

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA

**Winchester City
Council
Planning
Department
Development
Control**

Committee Decision

**TEAM MANAGER
SIGN OFF SHEET**

Case No:	08/00677/FUL	Valid Date	17 March 2008
W No:	06437/06	Recommendation Date	
Case Officer:	Mr Dave Dimon	8 Week Date	16 June 2008
		Committee date	
Recommendation:	Application Permitted	Decision:	Committee Decision

Proposal :	Residential development for 24 no. dwellings with associated parking, landscaping and new access from Bridge Road; re-profiling of parts of former railway cutting
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Site:	Land East Of New Farm Road New Farm Road Alresford Hampshire
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Open Space Y/N	Legal Agreement	S.O.S	Objections	EIA Development	Monitoring Code	Previous Developed Land
YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	N	Y

DELEGATED ITEM SIGN OFF		
APPROVE Subject to the condition(s) listed	REFUSE for the reason(s) listed	
	Signature	Date
CASE OFFICER		
TEAM MANAGER		

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AMENDED PLANS DATE:-

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Item No: 4
Case No: 08/00677/FUL / W06437/06
Proposal Description: Residential development for 24 no. dwellings with associated parking, landscaping and new access from Bridge Road; re-profiling of parts of former railway cutting
Address: Land East Of New Farm Road New Farm Road Alresford
Hampshire
Parish/Ward: New Alresford
Applicants Name: Chalkbank Estates Ltd
Case Officer: Mr Dave Dimon
Date Valid: 17 March 2008
Site Factors:

Recommendation: Application Permitted

General Comments

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of objections / support representations received.

Site Description

The application site extends to 0.69 hectares and comprises part of the former railway cutting that lies between Bridge Road and New Farm Road. At Bridge Road, the former bridge has been removed and the cutting has been filled sufficiently to accommodate pairs of new houses that front each side of Bridge Road. Access to the application site has, however, been retained on the southern side of the new houses that front the west side of Bridge Road, and beyond these houses the land drops to the original bed of the cutting, which has become overgrown through to the New Farm Road bridge.

To the east of Bridge Road, beyond the new houses, the cutting has been filled and utilised as an extension to the playing fields of Perins School, up to the point where the former railway remains, which is now under the management of the Watercress Line.

The application site is characterised by mature tree growth along the tops of the banks, much of which falls within the gardens of the properties in De Lucy Avenue, South Road and South Close, which back onto the site. Within the steeply sided cutting the base and sides have become overgrown and there are a number of felled trees that have fallen into the cutting at its western end, as well as various instances of domestic and garden refuse being tipped into the cutting.

The heights of the banks on each side of the cutting are variable, but with the south bank being generally higher than the north bank, and the depth of the cutting floor varies between 5 –10 metres.

At the New Farm Road end of the cutting the bridge creates a 'collar' to the road that just permits two vehicles to pass, but there is no footpath provision, and the bridge parapets inhibit visibility such that access to the site from this point is not practical other than for emergency purposes. Two-storey houses front New Farm Road to each side of the bridge.

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Proposal

The development proposes to reconfigure the cutting profile by widening the side banks and filling in the bottom to create a wider shallower cutting with steeper sides. Access is then taken from Bridge Road along the southern side of the cutting to serve 24 dwellings. These comprise 6 x four-bed detached houses, a terrace of 4 x three-bed townhouses, 6 x two-bed semi-detached houses and an apartment block that contains 2 x three-bed and 6 x one-bed apartments.

The detached and semi-detached houses and three of the town houses all have integral garages, whilst the apartments have parking in the form of a basement car park for 10 cars plus cycle and bin storage areas.

The detached and semi-detached houses front the road, with a central area of open space separating them, whilst the terrace of town houses is set across the width of the cutting towards the western end, with the vehicular access that leads to the apartment block beyond ramped down on each side to pass under the building. The apartment block is also set across the width of the cutting and is separated from the New Farm Road frontage by another area of open space.

Pedestrian access is provided from New Farm Road to link with the vehicular access that serves the development and provides a pedestrian / cycle access right through the site from New Farm Road / Bridge Road. It is also proposed to provide an elevated walkway adjacent to the New Farm Road bridge to join the footpaths each side of the bridge on the eastern side of New Farm Road. This will remove the need that presently exists for pedestrians to walk in the road to cross the bridge.

The new cutting bank is retained by means of 'gabion' baskets laid in undulating ribbons above each other. These will be metal mesh frames filled with chalk and faced with flint with a soil top section to give a planting line above each step.

The detached and semi-detached houses are cut into the northern bank. This provides thermal mass whilst also concealing some of the visual depth of the buildings and maximising the benefit of direct southern natural light. The properties have small rear gardens and side terrace areas.

