APPEAL REF: APP/W3005/W/21/3274818

LPA REF: V/2020/0184

Appeal by Bellway Homes Ltd



Land off Ashland Road West, Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Effects on the Character and Appearance of the area

Gary Holliday, B.A (Hons).MPhil, CMLI

19 August 2021

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Gary Holliday Background and Experience

Appendix 2: Figures and Photo viewpoints from the Golby and Luck LVA

Appendix 3: Extracts of appeal decision Barn Road, Longwick, Ref: APP/K0425/W/15/3018514

Appendix 4: Site in Context Figure 1

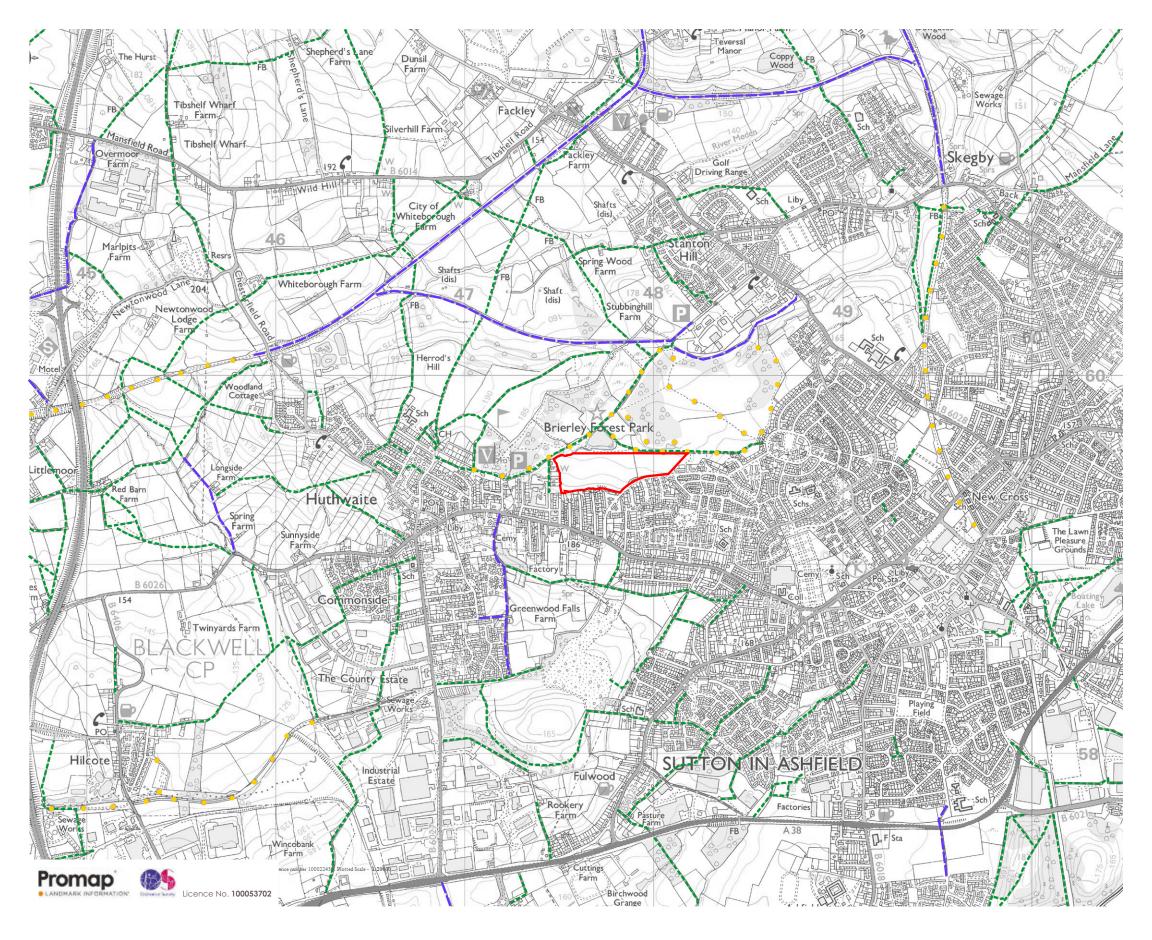
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APPENDIX 1: GARY HOLLIDAY BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Appendix 1: Gary Holliday Background and Experience

