

IN THE MATTER OF A PLANNING APPLICATION RELATING TO LAND  
SITUATE AND KNOWN AS "BEECHDRIFT" 108 BENNETT AVENUE  
ELMSWELL NEAR BURY ST EDMUNDS IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE OWNERS OF THE  
SAID LAND BEING MR AND MRS M ULLMAN UNDER PLANNING  
APPLICATION REFERENCE NUMBER 1213/06/OUT

=====

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

=====

RELATING TO THE OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL  
DEVELOPMENT ON THE SAID LAND COMPRISING FOUR RESIDENTIAL  
UNITS AS SHOWN ON THE SITE LAYOUT PLAN SUBMITTED WITH THE  
PLANNING APPLICATION

ALBION PLANNING CONSULTANTS LIMITED  
SELWYN CHAMBERS  
SAMPSON HOUSE  
THE STREET  
WOOLPIT  
BURY ST EDMUNDS  
SUFFOLK IP30 9QN

TEL: 01359 245140

FAX: 01359 245085

Email: [info@albionconsultants.biz](mailto:info@albionconsultants.biz)

Website: [www.albionconsultants.biz](http://www.albionconsultants.biz)

## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This Design and Access Statement accompanies an Application for Outline Planning Permission for proposed residential development on land at 108 Bennett Avenue Elmswell near Bury St Edmunds Suffolk. The proposed residential development comprises the proposed erection of four residential houses in substitution for the current single large house on the site which is to be demolished prior to commencement of work on the erection of the four replacement residential dwellings.

1.2 The Design and Access Statement has been written to meet the requirements of Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

1.3 Given that the proposal set out in the Outline Planning Application is for a small development comprising four residential properties, some aspects of the guidelines relating to the social and economic context are of limited applicability.

## 2. **DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS**

### 2.1 **Amount of development proposed**

2.1.1 The area of the site is shown on the plan attached to this Design and Access Statement which is marked Plan A. The plan which is on a scale of 1:200 was

prepared on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and bears drawing reference number 03.07.1355. The application site is shown encompassed by the bold interrupted red line on the said plan. At the present time, the site supports a large single residential dwelling together with a very substantial large garden. At the northern end of the site, there is a small shared driveway which provides access to both the property on the application site known as “Beechdrift” and the property on the adjacent site known as “Beechglade”.

2.1.2 The application site is located within an area of established residential dwellings which are mainly standard dwelling houses built on an estate layout constructed in the early 1980s. In general terms, the dwellings mainly comprise detached and semi-detached properties with substantial areas of soft landscaping along the frontages of the said properties. The application site which is known as “Beechdrift” is clearly located on the eastern side of Bennett Avenue. It is a large detached dwelling with a detached double garage sited in the front garden. The property is aligned north/south with the front and rear garden areas parallel to Bennett Avenue. The property is accessed from the front via the said small private driveway located at the northern end of the site.

2.1.3 The front garden area is predominantly laid to lawn with a laurel hedging marking the northern boundary and partitioning the drive. There are two young beech trees and a mature beech tree on the front lawn of the property. The large mature

beech tree is diseased and dying and will be removed in accordance with an Approval issued by the Local Planning Authority.

2.1.4 The rear garden of the property faces the south and is bounded on the eastern, southern and western aspects by evergreen hedging. Leyland cypress forms the hedges to the east and south. Both of these landscape features are sited in adjacent gardens. The hedge to the west is western red cedar and is within the boundary of “Beechdrift”.

2.1.5 The application site constitutes level land with no significant undulations.

2.1.6 Planning Policy Statement No. 3 recognises that new housing development cannot be viewed in isolation. It emphasises the wider context and the townscape. These themes are also reflected in the Statutory Development Plan for the Mid Suffolk District. It is clear that the existing form of development on the site comprises residential development with gable walls parallel to the road. It therefore follows that the proposed redevelopment scheme on the site should follow the same layout which will comprise the construction of houses with gable end walls parallel to the road. Given the dimensions of the site, it is possible to locate four new residential detached 2-storey houses within the site with their respective gable walls located parallel to Bennett Avenue and accessed by a small single private drive. This arrangement therefore demands that the layout should comprise new

properties two deep with the frontages of all of the said four properties fronting onto the single access drive which will have a junction with Bennett Avenue.

2.1.7 Planning Policy Statement No. 3 recognises that new housing development cannot be viewed in isolation. It emphasises the wider context and the townscape. These themes are also reflected in the adopted Mid Suffolk District Local Plan. It is considered that having regard to the surrounding existing development in the locality, a proposal for four detached dwellings on the site would be consistent with the existing character of the area and would therefore be clearly consistent with the terms of the policies set out in the Statutory Development Plan.