The density of the scheme is 34 .7 dph and the proposal includes the provision of 8 affordable housing units

Relevant Planning History

81/01469/OLD / W06437 - Infilling of railway cutting with chalk, land adj Railway Bridge, Bridge Road, Alresford - Application Permitted - 22/10/1981

86/00829/OLD / W06437/01- Infilling of railway cutting, between New Farm Road and Bridge Road, Bridge Road, Alresford - Application Refused - 11/04/1986 - Appeal Dismissed - 12/12/1986

86/00830/OLD / W06437/01- Infilling of railway cutting, between New Farm Road and Bridge Road, Bridge Road, Alresford - Application Refused - 11/04/1986

89/00871/OLD / W06437/02 - Erection of two dwellings and construction of vehicular access, Railway Cutting, Bridge Road, Alresford - Application Withdrawn - 28/11/1989

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88/00903/OLD / W06437/03 - Filling of land and erection of two houses, former Railway Cutting, Bridge Road, Alresford - Application Permitted - 17/10/1988

90/00760/OLD / W06437/04 - Residential development, former Railway Cutting, Bridge Road, Alresford - Application Refused - 08/11/1990

00/01250/FUL / W06437/05 - 1 No four bedroom detached dwelling and garage, Land West of Bridge Road, Alresford, Hants - Application Refused - 30/11/2000

Consultations

Engineers: Drainage:

No objection.

Engineers: Highways:

HCC have accepted the principle of the proposal. The site is in the form of a cul-de-sac with an emergency access / pedestrian access from New Farm Road. All vehicular access will be from Bridge Road. The road has been designed as a shared surface road and adequate car and cycle parking has been provided, together with a turning area to ensure that a large service vehicle can turn within the site, so as to enter and leave the highway in forward gear. The highway implications of this application are therefore acceptable, subject to Conditions 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Environmental Protection:

No objection by Contaminated Land Officer, but recommends that conditions relating to contamination be included should planning permission be granted (Conditions 10, 11 and 12)

Strategic Planning:

No response

Strategic Housing.

Policy H5 requires 30% affordable housing provision, which for 24 units would be 7.2 units, and in this case the applicant has offered to round up the number to 8 units, which is very much supported. These units comprise the 6 x one bed and 2 x three bed apartments.

The applicant has worked with the Council's preferred Registered Social Landlord (RSL) from an early stage which has enabled a positive input into the design to ensure that the units meet Housing Corporation standards and achieve agreement on a satisfactory mix of units.

With regard to tenure, the greatest need in the District is for social rented units and the provision of all of the units in this tenure type would be the preference, subject to funding being available.

Landscape:

The Local Plan Inspector stated that part of the land could be used more effectively for residential use whilst retaining the significant trees at the top of the embankment. The proposed layout needs to clarify the treatment of the northern boundary. Query the feasibility of retaining existing trees and the locations of new tree and shrub planting to site and garden boundaries because of site constraints. Central open space compromised by large klargester tank in the middle. Clarification needed regarding feasibility of fence boundary treatment between gardens because of levels. Small

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north-facing back gardens cut into a steep bank are very restrictive in terms of natural light and general use. Dwellings and layout do not appear family-friendly. More information needed regarding identification and management of private and communal areas.

Arboricultural Officer

Aerial views of this site give the impression that the site is heavily wooded. In fact, the trees internal to the site have been subject to ongoing coppicing for many years since the demise of the railway line, and probably before that.

Previous arboricultural comments stated that the most significant and important trees on the site are on the top of the bank. This is still the case, as careful study of the area shows that all of the significant tree cover is in adjacent gardens at the top of the bank overhanging the site.

Therefore, in terms of BS5837:2005, the assessment of tree cover would indicate the majority of trees on the bank to be poorer, grade C category trees which should not form a constraint to development. However this does not take account of the collective value of these trees in terms of green infrastructure and biodiversity and clearly there is collective merit in the tree cover for these reasons.

It is understood that the concept of development has been agreed on this site. Therefore, there is reason to look to a comprehensive and well thought out landscape plan that suitably mitigates for the loss of the tree cover. In addition, a comprehensive arboricultural method statement is required which clearly shows the measures taken to successfully retain the key trees on the top of the bank and indicate locations and methodology for establishment of new trees within the site.

Given the complexity of the site in terms of levels, it is not convincing that the indicative layout gives sufficient confidence in terms of new tree establishment. The proposed planting palette is very comprehensive, however, a landscape plan is not provided and there may be insufficient space provided in the site plan to allow the larger species to reach maturity.

Given the importance of integrating this site within the landscape, it is important to have a clear understanding of the achievability of tree planting in mitigation prior to the issue of consent but, if the proposal is otherwise considered acceptable, then these important details should be clarified as soon as possible through robust planning conditions. (Conditions 3, 18 & 19)

Open Space

For a development of this size, the Local Plan requires the following amounts of on-site open space. General amenity area 264 m², Play area 528m². The Sport requirement will be met by a financial sum.

The application includes two areas of communal open space ('public gardens') totalling approximately 460m². It can be seen, therefore, that the general recreational open space requirement of 264m² has been met but that the children's play space is short by 332m².

As the nearest play area is over half a kilometre away (Stratton Bates Recreation

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Ground) and as there is already a 1.6 Ha shortfall of children's play space in the town, this on-site shortfall is unacceptable.

For a development of this size in this location, there should also be a Local Area for Play (LAP) in addition to the space requirements mentioned above.

HCC Ecology.

No objection, but recommends that a condition to include provision for habitat and connectivity enhancement for biodiversity be included should planning permission be granted (Condition 17).