- 1.1 My name is Michael Gary Holliday. I have a degree BA (Hons) and a Master of Philosophy degree (MPhil) in Landscape Design from Newcastle University. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and a Director in FPCR Environment and Design Ltd, a multi-disciplinary design partnership with 60 years' experience of, landscape, ecology, urban design, masterplanning arboriculture and environmental assessment. The Practice is a member of the Landscape Institute, the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management and The Urban Design Group. I have been a partner/director of the practice for over 21 years. I am a Professional Practice examiner on behalf of the Landscape Institute. I am also a registered assessor for Building with Nature.
- 1.2 I have over 33 years' experience of landscape and development projects from initial conceptual design through to final completion and long-term aftercare. I am involved in site selection, constraints analysis, environmental assessment, and detailed landscape design. I have advised on landscape and visual impact issues on a wide range of residential development schemes and have given evidence at over 50 public inquiries. I have completed landscape character assessment work, and landscape capacity studies for local authority and private sector clients.
- 1.3 FPCR has received numerous design awards over the years, including a Civic Trust Partnership Award for "Conkers", the National Forest Discovery Centre, in recognition of its contribution to the regeneration of the former Leicestershire Coalfield. I was the lead designer for the project. We have prepared numerous Design and Access Statements & Design Codes in support of masterplanning applications, together with the accompanying Environmental Statements where these have been required.
- 1.4 The practice acts as a consultant to government bodies such as, Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. FPCR also acts as consultant to many local authorities across the United Kingdom. I led the team which prepared the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment, which was a finalist in the Landscape Planning category at the Landscape Institute Awards in 2019.

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES AND PHOTO VIEWPOINTS FROM THE GOLBY AND LUCK LVA



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Key

Site boundary



Public footpath



Public bridleway



Cycleway

GL1130 01

1:20000@A3 Date

19/02/2020

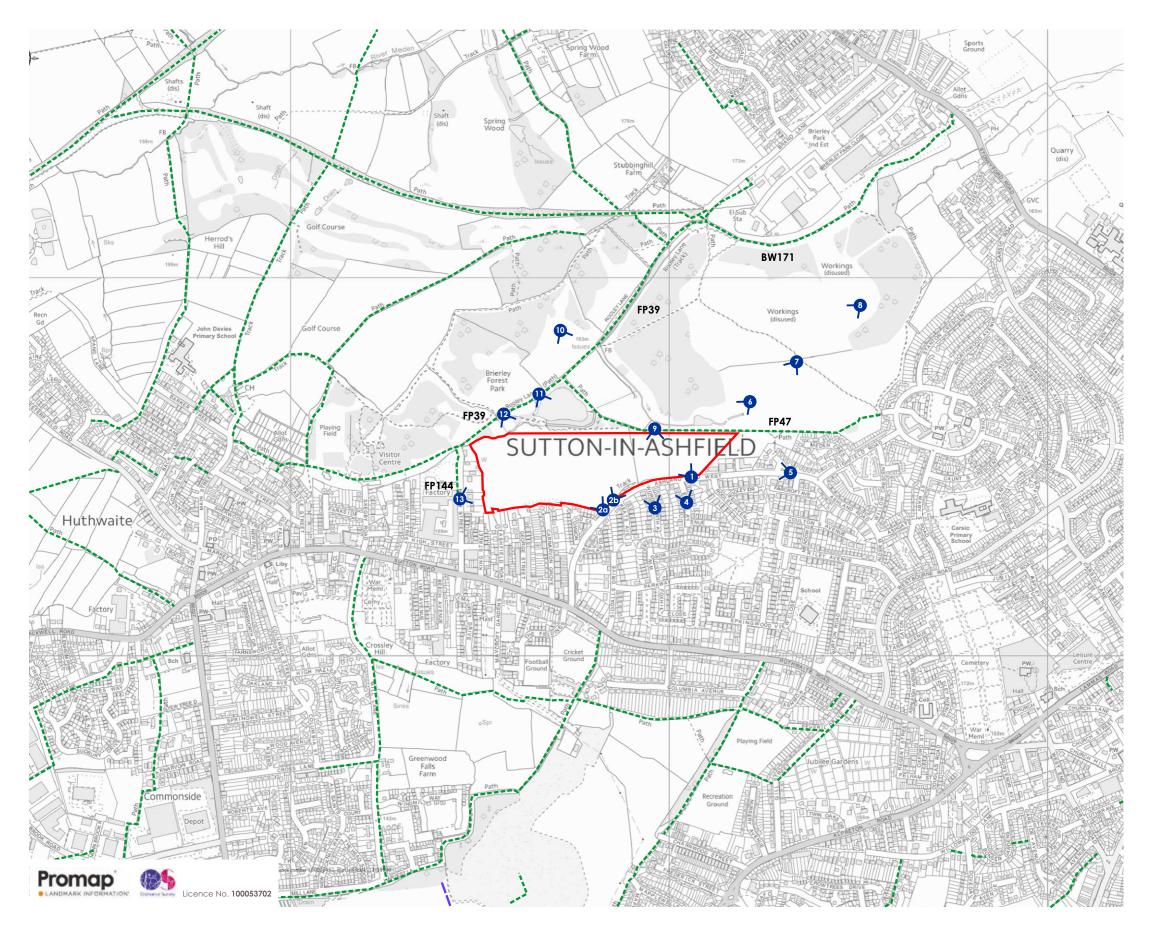
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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Drawing title

Site Context





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Key



Site boundary



Photographic views



Public rights of way (notable PRoW number indicated)

