



Highfield House, 5 Ridgeway, Quinton Business Park, Birmingham B32 1AF, United Kingdom

Our Ref: JBB7253/C1787

18 October 2013

Anna Miller  
Interim Planning Manager  
East Staffordshire Borough Council  
The Maltsters  
Wetmore Road  
Burton upon Trent  
Staffordshire  
DE14 1LS

P/2013/01227  
Received  
18/10/2013

Dear Ms Miller

## **LAND AT HAZELWALLS FARM, UTTOXETER: PROPOSED PLANNING APPLICATION REQUEST FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING OPINION**

RPS Planning and Development has been retained by Mosaic Estates and David Wilson Homes to pursue a planning application for development at land at Hazelwalls Farm, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire.

RPS is instructed to make this request for an Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion as to whether their proposals for a development on the land at Hazelwalls Farm should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 SI No.1824, Part 2, a brief description of the nature and purpose of the proposals is set out below along with other supporting information.

### **Site Description**

The 27.5 hectare site is identified in red on the attached Concept Masterplan (reference ACD5824 500\_003 Rev A). It is effectively two parcels of land with a private property (The Cottage) and its access between them.

The larger parcel (the western parcel) includes several buildings associated with Hazelwalls Farm. The sites lies adjacent to the south western boundary of Uttoxeter at Balance Hill. There are potential vehicular accesses to the western parcel from the B5013 lying to the east, from Westlands Road to the north, and from Fennel Close to the north-east. Vehicular access to the eastern parcel would be from Sorrel Close to the north. Both sites are contiguous with the built development of the town.

The site lies approximately 1km south west of the town centre. Both parcels are currently served by gated access from Timber Lane. The land is undulating with two small streams cutting through the sites. One of these streams is densely vegetated and runs between the two parcels. The western site is bounded along its south western boundary by a steep-sided ridgeline which runs to its north-east corner.

The site's context is of agricultural pasture with fields bounded by relatively strong, mature hedgerows; on the town side of the site lies 20<sup>th</sup> century suburbia with estates accessed off the A518. The surrounding agricultural land comprises gently rolling landscapes dissected by numerous small valleys.

Preliminary ecological study has identified the presence of some important hedgerows and veteran trees within the sites. There is also potential for barn owl, bat and badger.

### **Development Proposals**

An initial Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has informed preparation of a draft Concept Masterplan. This shows the potential for about 365 dwellings across the combined sites, which will allow for a mix of sizes, tenures and densities.

Lower density development would be generally situated adjacent to existing properties and boundaries with countryside. This site capacity also allows for a significant landscape buffer and strengthened planting to sensitive countryside boundaries and along ridge lines to establish green infrastructure, whilst preserving key views to local landmarks.

The development would include public open space including strategically placed play areas, landscaping taking into account the topography of the site, and a 'community hub' which would serve the development and neighbouring residents surrounding the site. The community hub will assist in overcoming the lack of community facilities which has occurred as this area of south Uttoxeter been developed incrementally in a largely unplanned manner. There is also potential, should this be required by the Education Authority, for the provision of a one form First/Primary School to serve the development and the wider area.

Although the site is close to Uttoxeter Town Centre, the provision of community facilities and new open space on the site will be valued as significant assets for the area, would not compete with these town centre uses. This 'community hub' is proposed adjacent to the public open space areas which will also include three equipped children's play areas.

As previously discussed it is envisaged that a comprehensive hybrid outline planning application will be submitted, to include a first phase of residential development in detail. The application will be supported by a concept masterplan/illustrative layout to indicate how the wider site could be developed, together with a suite of technical reports, as set out later on in this letter, which will inform the proposals and demonstrate the deliverability of the site.

## EIA Screening Opinion

The purpose of writing to you at this stage is to formally request a screening opinion from the Local Authority for the proposed development at Hazelwalls Farm, as defined in this letter and the accompanying information, in accordance with Part 2 (5) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (SI No.1824) (the EIA Regulations).

