect
Wivenhoe Landscape Proof of evidence

Summary November 2022