GL1130 02

1:10000@A3

Date 19/02/2020

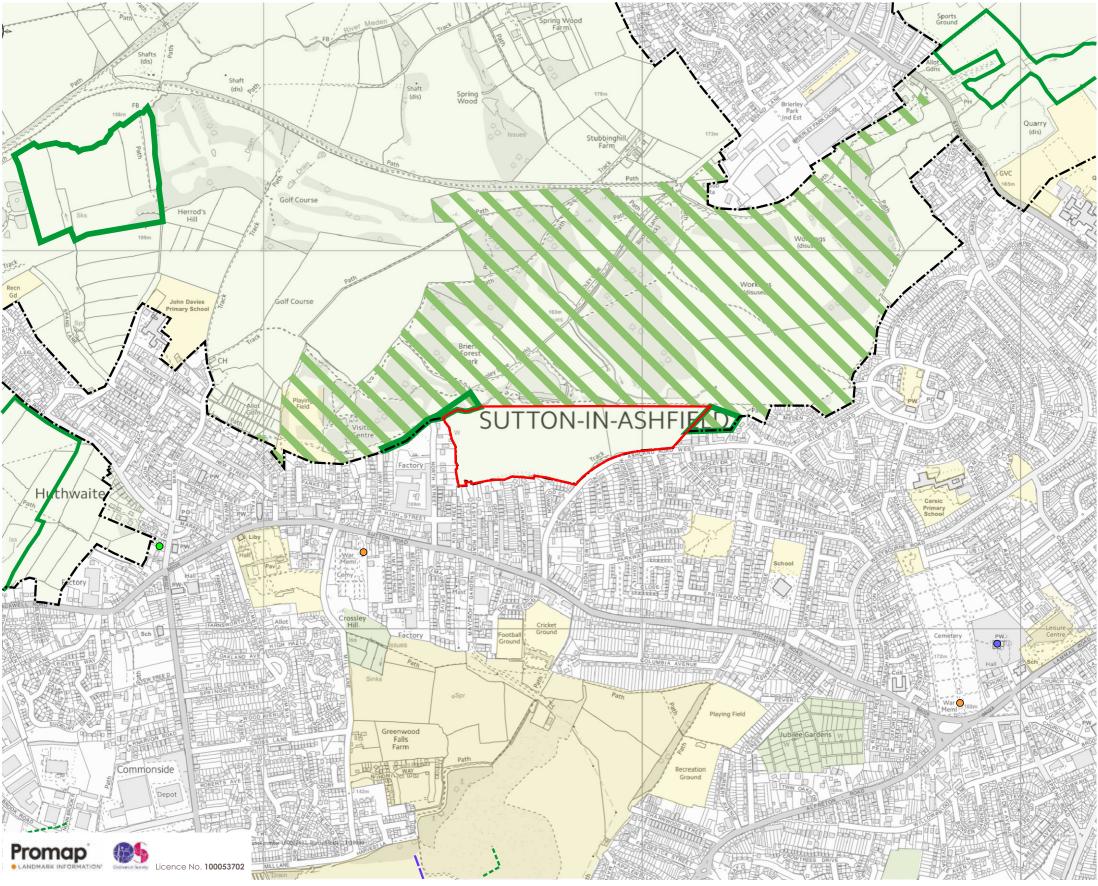
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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Drawing title

Site Location





Key

Site boundary



Main urban area



Countryside



Local Nature Reserve (LNR)



Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)