2.1.8 The proposed development is clearly located within the settlement boundary and is not allocated for an alternative use. It has no adverse impact upon the access, car parking or amenity space arrangements of any existing dwellings in the locality. The siting of the proposed new dwellings would not have any adverse impact upon the peace and privacy enjoyed by adjacent existing residential occupiers. The size of the proposed gardens for each of the dwellings is consistent with the general size of gardens for existing properties in the area. The proposed development would not constitute tandem development because the properties to be built will enjoy a shared private access drive leading directly onto Bennett Avenue.

2.1.9 The amount of the development proposed is entirely consistent with the recommendations set out in Planning Policy Statement No. 3 concerning the required density for development of this nature on previously developed land. It is clearly consistent with the amount of development permitted by Mid Suffolk District Council relating to other similar sites within the village of Elmswell. It therefore follows that the amount of development proposed on the application site is fully in accordance with the policies of the Mid Suffolk District Council and the policies of Central Government.

2.1.10 Clearly, the large garden at “Beechdrift” is far too large for one family to manage and given the circumstances of the current owners, Mr and Mrs Ullman, it is felt that a discreet and reasonable development scheme comprising four houses is clearly reasonable in all the circumstances. It is also considered that the current size of the grounds around “Beechdrift” creates an incongruous feature in the street scene at Bennett Avenue. It should be noted that long after “Beechdrift” was completed, the Council granted Planning Permission for the construction of a large residential estate comprising detached and semi-detached dwellings along the road known as Bennett Avenue on land adjacent to and opposite “Beechdrift”. It therefore follows that the decisions of the Local Planning Authority led to a substantial change in the character of the surrounding area and the amount of development one would expect to be placed on land fronting Bennett Avenue. Accordingly, the proposed development scheme is in a way designed to ensure that the grounds of “Beechdrift” are redeveloped in order to provide an amount of

development on the land which is consistent with the normal density and form of development now established along Bennett Avenue.

## 2.2 **Scale**

2.2.1 A street scene elevation has been included with the Outline Application. The street scene elevation clearly indicates that the height and width of each of the proposed new dwellings is appropriate having regard to the scale of existing development in Bennett Avenue. Whilst there is some variation in roof heights, it can be seen generally that the eave heights of the existing built development in Bennett Avenue is remarkably consistent. Accordingly, the proposed four new dwellings on the application site have been designed in such a way as to match the height and width of the existing houses which have a visual relationship with the application site.

2.2.2 The height of the ridge of the roof for all four properties is 10 metres. This reflects the average height as measured at the ridge of the roof of other properties in Bennett Avenue. The roof pitch on all four properties is 45% which is typical of the other properties in Bennett Avenue.

2.2.3 The width of each of the four new dwelling houses is 8 metres. This is comparable with neighbouring properties as the street scene elevation clearly indicates.

2.2.4 The depths of each of the said four dwellings is consistent with the average depth of other dwellings in Bennett Avenue.

2.2.5 The Circular accompanying the Regulations indicates that the elements of the design have to be justified in terms of human scale. In the present case, the proposed four residential dwellings are designed to relate well to the neighbouring properties and it is considered to be well related to the human scale.

### 2.3 **Appearance**

2.3.1 The predominant character of Bennett Avenue, Elmswell is that of modern compact residential dwellings. There is a mix of semi-detached and detached dwellings. However, on the land directly opposite to the application site at Bennett Avenue, the properties are primarily detached properties. The properties were constructed in the late-1980s and 1990s and are typical properties of that period with no apparent attempt to create a special character by design. Accordingly, the design concept in the present case has been to create four new residential properties in the style of a modern house of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, at the same time, the design also respects the surroundings of the said property. We have been keen to avoid a pastiche solution. It has already been mentioned that the proposed development comprising four residential properties is set out in a scale which is wholly in accordance with the scale of the existing neighbouring

properties in Bennett Avenue. Clearly, our clients do not want their design to be incongruous with the design of the existing properties in Bennett Avenue. Reference should be made to the Suffolk Design Guide to assist the design process.

2.3.2 A key aspect of the design has been to achieve a “green” style dwelling house for each of the four new properties. It is clear from the design that the objective is to achieve a very good rating in the Eco Homes Standard. One external aspect of this is the inclusion of solar panels on the rear elevation of each of the said four properties.

2.3.3 Considerable thought has also been given to the use of materials. There are innovative solutions within the four dwelling houses designed to ensure their green credentials. With reference to the materials, it should be noted that the main materials within the four dwelling houses will comprise the typical soft red Essex brick. The external walls will be faced in an Essex Red made by the Brunel Brick Company. The roof materials will comprise traditional roof material in a red clay plain tile.