Natural England.

The proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation site (SAC). No impact on the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Aspects of ecological design should be incorporated, e.g. wildlife corridors, brown roofs, native planting, wildlife ponds, nest boxes, bat boxes. Natural England is not aware that there are any protected species to be adversely affected by the proposal. Therefore, no objection, but recommends that conditions be included should planning permission be granted (Condition 17).

Environment Agency:

No response

Southern Water:

Southern Water can provide foul sewage disposal and water supply to service the proposed development. No objection, but recommends that informative be included, regarding connection to the public sewer, should planning permission be granted.

Architects Panel

The panel raised concerns that housing within the cutting, without the cutting being filled, would result in a very dark and gloomy environment for a residential use. The retaining walls would not provide a good outlook even if they were to be greened.

The panel feels that the open spaces, both public and private, are too small for the density of the development proposed, which may be too high for the site.

The architectural design appears too contrived and overly complex in terms of the different levels. The heights and elevational proportions appear unplanned. The panel's main concern is the quality of the spaces and environment created. The site requires a very simple, elegant and clever design solution.

There would appear to be no real argument in terms of sustainability. Waste would need to be pumped off site, lights would be on for longer periods due to the dark environment and the buildings would be hard to maintain.

Redevelopment of the site would further prevent the opportunity for the railway line to be reinstated, or for other transport solutions.

Others:

Mid Hants Railway – Planning application invalid as there is a small strip of land to the east of Bridge Road that is in the ownership of Mid Hants Railway who have not been included on the ownership certificate.

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Representations:

New Alresford Town Council

The applicants have engaged fully during the consultation process, however, the Town Council objects for the following reasons:

- Out of character with area and contrary to Town Design Statement.
- Lack of light to new dwellings and north facing gardens.
- Drainage issues not overcome, properties in a damp area.
- Traffic on Bridge Road higher than indicated on reports.
- No safe exit onto Bridge Road.
- Light pollution to neighbouring properties.
- Need for single storey accommodation for elderly occupants.
- Evidence of grass snakes on the site.

The Alresford Society

- Bridge Road is, in the view of local residents, not lightly trafficked and is often reduced to one lane by parked cars, and trees limit sight lines.
- Site may have a population of grass snakes. The wildlife survey was a walkover in April 2007 which would have been too early in the year for many species of flora and fauna to be in evidence.
- The site is of an extremely awkward shape with a dire microclimate whose development will have a severe impact on the surrounds, which is hardly a justification for development.
- The old railway line could be imaginatively developed as a green route combining cycle and pedestrian connections running outwards from the town.

85 letters received objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- Impact on neighbouring properties - noise and disturbance during construction and from future occupants; overlooking from balconies and windows; cutting away of embankment will endanger adjacent properties and stability of bank; pedestrian and cycle access will cause loss of privacy and security; overbearing impact from buildings; light pollution.
- Out of keeping with the area – design, appearance, layout, scale and height; materials; increase in hard standing.
- Design – lack of light and natural heat to new dwellings; no provision for disabled or elderly; cramped; affordable units not suitable for families; poor amenity space.
- Density – too high; over-development.
- Drainage – inadequate; no details of sewerage management; increase in flooding;
- Incorrect plans – drawing numbers 2006-20-40 and 41 show incorrect position and height of ‘Glenholm’, and show more planting than is actually on site.
- Incorrect Design Statement – pg. 7, no reduction in number of dwellings, only deletion of business unit; no reduction in number of affordable apartment.
- Loss of green area within Alresford town.
- Serious impact on nature conservation and ecology.
- Impact on trees – existing trees on site already felled; loss of bank means new trees cannot be planted to screen development; loss of ancient hedgerow.
- Highways - dangerous access onto New Farm Road and Bridge Rd; not suitable for refuse and emergency vehicles and construction traffic; traffic survey underestimates traffic; increase in traffic from new occupants; lack of parking; loss of on-street parking; danger to pedestrians.
- Previously contaminated land.

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- No provision of lighting.
- Local infrastructure insufficient.
- Previous application refused on this site.
- Insufficient information regarding the excavation of the site, the stability of the cutting and adjoining properties.
- Unsustainable location.

Reasons not material to planning and therefore not addressed in this report:

- Party Wall Act.
- House values will go down.
- Loss of view.

34 letters of support received, for the following reasons:

- Good use of brownfield site.
- Provision of good mix of much needed housing.
- Sustainable site.
- Improvement of road access.
- Enhances cutting which is presently used for dumping.
- Little effect on surrounding properties.
- Good for economy of town.
- Carbon neutral scheme.
- Improved habitat for nature conservation.