Allotments



Open Areas



Formal Open Space



Grade II* Listed Building



Grade II Listed Building



De-Listed

GL1130 03

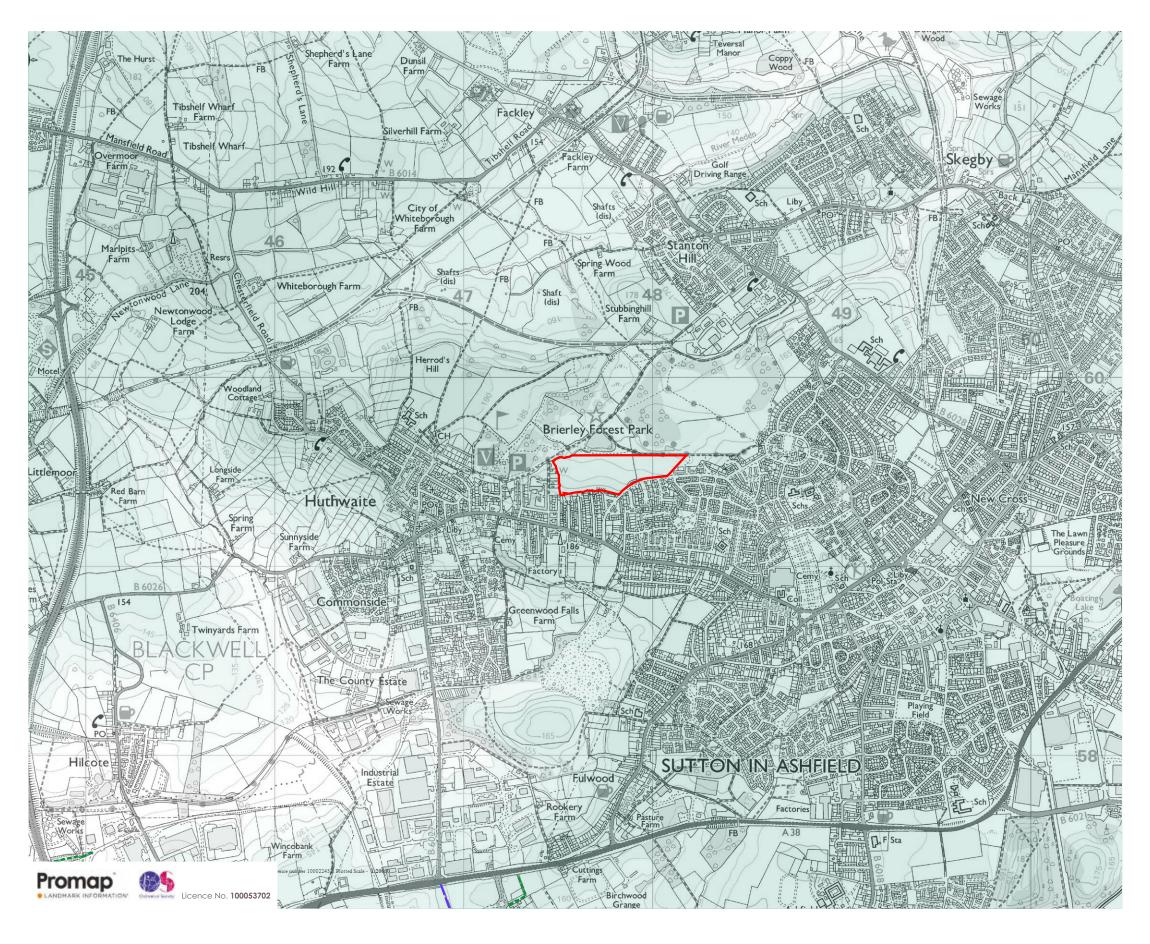
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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Planning Context





Key

Site boundary



110m to 120m AOD



120m to 130m AOD



130m to 140m AOD



140m to 150m AOD



150m to 160m AOD



160m to 170m AOD



170m to 180m AOD



180m to 190m AOD



190m to 200m AOD



200m to 210m AOD

tel: 01530 265688 | email: info@golbyandluck.co.uk | web: www.golbyandluck.co.uk

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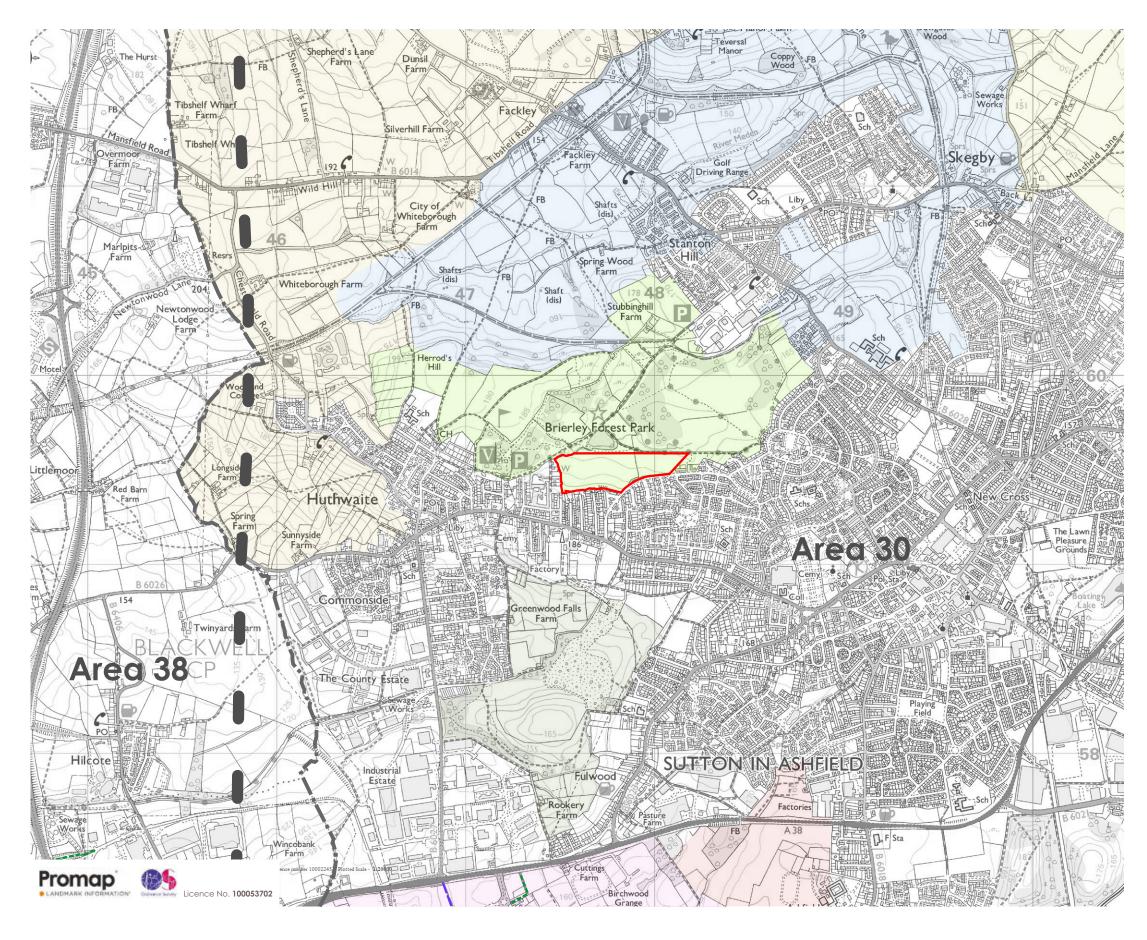
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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Drawing title