The EIA Regulations apply to separate types of projects:

- I. 'Schedule 1 projects' for which an EIA is required in every case; and
- II. 'Schedule 2 projects' for which an EIA is required only if the particular project in question is judged likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

The purpose of these regulations is to require applications for permission of certain forms of development, which come into certain categories specified in Schedules 1 and 2 of the regulations, to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES). Such a statement is intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of the likely environmental effects of the development proposed having reasonable regard to current knowledge and methods of assessment.

I trust the Council will accept the proposals do not constitute development falling within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations.

The EIA Regulations in respect of the EIA makes it clear that the EIA Directive's main aim is to ensure that the decision maker makes a decision in the knowledge of any likely **significant effects** on the environment. The possibility of significant effects is a constant theme of the Circular. Indeed, Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations defined EIA Development as being either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of such factors such as nature, scale and location.

Schedule 2 provides descriptions of development and applicable thresholds and indicates at criterion 10 Infrastructure Projects, which includes at (b) urban development projects with a development threshold of 0.5 hectare.

The EIA regulations (Circular 02/99) indicate that an EIA is likely to be required where the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. If the site is not previously developed land, EIA is more likely where the site area is more than 5 ha, or where more than 10,000 sq m of commercial floor space is proposed, or where the development would have significant urbanising effects in previously urbanised areas (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).

## Possible Effects

Although 'significance' is not defined in detail in the legislation, Schedule 3 of the Regulations asks local authorities to have regard to the following factors:

- The *Characteristics of Development* having regard to size; cumulation with other development; use of natural resources; production of waste; pollution and nuisances; accident risk;
- The *Location of Development* having regard to the environmental sensitivity of areas affected; existing land use; the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of local natural resources; the absorption capacity of the natural environment; and
- The *Characteristics of the Potential Impact* having regard to the extent of impact; multitude and complexity; probability of impact; and the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

### 1. *Characteristics of Development*

In respect of the characteristics of development, the criteria in Schedule 3 refers to the size of development and cumulation with other development. The proposal is for up to 365 dwellings, potentially a one form entry Primary/First School (if required), green infrastructure and associated infrastructure on a total site measuring 27.5ha and would be located adjacent to the urban area of Uttoxeter. In terms of cumulation with other developments there is a current proposal for up to 700 dwellings, 10ha of employment land, a first school and a local centre at land west of Uttoxeter (reference number P/2013/00882).

The other criteria within this category being the use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisances and risk of accidents are not such as could give rise to any significant environmental effects. Other than the normal amount of waste produced from construction on site, the proposed development will not involve significant levels of waste or pollution and other nuisance.

### 2. *Location of Development*

In respect of the second set of criteria, being the location of the development, the site is located adjacent to the southern edge of Uttoxeter and its existing use is for agricultural purposes. The Local Planning Authority has identified Hazelwalls Farm as a proposed strategic site allocation for 350 dwellings in the emerging Pre-Submission Local Plan published for consultation in October 2013. The proposed development would be in accordance with this strategic allocation.

In terms of the abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources the site is not the subject of any specific national or local landscape designations, there are no listed buildings or known areas of archaeological importance, the site would be located in Flood Zone 1 with least risk of flooding, the site is not agricultural land, and there are no ecological designations. The site falls outside of the Green Belt.

Additionally the site is not known to include any of the features identified in Schedule 3 Part 2 (c) and is therefore considered to be a site of 'lesser environmental value'.

### 3. *Characteristics of the Potential Impact*

In terms of extent of impact the proposed development would have visual impact on this part of Uttoxeter in terms of the change in the character from countryside to residential, however a sympathetically designed development will ensure that the extent of the impact is limited to the local level and provides the potential for visual enhancement though the removal of the industrial buildings which currently exist.

The provision of up to 365 dwellings would provide housing for approximately 876 people, which would help to sustain existing services and facilities. The development can be accommodated on the local road network.

