

MEETING MINUTES

Land at Moat Road, Headcorn - Meeting with Case Officer

Date: 22.02.24

Time: 16:00 – 17:30

Attendees:

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Marion Geary (MG) | MBC |
| Victoria Groves (VG) | Catesby |
| David Morris (DM) | Catesby |
| Guy Dixon (GD) | Savills |
| Philippa Robinson (PR) | Savills |
| Emily Harris (EH) | Savills |

1. **Purpose**

- 1.1. The purpose of the meeting is to outline the status of the application and the actions required to determine the application.

2. **Consultation Responses**

Landscape

PR explained that landscaping comments had been received from an external consultancy on behalf of the Council. In response to this an updated report has been submitted to MBC to show the winter views of the site. PR displayed the updated winter views on screen. MG was concerned that views from the southwestern side of Moat Road were lacking particularly from the west of the substation, near the proposed access of the site. VG explained that this was a localised view.

- 2.1. MG stated that a fresh view needs to be taken on the landscaping of the scheme because it was not looked in detail at the Local Plan allocation stage. She has “general concerns” with regards to the southwest corner of the site. VG explained that the screening on the site has addressed these concerns and queried what else was required. VG explained they could explore further opportunities for landscape screening here. VG requested clarification on what MG would expect to see in terms of landscaping. MG considers that *“the number of dwellings to the southwest corner needs to come down significantly”*. She is not convinced of the dual purpose of the SUDs ponds as they can look unattractive and do not act as landscape screening.

VG confirmed that Catesby would explore opportunities for strategic planting to screen the south western corner / access road.

- 2.2. DM queried whether this could be resolved by the removal of 3 dwellings to the southwest corner. MG explained that the proposal is already contrary to Policy which sets out the allocation is for 110 dwellings. DM also queried whether the southern parcel is acceptable as shown and MG considered that at this stage development in the southern parcel was unconvincing.

- 2.3. VG asked for further clarification on this point and MG considered that more screening was required. Especially on the section of the site labelled as A-A on the Design and Access statement. This shows a lot of the trees within back gardens which is not ideal. Marion also said that an east to west belt of trees (in addition to the north south) would be preferable to break up the landscape when viewed from the bottom of the slope.
- 2.4. PR sought clarity on whether Marion was intending to reconsult the external consultant or MBC would interpret the response themselves. MG did not confirm if she would reconsult.

Parks and Open Space

- 2.5. It was outlined by VG that the proposal has complied with both adopted and emerging local plan policies. The site is not flat and therefore it would not be able to accommodate a sports pitch. A contribution can be provided in accordance with Policy. The Open Space Officer considers that there is a deficit in natural / semi natural space provided on the site. Through liaison with the Open space officer it appears that this is on the basis of unmet need in the area rather than the unmet need created by the development. VG explained that the additional contribution is unlikely to meet the NPPF tests for obligations.

MG will speak to the Open Space Officer to understand more.

Archaeology and Conservation

- 2.6. PR noted the meeting that took place with Wendy Rogers of KCC Archaeology that MG attended.
- 2.7. Catesby and their heritage consultant has reviewed the layout and managed to retain the ROC under the proposed road layout. Wendy Rogers has agreed this approach. She also requested further notes of the historic farmstead in the south eastern corner of the site. Catesby and their heritage consultant consider that a shelter could be created that has the same historic character and structure as the curtilage listed building. This could include interpretive signage or be used as a feature of the open space.
- 2.8. VG stated that the council has refused the demolition of the Listed Building and that Catesby would like to know what is expected for that building. It has been patched up over many years and it is completely incapable of repurpose or reuse. The historic maps clearly show that there was a building there before that the listing occurred. However, this existing building no longer represents the historic building.
- 2.9. It was queried whether the conservation officer has been on site at all. MG was not able to confirm. MG recommended that a site visit is arranged with the Heritage Officer present. VG noted that the original Pre-app was meant to include an onsite meeting with the Landscape and Heritage Officer. However, due to the extreme weather, the meeting took place at MBC officer and they did not attend. MG confirmed that this fee could be used for a site visit now.