Topography





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Key



Site boundary



District boundary



National Character Area (NCA) boundary

Area 30 - Southern Magnesian Limestone

Area 38 - Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield



Policy Zone ML21 - Brierley Forest Park



Policy Zone NC07 - Stanley and Silverhill



Policy Zone NC08 - River Meden Valley



Policy Zone ML23 - Skegby Plateau



Policy Zone NC06 - Fulwood Restored Works



Policy Zone NC05 - Kirby Coalfield Farmlands/Kirkby Vales



Policy Zone ML20 - Kirkby Plateau

GL1130 05

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19/02/2020 Checked

SG

Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Landscape Character





View 1 - From Ashland Road West approximately 15m from the site looking north-west



View 2a - From Ashland Road West (near Keats Avenue) approximately 10m from the site looking north-west

Number/Figure GL1130 06

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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

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Photographic Views 1 & 2a





View 2b - From Ashland Road West (near Keats Avenue) approximately 10m from the site looking north-east



View 3 - From Wordsworth Avenue approximately 75m from the site looking north

GL1130 07

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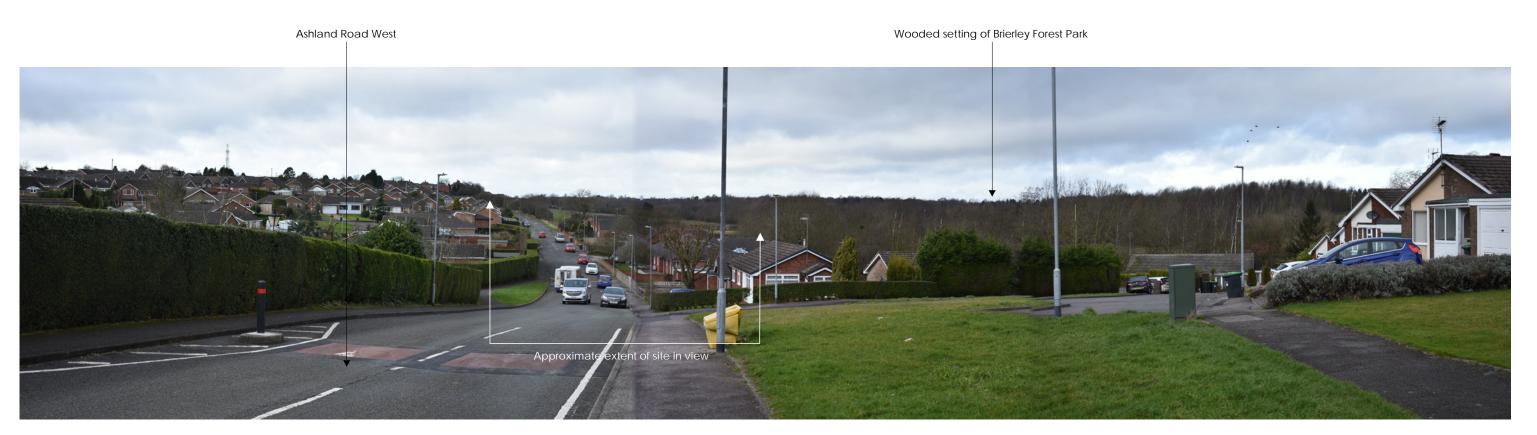
Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Photographic Views 2b & 3





View 4 - From Evans Avenue approximately 80m from the site looking north



View 5 - From Ashland Road West approximately 180m from the site looking east

GL1130 08

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19/02/2020

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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Photographic Views 4 & 5



View 6 - From Brierley Forest Park approximately 80m from the site looking south-west



View 7 - From Brierley Forest Park approximately 250m from the site looking south-east

Number/Figure
GL1130 09
Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield
Scale

NTS@A3

SG

19/02/2020 Checked Photographic Views 6 & 7





View 8 - From Brierley Forest Park approximately 460m from the site looking south-east