Relevant Planning Policy:

Hampshire County Structure Plan Review (relevant saved policies):

None

Winchester District Local Plan Review

DP.1, DP.3, DP.4, DP.5, DP.6, H.5, H.7, RT.4, T2, T.4,

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS 3 Housing

PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS12 Local Development Framework

PPG 13 Transport

PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

PPS 22 Renewable Energy

PPG 24 Planning and Noise

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment

Alresford Town Design Statement

Other Planning Guidance

Guide to the Open Space Funding System

Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan

Housing Monitoring Report

Movement, Access, Streets and Spaces

Technical Paper: Open Space Provision and Funding

Winchester District Landscape Assessment

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Winchester District Urban Capacity Study
Winchester Housing Needs Survey
Local Plan Review Inquiry Inspector's Report 2005

Planning Considerations

Principle of development
Design / Layout
Impact on character of area
Impact on neighbours
Landscape / Trees / Public Open Space
Ecology
Highways & parking
Drainage
Sustainability

Principle of development

The site is within the settlement boundary of Alresford, where there is a presumption in favour of residential development subject to the provisions of the Development Plan, Government guidance and other policy documents as set out above. It is also important to consider the comments of the Local Plan Inspector's Report (2005), which considered whether this site should be designated under Policy RT.1. This policy seeks to protect open areas of important amenity value. In his report, the Inspector concluded that the designation of the site under Policy RT 1 would not provide any means of bringing the land into productive use, particularly as the Council have no intention of acquiring it for public open space. Accordingly, he recommended the deletion of the policy designation, as the land does not have any useful amenity purpose. As such, the site is capable of being considered as a suitable location in which further development would be acceptable in principle.

The relevant policies of the Development Plan and Government guidance are summarised below.

Policy DP1 of the Development Plan requires planning applications to be supported by a Design Statement.

Policy DP3 requires development to make efficient and effective use of land or buildings; for the design, scale and layout of development to respond positively to the character, appearance and variety of the local environment; to keep parking provision to a minimum; to provide for ease of movement and local permeability; to maximise access to public transport and to have an acceptable impact on adjoining land uses or property.

Policy DP4 seeks to maintain or enhance the District's townscape and landscape through the protection of important public views, slopes, trees and hedgerows, open areas important to the townscape and areas of ecological importance.

Policy DP5 requires development to provide adequate on-site amenity space and locate and design car parking areas sensitively.

Policy DP6 promotes sustainable forms of development by maximising opportunities for passive solar gain, and, where appropriate, incorporating renewable energy production equipment, measures to reduce water consumption, sustainable drainage systems and waste minimisation during construction.

Policy H5 seeks 30% of new housing on a site to be affordable.

Policy H7 requires at least 50% of new housing on a site to be small one or two bedroom units and for the layout to achieve a net density of 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare, with the

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potential for higher densities on sites close to town centres.

Policy RT4 permits residential development provided that financial contributions are made for appropriate amounts of public open space facilities in those areas that are deficient.

Policy T2 seeks to ensure that new or improved accesses do not interfere with the safety, function and character of the road network.

Policy T4 requires that provision be made for the parking of cars and cycles to the relevant standard.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, promotes good design and seeks to reject development which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, also promotes good design, an efficient use of land and seeks to ensure that development is well integrated and compliments neighboring buildings and creates or enhances a distinctive character that relates well to its surroundings.

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, promotes sustainable development; seeks to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology and contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance by ensuring that development takes account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport, seeks to promote more sustainable transport choices, promote accessibility to facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and reduce the need to travel by car.

Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy, sets out the Government's aim to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by 2050.

Planning Policy Statement 25 : Development and Flood Risk, seeks to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process, to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.

Alresford Town Design Statement seeks to influence the planning process so that changes and developments in the town settlement area will reflect local characteristics and will preserve the qualities the community values in its surroundings.

It is considered that the principle of residential development on the site is acceptable, subject to the following matters being satisfactorily addressed: the design and layout of the proposal and its impact on the character of the area and on the amenities of neighbours; the impact on the local highway network and on the landscape; and nature conservation. Additionally, the requirements for affordable housing, open space, drainage and sustainability provisions should be satisfactorily met by the development.

Design / layout

The design is an imaginative response to the particular constraints of the site, which seeks to make best use of the land without resorting to a protracted and non-sustainable filling exercise that would otherwise be necessary to reclaim the cutting to a level compatible with the existing adjoining land.

In order to maximise the developable area, and relieve the sense of enclosure arising from the high embankments, it is therefore proposed to widen the cutting by making its sides more vertical and to raise its floor level by approximately 4 metres using the material cut from the sides. This will necessitate the use of terraced retaining structures

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in the form of 'gabion' baskets laid in undulating ribbons above each other. These metal mesh containers will be filled with chalk and faced with flint, with a soil top section to give a planting line above each step. The resultant structure will have the appearance of a flint faced retaining wall that steps up the southern side of the cutting, whilst also following a sinuous alignment, and over which plants can grow.

Notwithstanding the raising of the existing floor level of the cutting, the proposed dwellings will, in most cases, lie largely below the top level of the cutting. Only the roofs and a small part of upper floors of the dwellings will rise above the general level of the land that adjoins the cutting. Therefore, the buildings will be lower than the adjoining dwellings along each side of the cutting and not cause any overshadowing to existing properties.

The effect of setting the detached and semi-detached dwellings into the northern side of the cutting means that there are only small garden areas available at first floor level, which to a large extent will be overshadowed by the buildings. However, the detached houses also have side deck areas at second floor level and the semi-detached houses have side first floor balcony areas, in addition to which both house types have south facing front balconies.