PR to contact Janice Gooch to arrange site visit. Reference 22/501788

- 2.10. DM expressed frustration that no warning had been given about the refusal and that the Conservation Officer had not been to site and inspected the building. MG confirmed that the conservation officer had not been to the site in advance of the decision being issued but also noted that in her pre-app response that the Heritage Officer may resist the demolition of the building.
- 2.11. Notwithstanding the fact that the conservation officer had not been to the site, MG expressed her disappointment that the views of the Church Tower has not been included in the proposals. VG explained that the only public viewpoint is to on the PROW, however, there are some other viewpoints in the site. Most notably at the mature tree that sits in the eastern site of the central open space. In the summer the views would be limited with leaf cover. VG would be happy to provide viewpoint analysis for MG.

Trees

- 2.12. MG sent the tree comments to PR to distribute. The main concern was that the tree survey did not cover the area covered by the S278 works. VG acknowledged that the AIA would not cover the 278 works. MG was concerned about a large tree adjacent to Moat Road. VG clarified that the footpath will be raised work rather than dug work and so will protect the roots.

PR to distribute Tree Officer comments to the team.

KCC Highways

- 2.13. PR confirmed no objection from KCC Highways.
- 2.14. MG queried whether the road safety audit had required any engineering works to the bridge on Moat Road such as a barrier. VG explained that this would be subject to S278 works as it outside of the redline but that they can discuss it with their technical manager.

VG to liaise with Technical Manager regarding bridge barrier.

- 2.15. MG also asked for more detail about the lighting on footpaths. VG noted that this would be dealt with by the S278 details.
- 2.16. MG also queried the provision of a cycle lane. VG confirmed that the Moat Road is too narrow for a cycle lane. Also, if a cycle road was included on this stretch of road, it wouldn't lead to any other cycle path so would not be useful.

Parish Council objections

- 2.17. MG raised the Parish Council Objections but said that she had not yet read them in detail. PR/VG explained that a response can be provided but guidance from MG on specific details is requested.

3. Local Plan update

- 3.1. VG understood that April 2024 is the new target date for the adoption of the emerging Local Plan. MG thought the current councillors would be keen to get it through ahead of the elections, although MG thought this was ambitious.

MG would contact Head of Policy for a Local Plan Update

4. General comments on the scheme

- 4.1. VG acknowledged that there are matters to address however would like to know what the future of the application is i.e. timeframes etc. Catesby is keen to get a recommendation for approval. MG was only aware of one application that had been taken to committee prior to the Local Plan adoption. It is not standard practice to recommend any emerging allocation for approval before the local plan adoption.
- 4.2. VG requested whether MBC had any internal requirements for the site. MG explained the concern she had raised in the pre-application and that she feels like the same scheme has been submitted. VG set out that Catesby are listening, and amendments are being made.
- 4.3. DM sought to confirm how many homes MBC Development Management would consider be acceptable on the site. In response, MG answered "definitely less than 110, and psychologically more like 100." DM

explained that Catesby would need to discuss this with the landowner, as there did not appear to be any proven rationale for the number of dwellings that were suggested based on the consultation responses received.

- 4.4. MG explained that their expectations are driven by landscape. It is a very landscape sensitive area. They would seek a larger no build zone to allow more screening from the south and an east/west line of trees in the northern parcel of land. DM explained that this possibly could be incorporated, but the exact number of dwellings it would reduce by would be difficult to guess at this stage. MG considered that members would expect to see in the region of 100 dwellings.

Catesby to explore the options to overcome Officer concerns on landscape impacts from the south

END

Actions:

- **Catesby to explore opportunities for strategic planting to screen the south western corner / access road.**
- **MG to speak to the Open Space Officer.**
- **PR to email Janice Gooch (reference 22/501788) requesting a site visit.**
- **PR to distribute Tree Officer comments to the team.**
- **VG to liaise with Technical Manager regarding bridge barrier.**
- **MG to contact Head of Policy for Local Plan update.**
- **Catesby to explore the options to overcome Officer concerns on landscape impacts from the south.**