The impacts of the proposed development would be localised and it is not considered that the impacts would be of a great magnitude or complexity to be considered significant. The extent of the impacts likely would be predictable and are unlikely to be significant. Any impacts from the development would be for its life time and are therefore likely to continue. The removal of the development once built is unlikely to occur.

### **Screening Opinion**

It is recognised the decision on whether or not the proposal constitutes EIA development rests solely with the Local Planning Authority.

The proposed development would not fall under Schedule 1 development in relation to the Regulations, however the proposal would fall under Schedule 2 being an urban development project of more than 0.5ha.

Whilst the substantive baseline assessment work is currently being undertaken, it is not considered there are overriding constraints to the delivery of the site. Although the site exceeds 5ha in size the effects of the development are not considered to be significant and any impact would be localised and could be managed. The site is not within an environmentally sensitive area or a vulnerable area and would not give rise to any hazardous impacts. Therefore it is not considered that the proposed development would require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

It may also help your consideration of the screening request to know that should the LPA be in agreement with this assessment, we would envisage the planning application being supported by the following documentation:

- Concept Masterplan/Illustrative Layout
- Detailed Layout, Floor Plans and Elevations for Phase 1 Residential Development
- Design & Access Statement

- Planning Supporting Statement (including Draft S106 Heads of Terms)
- Arboricultural Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Ecology Reports
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Topographical Survey
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan

Given the comprehensive technical work being undertaken we envisage an Environmental Impact Assessment would not be necessary. Your confirmation of a formal screening opinion is therefore sought and also any other potential requirements from the Council's validation checklist would be helpful.

RPS on behalf of Mosaic Estates and David Wilson Homes looks forward to receiving the screening opinion within the statutory three week period. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss any aspect of the proposal in advance of your decision, I would be only too willing to discuss the matter with you.