View 9 - From Brierley Forest Park at the northern site boundary looking south-east

GL1130 10

NTS@A3

19/02/2020

Checked SG

Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

Photographic Views 8 & 9





View 10 - From Brierley Forest Park approximately 250m from the site looking south



View 11 - From Brierley Forest Park approximately 85m from the site looking south-east

Number/Figure GL1130 11

GL1130 1 Scale

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19/02/2020

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awing title

Photographic Views 10 & 11

Client





View 12 - From Brierley Forest Park approximately 50m from the site looking south



View 13 - From North Street Approximately 65m from the site looking north-east

Number/Figure GL1130 12

Scale NTS@A3

NTS@A3

19/02/2020

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Ashland Rd, Sutton in Ashfield

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Photographic Views 12 & 13

Client
Bellway Homes East Midlands



APPENDIX 3: EXTRACTS OF APPEAL DECISION BARN ROAD, LONGWICK, REF: APP/K0425/W/15/3018514

Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 12 to 15 and 19 April 2016 Site visit made on 19 April 2016

by P. W. Clark MA MRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19 May 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/15/3018514 Land off Barn Road, Longwick, Buckinghamshire

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an
 application for outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Gladman Developments Ltd against Wycombe District Council.
- The application Ref 14/06965/OUT, is dated 29 July 2014.
- The development proposed is residential of up to 160 dwellings with access, parking, public open space with play facilities and landscaping.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for residential development of up to 160 dwellings with access, parking, public open space with play facilities and landscaping on Land off Barn Road, Longwick, Buckinghamshire in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 14/06965/OUT, dated 29 July 2014, subject to the eleven conditions which are appended to this decision letter.

Procedural matters

- 2. The application is made in outline. Details of one vehicular access to the site are submitted for approval now. Details of any other access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for submission at a later date in the event that permission is granted.
- As submitted, the application was for residential development of up to 175 dwellings. By e-mail dated 30 October 2014, this was amended to 160 dwellings. The Council publicised the amendment; so nobody would be prejudiced by basing this decision on the amended proposal.
- 4. In the documentation associated with this appeal, the parties between them adduced twenty-four legal decisions and twenty-three appeal decisions which they regarded as precedents for this appeal. Because of the numbers involved, I have not included specific written reference to each and every one of these.

Main Issues

 There is agreement between the main parties on the extent of best and most versatile agricultural land on the site and on the need to take into account its economic and other benefits in reaching a decision on this appeal. Disagreements focus on four points;

- Whether the site would be a sustainable location for development.
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
- The effect of the proposal on highway safety and
- The effect of the proposal on the supply of housing.

Reasons

Location

- 6. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development. One is the economic role, elements of which involve ensuring that land is available in the right places and identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure. Another is the social role, an element of which is accessible local services. The third is the environmental role, which includes the prudent use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution. So, without satisfying all the requirements for sustainable development, a location where the existence or provision of infrastructure offers or provides access to local services whilst minimising the need to travel would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in a variety of ways.
 - (i) Access to local services
- 7. As the Statement of Common Ground between the parties confirms, Longwick village itself offers a number of facilities. There are two small general shops, one associated with a petrol filling station, the other with a Post Office. There is a pre-school unit and a primary school, a scouts hut and a substantial village hall with sports changing facilities for the adjacent sports ground and play area on The Green. There is a public house. There are several bus services which between them provide between 5 and 8 services a day to, and between 6 and 9 services from, Princes Risborough and, rather rarely, to and from Thame. But the bus services only operate between the peaks, Mondays to Saturdays. There is no peak hour, evening or Sunday service. There are also a few businesses providing some local employment in the village.
 - (ii) Minimising the need to travel
- 8. In terms of daily life, although there is no major supermarket, the two small retail outlets would make it possible to obtain food and groceries without travelling outside the village. There is a pre-school and a Primary School so children of primary school age would not need to travel far for their education. However, secondary education requires travel to a higher order settlement.
- 9. Longwick offers little by way of employment and none is proposed to result from the development other than jobs during construction. So it is likely that residents of the proposed development seeking work would either have to work at home or would have to travel further afield for employment, as most employed residents of the village already do.
- 10. There are no health care facilities (doctor, dentist or pharmacy). Spiritual needs would require travel to find a place of worship. These are not normally needed on a daily basis but to reach them, residents of the development would have to travel to higher order settlements such as Princes Risborough nearby.

reach the same conclusion as those who drafted the now withdrawn Neighbourhood Plan; that is that Longwick is a good location for development, provided it is underpinned by investment in sustainable travel modes.