The detached houses provide three bedrooms at first floor level with a further study / fourth bedroom at ground level with access to a courtyard. Living accommodation is located at second floor level with a study deck formed on a mezzanine above. All the main living rooms open onto a three storey angled solar atrium which faces south and acts as a means of tempering the environment internally and naturally venting the buildings, as well as giving characteristic definition to the buildings and providing an opportunity for internal balconies.

The semi-detached houses follow a similar style, again with living rooms opening onto a solar atrium and a split roof device to introduce natural light into the core of the building with service and ancillary rooms situated on the north side. The minimal circulation area enables the dwellings to be within a 75m² floor area, whilst providing a first floor open plan living space with two double bedrooms at second floor level.

The town houses span the cutting, forming a visual backdrop to the development when approached via the access road from Bridge Road. They are also staggered to create visual interest, reduce the mass and allow for the creation of private balconies to the front (east) elevation where they appear as three-storey units. To the rear, they appear as two-storey dwellings as the land steps up allowing direct access from the first floor living area to the rear gardens. In the case of House 1, the road passes beneath the building, which reduces its garden area compared to the other three houses of the terrace.

The block of apartments provides the affordable units with, at ground floor level, a row of three staggered apartments sited over the basement parking and accessed from a central entrance hallway that serves 2 x three-bed and 1 x one-bed flats. The second floor contains 3 x one-bed flats, each with balconies facing onto the open space and towards New Farm Road, with the end two units also having balconies to the east elevation. The two third floor flats are sited above only the first two of the second floor units, as the height of the building is deliberately stepped down a floor at its northern end to avoid any loss of amenity to the existing adjoining properties that front New Farm

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Road.

The properties all have contemporary design features including stepped roof forms and draw on a palette of materials chosen from BRE good practice guidelines in conformity with the objective of achieving Code 4 for Sustainable Homes. Externally, finishes will mainly be of red brick and untreated larch for the elevations, with roofs of reconstituted slate or zinc.

Impact on character of area

The cutting presently conveys a perception of being a green corridor separating the gardens of dwellings in De Lucy Avenue from those in South Drive. There is, however, no public access to the cutting, which has been in private ownership since the 1970's. As is pointed out in the arboricultural assessment, there is little merit in the tree growth that actually falls within the cutting, the main tree growth being that which occurs along the tops of the cutting and which for the most part lies within the gardens of adjoining properties.

Most of the adjoining properties have fairly long gardens and, with the proposed development being set at a substantially lower level within the cutting, it will not impact significantly on the character of the area. The principal impact will be at either end where the access joins Bridge Road and as seen from the bridge parapet in New Farm Road, although the apartment block that will face New Farm Road will be set back substantially beyond an area of open space.

Whilst the character of the area will undoubtedly change, such change is unlikely to adversely affect either the public amenity, or the private amenity that is presently enjoyed by occupiers of neighbouring properties, the main impacts being the appearance of the site as seen from the bridge in New Farm Road and the fact that the roofscape of the development will be visible from neighbouring gardens.

The impact of the development in terms of traffic and ecology is considered separately below, under those headings.

Impact on the amenity of neighbours

The closest existing properties to the proposed housing comprise of a block of three bungalows in De Lucy Avenue (Nos. 11-15). These are about 10-12 metres from the northern rim of the cutting, at a lower level, are screened by existing trees and so will not be overlooked by the proposed dwellings. The other houses to De Lucy Avenue are all set considerably further away, with rear gardens of 20 metres or more that slope up to the boundary of the cutting and contain mature trees and hedges.

To the southern side, the closest property is No. 5 South Close which is less than 10 metres from the boundary of the cutting. However, the nearest proposed building is a detached dwelling that is set some 13 metres away from the boundary with only the second floor level and roof rising above the level of the cutting. The only accommodation at that level of the proposed dwelling is the mezzanine study deck and given the distance involved, and the boundary vegetation to the rear garden of No. 5 South Close, there will be no loss of amenity due to overlooking or the building appearing overbearing. All the other existing properties on the south side of the cutting have longer gardens and boundary vegetation that will similarly ensure that there is no significant loss of amenity as a result of the proposed buildings.

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The block of apartments adjoins existing dwellings that front New Farm Road to each side of the cutting and is set back from those dwellings. The relationship of the apartment block to the dwelling on the northern side, and its private rear garden, could pose some loss of amenity but this has been addressed by lowering the proposed building to two storeys at that end, which presents a single storey elevation to the boundary. This, together with the boundary vegetation and absence of windows in the side elevation, should avoid any loss of amenity. The balcony on the western elevation could however give rise to a perception of overlooking, so to avoid this a condition is proposed requiring that the side screen of the balcony be of obscure glazing or other material to be agreed. (Condition 16).

Landscape / Trees / Open Space

The supporting Landscape and Tree Statement to the application, together with the landscape appraisal, zoning and structure plans, clarify the nature of the existing landscape character of the site as well as setting out the proposals for retaining the principal landscape elements plus proposed new planting.