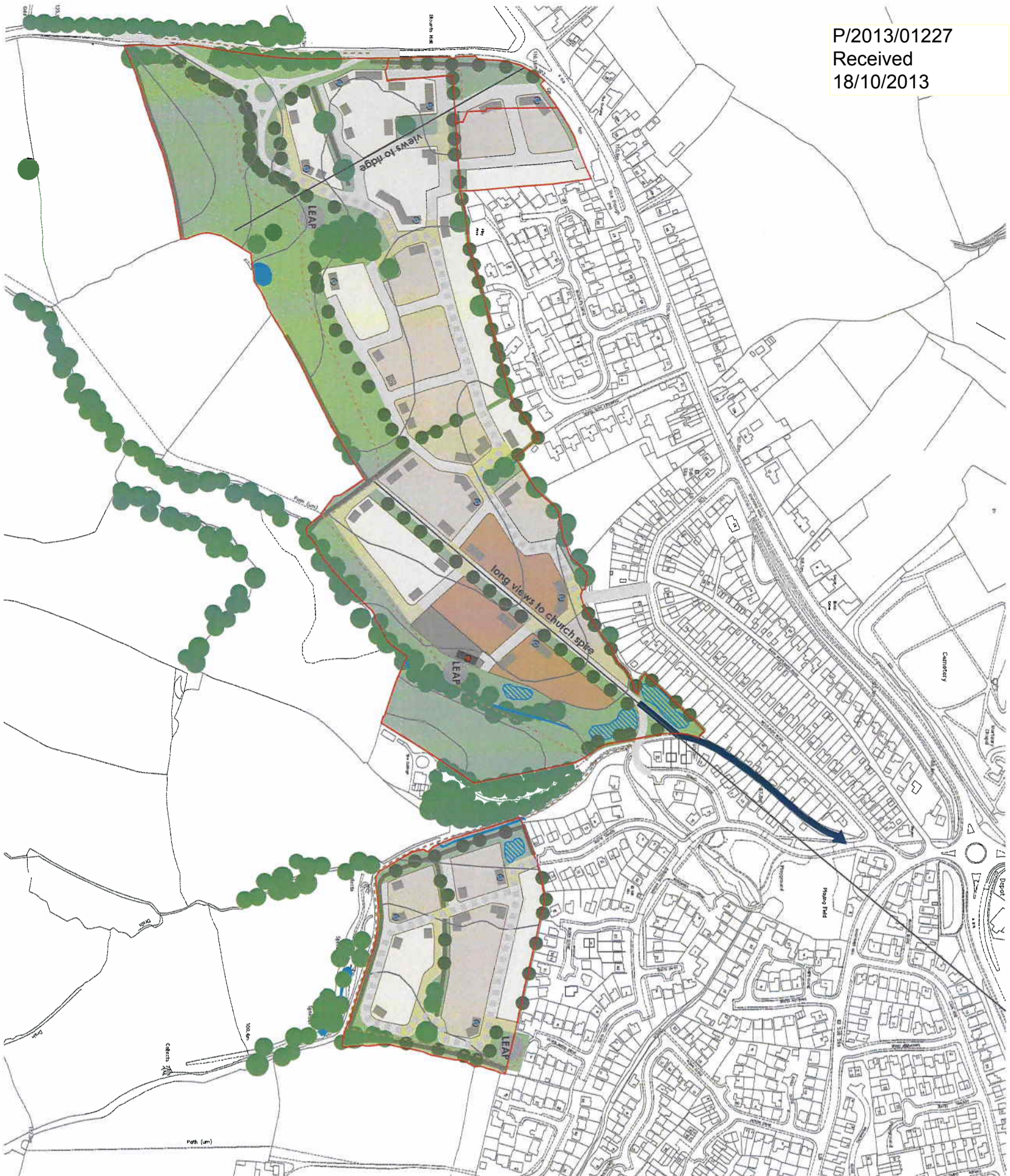
Yours sincerely



cc G Day, Mosaic Estates  
J Rowson, David Wilson Homes  
M Horton, David Wilson Homes

Enc: Concept Alternative Masterplan (reference ACD5824 500\_003 Rev A )

P/2013/01227  
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- Site boundaries
- Higher Density Residential (including driveways and gardens)
- Medium Density Residential (including driveways and gardens)
- Lower Density Residential (including driveways and gardens)
- Indicative Frontage / Focal Building
- Community Use
- Public Open Space
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Existing Tree / Hedgerow
- Indicative Tree
- Main Street / Highway
- Shared Surface / Square
- Existing / Proposed Public Right of Way
- Potential Bus-only Route
- Indicative Balancing Pond
- 10m Contours

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Do not scale from this drawing. This drawing is for indicative purposes only. All information contained on this drawing should be verified through proper survey.

Rural Project, Kumberg, ACD5824, Hazelwall Farm, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST10 2JG, 003\_A, Draft Concept Alternative Masterplan, 08/10/2013.dwg

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When existing trees are to be retained they should be subject to a full Arboricultural Inspection for safety. All trees are to be planted so as to ensure they are a minimum of 5 metres from buildings and 3 metres from other structures. A suitable method of foundation is to be provided to accommodate the proposed trees and services.  
Sketch proposals are for illustrative purposes only & as such are subject to detailed site investigation proposals. The proposed site investigation proposals may be based upon estimations of OS sheets & visual estimations of existing site features, accuracy of information used to be verified by survey. Sketch proposals have not been considered in respect of CDM regulations.



Revisions: Date: Amendment: Name: Checked:



2420 The Quadrant, Ayrce Way, Abingdon, Oxford OX14 3AD  
T 01454 833800 F 01454 833829 E rpsweb@rpsgroup.com W www.rpsgroup.com/design

Client: **Jennings Estates**  
Project: **Hazelwall Farm Uttoxeter**

Title: **Concept Alternative Masterplan**

Status: **DRAFT** Checked: **JR**  
Drawn: **JR/MD** Date: **06:01:2011** Scale: **NTS**  
Drawing Ref:

Job No: **ACD5824** Dwg No: **500\_003** Rev: **A**

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