- 25. The Neighbourhood Plan was withdrawn, reportedly because its Examiner recommended the removal of the policies which would have sought the provision of such underpinning investment. He pointed to the use of CIL monies to provide such investment instead. But, in fact, the adopted CIL infrastructure charging schedule does not make such provision.
- 26. Through a travel plan encouraging car sharing and a contribution to a peak-hour bus service the appeal proposal would do much to maximise the use of sustainable transport modes. But its contribution to the maintenance and upgrading of the Phoenix Trail and its connecting bridleway appears unfocussed; although that would no doubt be beneficial, what would maximise cycling use from this development would be the provision of a reserved cycleway alongside the Longwick Road as canvassed by the County Council at an early stage. That is not proposed or provided for.
- 27. That, however, is a relatively minor consideration in the overall picture; cycling is at least possible at the present time, either on or off-road, whereas peakhour public transport use is not. I note that the authors of the now withdrawn neighbourhood plan considered that, if underpinned with investment in sustainable transport, Longwick would be a suitable location for growth in the order of the 140 dwellings identified in the Longwick Capacity Study. What is here proposed is 160 dwellings, a similar order of magnitude. So it would not be out of scale commensurate with the size and relative sustainability of Longwick, as required by the relevant part of Core Strategy policy CS 2 adopted in July 2008.
- 28. Without resolving all of Longwick's sustainable travel issues, a considerable contribution would be made by the public transport subsidy. I therefore conclude that the site would be an acceptably sustainable location for development. Its development would comply with the part of Core Strategy policy CS 2 adopted in July 2008, which requires sites to be well located in relation to jobs, services and facilities and in the most accessible locations for transport by non-car modes.
- 29. Although the public transport service being provided would not match the Council's definition of high quality, the proposal would comply with those parts of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan policy DM2 which require qualifying developments to provide travel plans and car sharing amongst other matters. Were it not technically outside the development boundary of Longwick defined in accordance with Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (the Local Plan) policy C9 it would otherwise comply with the requirements of those parts of policy CS 7 which identify Longwick as a location for providing housing development and supporting rural transport initiatives improving accessibility.

Character and appearance

30. The historic linearity of Longwick is recognised in many of the appellant's submitted supporting documents². A corollary of that historic linearity is that

² Design and Access Statement, page 23-24; Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment paragraph 1.6; Archaeological Assessment paragraph 4.6.2; Planning Statement paragraph 2.4; Sustainability Report paragraph 3.1

there is said to be a close relationship between the main road through the village and the countryside beyond the buildings which front it, with constant glimpses of that countryside seen between the frontage development. The concern is that both linearity and the close connection with the countryside would be compromised by the development proposed.

- 31. In more modern times, that linearity has been modified by development in depth. This is particularly so at the south end of the village where Bell Crescent has been developed in the hinterland between Thame Road and Chestnut Way and where Boxer Road, Barn Road and Williams Way have been developed to the west of Chestnut Way. There is also development in depth at the centre of the village, along and off Walnut Tree Lane to the west of Thame Road. At the north end of the village, which is separated from the rest by an interval of undeveloped countryside, there is development in depth on the east side of Thame Road, comprising Walkers Road, Sawmill Road and Wheelwright Road.
- 32. Nevertheless, both parties agree that on the eastern side of the village there remains the experience of a close relationship with the countryside, glimpsed between frontage buildings. I was able to confirm that on my site visit.
- 33. However, the same is not true of the west side where the appeal proposal would be located. As I walked through the village from south to north, the only view across the site from between frontage development is from adjacent to Church Farm Cottage, opposite Bell Crescent. This is a view across part of the site which was anyway proposed for development in the now withdrawn Neighbourhood Plan and is included as an option for development in the Council's emerging Local Plan options consultation document, so its loss may be regarded as acceptable to the Council.
- 34. As one progresses further north, the only glimpses between buildings are either blocked by existing backland development or by trees, or are views across the recreation ground and to the tree belt which bounds it, views which would not be affected by the proposed development. The proposed development would therefore have little or no visibility from Thame Road and so would barely impinge on the public perception of the village's character or appearance.
- 35. The Council accepts that the existing development in depth at the southern end of the village has had little impact on the linear appearance of the village because it is largely backland, hidden behind the retained ribbon of frontage development. It is somewhat surprising then that the appeal proposal is criticised for not having direct access on to Thame Road or Chestnut Way. In fact, that very characteristic would protect and preserve the visually linear character of the village, whatever its morphological reality.
- 36. There is a functional disadvantage to the historic linearity of the village which is noted by a few of the third party correspondents. That is that the village street (Thame Road) is a busy main road along which residents have to walk to access the school, shop, village hall and recreational ground. A few correspondents regard this as something of a hazard, although there is no information given of any accidents occurring. The development offers the opportunity of an alternative, quieter route for pedestrians and cyclists. In a small way, this represents an improvement on the village character.