Although the site has a green character, analysis of the vegetation shows that it is only along the boundaries of the site where mature trees contribute significantly to such character with the vegetation within the cutting being mostly seedlings, saplings or shoots from previously coppiced stools. Such mature trees as exist within the site are confined to the upper parts of the embankments, or most commonly on the boundaries, and with the main tree features occurring within adjacent private gardens. The cutting itself is an abundance of tree seedlings and saplings, decaying tree trunks, debris, bramble and other vegetation that form impenetrable thickets throughout much of the corridor. The Council's Arboricultural Officer assessed the scope for a Tree Preservation Order on the site in 2005 and concluded that only three trees merited inclusion (two Ash and an Oak), all of which were on the site boundaries with adjoining properties in either South Close or De Lucy Avenue.

In terms of the proposed landscape strategy for the site, the trees on the boundaries are to be retained virtually intact and new hedge planting undertaken to reinforce and marry-in visually with existing short lengths of hedgerow. Additionally, within the development 'fingers' of planting will extend at intervals and partially across the site to soften the development and enhance its spatial character. In combination, the two landscape open spaces and the numerous 'fingers' of planting across the site, create a series of smaller 'cells' or spaces along the length of the cutting.

The provision of open space, as explained in the consultation response, falls short of the full area required by the open space strategy. Each area is, however, situated to contribute to the amenity of the development, providing areas where young children can play within a safe environment, there being adequate space to include a LAP. Furthermore, the Stratton Bates recreation ground in Grange Road is reasonably close and provides a large area more suitable to the needs of older children. Having regard to the special constraints that the development of this site imposes, it is therefore considered that the shortfall in the area of public open space being provided is acceptable when balanced against the merits of the development overall. In addition, the applicant will make a financial contribution to offset the shortfall.

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Ecology

The supporting Flora and Fauna Report to the application has been considered by the Hampshire County Ecologist and Natural England and found to be generally satisfactory, but the site's function as a wildlife corridor should be recognised by the retention of existing trees and adherence to an approved landscaping, native planting and ecological enhancements strategy. This should include the provision of measures to enhance biodiversity such as further native planting, wildlife ponds and nesting / bat boxes. Tree and scrub removal should also be undertaken outside the bird breeding season.

There is no evidence of protected species being present on the site but further survey information should be commissioned if additional information arises that suggests otherwise. Condition 17 provides for this.

Highways/Parking

In pre-application discussions with the Highway Authority, it was determined that vehicular access from New Farm Road was unacceptable due to the pinch point of the existing bridge and that access from Bridge Road was deemed appropriate due to its adequate visibility, pedestrian footways and lesser traffic volume than New Farm Road.

Although the Highway Authority has not raised objection to the use of Bridge Road for accessing the development, a number of the representations to the application have expressed concern on traffic grounds. The applicants have submitted a supporting highways statement by a consultant engineer which has been based on a traffic count, over a one week period, of vehicles using Bridge Road and their speed. This has shown that traffic flows are light and that the proposal would not change this significantly.

The concerns about on-street parking in Bridge Road have also been considered, including the disabled space that is marked out opposite the site entrance, but, as the road is straight for some distance to each side of the access, visibility is good and the obstruction of parked cars, although reducing the flow to one lane, and effectively suppressing speed, (85th percentile 25.5mph southbound and 27.7mph northbound) would not pose a danger or hinder the flow of traffic unacceptably.

Parking provision is 3 spaces for the detached house, 2 spaces for the semi-detached and 1 space for the town houses, plus 3 casual spaces. The affordable units have 10 spaces in the basement car park. Overall, the parking ratio is 2 spaces per unit. Each unit also has provision for internal secure cycle storage.

Drainage

Foul drainage to serve the development will be by gravity to a collection point beneath the central area of open space from where it will be pumped to the public sewer in Bridge Road. The holding tank will be underground but there will be a requirement for a control kiosk. The pumping station will be designed to 'Sewers for Adoption' criteria but will be privately owned and maintained with twin pumps and alarm provisions for safety. This Council's Drainage Engineer and Southern Water have no objections to this arrangement.

Surface water drainage will be by soakaways and each property will have rainwater

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harvesting tanks to allow re-use within the dwellings. The spine road will be constructed of block paving to provide a permeable surface for rainwater and other run off will be directed to a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) which will be privately owned and maintained.

Sustainability

The proposal is to achieve a sustainable form of development that will meet Sustainable Homes Code 4 rating. This will be reflected by the construction methods, using a heavy masonry base with high thermal mass to insulate the basement and ground floor levels, whilst creating a heat store to be radiated back through the building. The higher levels will be of light weight, prefabricated construction, primarily timber framed, which can be brought onto site in kit form and quickly erected, thereby requiring fewer deliveries and less energy and time to construct

Materials to be used will be from the BRE sustainable materials register, having a proven recyclable or low energy heritage and sourced from local manufacturers. The structures will have highly insulated external envelopes, and solar voltaic panels mounted on the *brise soleil* will contribute a degree of electrical power. All buildings have solar operated, central ventilation systems and air-to-air heat exchangers to provide what little heating they will require. The affordable apartments are grouped together to allow a shared central combined heat and power unit to produce electrical supply and heating.