- 37. Longwick is a village of great variety of building design in which even modern developments have been relatively small estates of 30 50 dwellings at most. But, as I saw on my site visit, they have a very limited palette of house type and building materials. Long runs of identical dwellings are commonplace. There is an understandable concern that, if that style of development were repeated on a larger scale, a single development of 160 dwellings representing a 36% increase in the number of dwellings in the village would have an overwhelmingly dominant and homogenous bearing on its character.
- 38. There is no presumption that the development would in fact be carried out by a single developer; paragraph 6 of the appellant's submitted Planning Statement makes clear the intention to sell to one or two developers. Each would have their own styles. Furthermore, as discussed below, the dwelling mix of the proposal is likely to comprise a considerable variety of house types and sizes, in contrast to development of the 1960s and 1970s. In any event, this would be under the control of the local planning authority when detailed submissions of reserved matters are made. There is no reason to conclude at this stage that the development would be so homogenous as to harm the character of the village.
- 39. Contrasting comparisons were made between the density of various existing developments within the village and that proposed. But, quite aside from confusions of net and gross density, use of density measurements based on units of a dwelling to judge character can be very misleading because a dwelling is not a uniform unit. A six-bedroomed mansion and a studio flat are each one dwelling but have quite different characters and appearance. Six small flats in an apartment block can have a very similar appearance to a single large house but would be regarded as six times the density when measured as dwellings per hectare.
- 40. As is known, the village has a disproportionate element of larger dwellings whereas, as discussed below, the development is likely to have a larger proportion of smaller dwellings. Thus, comparisons of density based on dwellings per hectare are akin to comparing apples with pears and are quite misleading as a measure of character and appearance. I therefore take no account of them.
- 41. It must not pass without acknowledgement that the site is greenfield. Its development therefore does not accord with the seventh and eighth of the government's twelve core land use planning principles, set out in paragraph 17 of the NPPF. These are that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed. The proposal would do neither of those things and would change the character and appearance of the land from an undeveloped to a developed state.
- 42. The fifth of the government's twelve core land use planning principles includes recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. But recognition does not automatically imply retention of all undeveloped land in the countryside. As is recognised by the appellant's uncontested Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the appeal site is an unremarkable example of the Upper Thames Clay Vale landscape character area. Other than within the site itself, its loss to development would have negligible or minor adverse effects (to use the professional jargon) on the landscape or its character.

- 43. From standing on its western boundary, at the point where the footpath which crosses the site passes under the railway, the southern fields can be clearly seen to be surrounded and dominated by development on two sides and the railway on the third. They seem to be already part of the village. The westernmost of the northern fields is more separated from the village by substantial hedgerows and so does not share that characteristic. But equally, it is cut off from open countryside by the railway embankment on the west and bounded by Willow Tree Lane on the north and bungalows to its north-west, so can hardly be regarded as open countryside. I do not regard its development as causing any great harm to the countryside as a whole.
- 44. I conclude that although the development would increase the extent to which the village is developed in depth, it would have little or no impact on its perceived character and would offer some functional advantages. It would involve the development of previously undeveloped greenfield land, which is a change in character but its effects would be so localised that little or no harm would result.
- 45. It is acknowledged in the Council's closing statement that the appeal site fields lying between the dwellings on Thame Road and the railway embankment are regarded not as part of the wider countryside but as part of the village. Although defined by the settlement boundary of Longwick and Local Plan policies C9 and C10 as countryside, in practice the appeal site is not open countryside and so its development would not conflict with policy CS 7 (7) and would comply with policy CS 7 (6) which requires new development to respect the particular character and sense of place of villages. Core Strategy Policy CS 19 and Wycombe District Local Plan policy G3, which are referred to in the Council's putative reasons for refusal set requirements which could only be determined when reserved matters are considered. At this stage, I have identified no matter which precludes compliance.

Highway Safety

- 46. Details of one vehicular access, onto Barn Road, are submitted with this otherwise outline application. The concept of a single vehicular access to serve the development is accepted as satisfactory by the local Fire and Rescue Service and in turn by the Highway Authority. I have no reason to disagree.
- 47. The details of access onto Barn Road are accepted by the local Highway Authority as satisfactory and unlikely to give rise to any undue safety concern. Barn Road in turn is accessed from Boxer Road and there is no suggestion that the junction of Barn Road with Boxer Road would give rise to any undue safety concern. Boxer Road is, in turn, accessed from Chestnut Way, a classified road B4444. There is no suggestion that this junction would give rise to any undue safety concern.
- 48. The B4444 is accessed in turn by two junctions, one at each end of Chestnut Way. At its northern end it joins Thame Road, the A4129. The Highway Authority raises no safety concerns with the effects on this junction of traffic arising from the development.
- 49. At its southern end Chestnut Way joins the Lower Icknield Way B4009 at a Y-shaped junction. The base of the Y is spanned by a railway bridge which limits the configuration of the road layout. It also has a height limit which advises tall vehicles to cross the centre line of the road when passing under the bridge.

APPENDIX 4: SITE IN CONTEXT FIGURE 1



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Appeal Site



Existing Forest Park Access



Potential Park Access (Indicative locations)

fpcr

Bellway Homes

Ashland Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield

fpcr drawing title SITE IN CONTEXT



scale 1:25,000 @ A3 drawing / figure number Figure 1 issue date 02 August 2021