Other Matters

The current proposal has evolved over a period of almost two years and involved a number of consultations with various Council departments, plus consultation with Hyde Martlett Housing Association and the local community, initially in September 2007 and twice subsequently with the Alresford Town Council's Planning Committee. The scheme has responded to comments from such consultations, most notably with regard to the revised proposals for the block of apartments at the western end of the site, which were pulled back from the road behind an area of open space and scaled down, and in respect of the introduction of the central area of open space and omission of a business unit originally shown at the eastern end of the site.

Conclusion

The site is within the settlement boundary and is suitable for development. This was confirmed by the Local Plan Inspector's findings in consideration of an objection to the proposed designation of the land as RT.1, which was not supported as the Inspector found no case for the land to be identified as of significant amenity value where development should not occur.

The proposal uses this difficult site in an efficient and imaginative way to provide a range of accommodation that meets the Council's housing policies. The avoidance of the need to reclaim the cutting by a protracted filling operation, as has occurred with the sections of the cutting to the east, accords with sustainability principles, as does the design of the development. Access to the site is satisfactory in highway terms and the proposal offers benefits in terms of improved pedestrian provision to New Farm Road and through the site to Bridge Road.

The proposals are not harmful to the amenities of neighbours and they include open

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spaces that, although below the full standard required by the Open Space strategy, will provide scope for a LAP and help to contribute to the amenity of the residents of the development.

Having regard to the unique nature of the site, the scheme is considered to address the policy requirements of the Local Plan in a satisfactory way.

Planning Obligations/Agreements

In seeking the planning obligation(s) and/or financial contributions for open space and to secure affordable housing and arrangements to set up a management company to maintain the common areas, plus the securing of the footpath to New Farm Road bridge and rights of way through the site for pedestrian/cycle traffic, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the tests laid down in Circular 05/2005. These require obligations to be necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects.

Recommendation

That, subject to the applicant entering into an agreement under the provisions of Section 106 to the Town and Country Planning Act to secure the following matters to the satisfaction of the Head of Legal Services:

1. A financial contribution for open space sport provision and towards the shortfall of on-site play provision;
2. The provision of 8 units of affordable housing;
3. The setting up of a management company to maintain all common areas within the development, including the banks of the cutting, all tree cover within the site that is not privately owned, the open spaces, footpaths including the New Farm Road pedestrian bridge, roads, parking and turning areas and the drainage infrastructure serving the development;
4. The provision of a returnable bond to cover the laying out of the on-site public open space;
5. Public Open Space laying-out inspection fee;
6. The provision of a footpath to New Farm Road bridge and public rights of way over it to link with the existing footpath in New Farm Road to the north and south sides of the bridge;
7. The securing of a public right of way for use by pedestrians and cyclists through the site from New Farm Road to Bridge Road.

Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

(Note: If the Legal Agreement is not completed within 6 months then the application may be refused without further reference to Committee)

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. No development shall take place until details and samples of the materials to be used for the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development presents a satisfactory appearance in the interests of the amenities of the area.

3. No development shall take place until details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include the following, as relevant:
 - a) existing and proposed finished levels or contours;
 - b) means of enclosure, including any retaining structures and details of the gabion wall supporting the sides of the cutting;
 - c) other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
 - d) hard surfacing materials;
 - e) minor artefacts and structures (eg. street furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, utility apparatus etc);
 - f) proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (eg. drainage, power, communications cables, pipelines etc, including lines, manholes, supports etc.);

Soft landscape details shall include the following as relevant:

- g) planting plan;
- h) written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishmen;
- i) schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
- j) retained areas of grassland cover, scrub, hedgerow, trees and woodland;
- k) manner and treatment of banks;
- l) implementation programme;

Reason: To improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

4. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, or in accordance with the programme agreed with the Local Planning Authority. If, within a period of five years after planting any tree or plant is removed, dies or becomes, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged, defective or diseased another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally approved shall be planted at the same place, within the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

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Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscape in accordance with the approved designs.

5. Details of measures to be taken to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction works being deposited on the public highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and fully implemented before development commences. Such measures shall be retained for the duration of the construction period. No lorry shall leave the site unless its wheels have been cleaned sufficiently to prevent mud being carried onto the highway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

6. Details of provisions to be made for the parking and turning on site of operative and construction vehicles during the period of development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and fully implemented before development commences. Such measures shall be retained for the construction period.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

7. The parking areas including the garages shall be provided in accordance with the approved plans before the dwellings they serve are first occupied and thereafter permanently retained and used only for the purpose of accommodating private motor vehicles or other storage purposes incidental to the use of the dwelling houses as residences.

Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of parking for the properties.

8. Before the development hereby approved is commenced details of the design, means of construction and finish of the proposed footpath bridge to New Farm Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details of the arrangements to be put in place to secure the subsequent maintenance in perpetuity of the footpath (which will not be publicly adopted) shall concurrently be provided to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The footpath provision shall be implemented as approved before the apartment block and associated open space is completed and first occupied.

Reason: To ensure that the improvements to the pedestrian facilities in New Farm Road are provided as proposed, made available to serve the residents of the development hereby approved, and subsequently maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

9. Detailed proposals for the disposal of foul and surface water, including the central storage and pumping facility to connect to the main sewer in Bridge Road and the surface water Sustainable Drainage System, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of the development hereby permitted. The approved details shall be fully implemented before the development is occupied or in accordance with any phased implementation, details of which to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of foul and surface water drainage.

10. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted (or within such extended period as may be agreed with the Local Planning Authority), a scheme

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to deal with contamination shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme shall conform to current guidance and best practice as set out in BS10175:2001 : Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – Code of Practice and Contaminated Land Reports 7 to 11, or other supplementary guidance, and include the following phases, unless identified as unnecessary by the preceding stage and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- a) a desk top study and conceptual model documenting all the previous and existing land uses of the site and adjacent land;
- b) a site investigation report documenting the ground conditions of the site and incorporating chemical and gas analysis identified as appropriate by the desk top study;
- c) a remedial strategy detailing the measures to be undertaken to avoid risk from contaminants and/or gases when the site is developed and proposals for future maintenance and monitoring. Such scheme shall include nomination of a suitably qualified person to oversee the implementation of the works.

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of the future occupants.

11. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, written verification produced by the suitably qualified person approved under the provision of Condition 10 c) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report must demonstrate that the remedial strategy approved under the provisions of Condition 10 c) has been implemented fully, unless varied with the written agreement of the Local Planning Authority in advance.

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of future occupants.

12. Development shall cease on site if, during any stage of the works, potential contamination is encountered which has not been previously identified, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Works shall not recommence before an assessment of the potential contamination has been undertaken and details of the findings along with details of any remedial action required (including timing provision for implementation), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be completed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of future occupants.

13. No development shall take place until a Construction Method Statement and Construction Code of Practice for limiting the emission of noise and dust from all the demolition and construction activities on the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall not commence until the measures approved in the scheme have been fully implemented and they shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties.

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14. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no development permitted by Classes A, B, D, E, of Parts 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order, shall be carried out without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
- Reason: To protect the amenity and privacy both between occupiers of properties within the development and of those occupying properties adjoining the development.
15. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order, with or without modification), no windows, doors, dormer windows or roof lights other than those expressly authorised by this permission shall, at any time, be constructed in any of the elevation(s) of the dwelling houses hereby permitted.
- Reason: To protect the amenity and privacy both between occupiers of properties within the development and of those occupying properties adjoining the development.
16. The balcony to the west elevation of the first floor apartment (Plot 22) shall be provided with a privacy screen to the northern side in the form of opaque glazing or similar material to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the unit is first occupied. Such screen shall be installed as approved before the unit is first occupied and shall subsequently maintained in such condition.
- Reason: In the interests of avoiding any overlooking of the neighbouring properties private rear garden area and minimising the perception of loss of privacy.
17. In accord with the recommendations of the supporting Flora and Fauna Report, the applicant or their agents or successors in title shall ensure that before development commences a detailed Phase II ecological investigation and survey of the site at an appropriate time of year is undertaken to ensure that no protected species are present on the site. The findings of such survey shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration together with a scheme of mitigation and programme for implementation of such measures. The development shall be undertaken in adherence with an approved landscaping, native planting and ecological enhancement scheme. Such scheme shall demonstrate that habitat, connectivity and the site have been enhanced for biodiversity in line with PPS9 and include features such as bird and bat boxes. Any site clearance of trees or scrub should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season. The approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority shall be obtained before any work is commenced and the approved details shall be fully implemented as approved before the dwellings are occupied.
- Reason: To ensure that any ecological interest on the site is properly dealt with.
18. In this condition, "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of five years from the date of the occupation of the building(s) for its permitted use:

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- a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998 (Tree Work).
- b) If any tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any equipment, machinery, or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the protection of trees, which are to be retained.

19. An Arboricultural Method Statement, in accordance with BS5837:2005 shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, prior to any construction or groundwork commencing on the site.

The Arboricultural Officer shall be informed as soon as the construction exclusion zone has been fenced so that it can be inspected and deemed appropriate and in accordance with the approved Method Statement. Contact 01962 848317.

No arboricultural works shall be carried out to trees other than those specified and in accordance with the approved Method Statement

Any deviation from works prescribed or methods agreed in accordance with the approved Method Statement shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure protection and long term viability of retained trees and to minimise the impact of construction activity.

Informatives:

1. This permission is granted for the following reason:
2. The development is in accordance with the policies and proposals of the Development Plan set out below, and other material considerations do not have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.
3. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following Development Plan policies and proposals:-

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Hampshire County Structure Plan Review No relevant saved policies.
Winchester District Local Plan Review: DP.1, DP.3, DP.4, DP.5, DP.6, H.5, H.7,
RT.4, T2, T.4,

4. A formal application for connection to the public sewerage system is required in order to service this development. To initiate a sewer capacity check to identify the appropriate connection point for the development, please contact Atkins Ltd, Anglo St James House, 39A Southgate Street, Winchester, SO23 9EH (tel 01962 858600) or www.southernwater.co.uk.
5. The applicant is advised that planning permission does not in any way override the need to comply with the relevant law in regard to the protected species including compliance with the terms and conditions of any licences required as described in Part IV of Circular 06/2005 absolute