2.3.4 The design fully responds to the most recent Central Government guidance as expressed in Planning Policy Statement No. 1. By building to the Eco Homes Standard, the design responds to the need for development to be sustainable as set

out in Planning Policy Statement No. 1. The design fully complies with the policies set out in the Statutory Development Plan for the Mid Suffolk District.

## 2.4 **Layout**

2.4.1 As mentioned in previous sections within this Design and Access Statement, the layout of the proposed development comprising four residential dwellings is designed to reflect the existing form of orientation and layout of the existing residential house on the site known as “Beechdrift”. The layout now proposed for the new four residential dwellings therefore follows the existing pattern of development on not only the application site itself but also on the adjacent site located behind “Beechdrift” which is known as “Beechglade”. The layout creates a number of advantages in that it clearly minimises the prospect of any overlooking between the proposed new development and the existing adjacent development at “Beechglade”. At the same time, it also reduces the number of access points required from the application site onto Bennett Avenue.

2.4.2 The layout includes a private communal access drive leading from Bennett Avenue into the site which serves the frontages of the proposed new four residential dwellings. The layout also constitutes the most efficient form of layout in terms of use of the available land. It is therefore fully compliant with Central Government advice set out in Planning Policy Statement No. 3. The private

amenity space provided for each of the four new residential dwellings clearly satisfies the minimum requirements set out in the Statutory Development Plan.

2.4.3 In considering the layout, attention has also been given to crime issues. This is identified as a key issue in Planning Policy Statement No. 1. The scheme has also been designed with reference to the policies set out in the Statutory Development Plan. The layout has also been designed after taking into account the advice set out in the publication “Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention” published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003. The development is clearly open in both form and aspect and will reduce the opportunity for crime in Bennett Avenue. Windows, doors and locks will all be designed to meet “secured by design” standards.

## 2.5 **Landscaping**

2.5.1 The application site in part supports a total of three trees and four hedges. These landscaping features have been identified by Hayden’s Tree and Woodland Management Services in their report on the site issued on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007. In that report, there was a full examination of the existing trees on the site and an arboricultural implication assessment.

2.5.2 One tree on the southern part of the site is a mature lime tree in respect of which the trunk of the tree is actually located in the front garden of the neighbouring

property known as “Wood Grange”. This tree is approximately 6 metres from the southern boundary of “Beechdrift”. Technically, it does not overhang the boundary of “Beechdrift” to any significant amount. The tree has a slight lean to the south but displays no unexpected indicators of disease, instability or decay.

2.5.3 There are two young beech trees which appear to have been planted during the course of the last five years at the northern end of the site. Whilst being attractive trees, they are not large enough to have any significant impact on the surroundings. There is an additional large mature beech tree in the front garden of the property known as “Beechdrift”. However, the said tree is diseased and technically unsafe. It has been recommended by the arboriculturalist that the tree be removed as soon as possible. This has been accepted by the Council’s own Tree and Landscape Officer.

2.5.4 There are four evergreen hedges on or adjacent to the application site. One of the hedges is a low laurel hedge which provides a boundary to the private access drive running from Bennett Avenue into “Beechdrift”. There is also a boundary hedge in the garden between “Beechdrift” and “Beechglade”. It is a leyland cypress hedge which appears to have been maintained and is in a good condition. This hedge will of course remain in the current location and condition after the redevelopment scheme as proposed is implemented.

- 2.5.5 There is also a hedge on the southern boundary between “Beechdrift” and “Wood Grange”. This hedge is in the garden of “Wood Grange” and appears to have been cut back quite hard. However, it still provides adequate screening. It is proposed that this hedge should also be retained after the redevelopment scheme has been implemented.
- 2.5.6 There is also an attractive well-clipped western red cedar hedge which provides dense screening when viewed from Bennett Avenue. At the present time, this lends considerable privacy to the rear garden of “Beechdrift”. Clearly, as part of the redevelopment proposals, this particular hedge will be subject to redevelopment works which will involve substantial breaches in a large part of the said hedgerow. However, it should be noted that this hedgerow only serves the application site at the present time and accordingly the substantial removal of part of this said hedgerow will not have an adverse impact upon any adjacent neighbouring residential property.
- 2.5.7 It should be noted that site meetings have been held over a period of several months and the Council’s Tree and Landscaping Officer has attended site meetings and agreed upon a course of work as part of a landscaping proposal which would involve work on the trees. It is noted that the trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order referenced under Order No. 312 being an Area Tree Preservation Order issued in 1973. It is recognised that consent must be obtained from the Local Planning Authority before any tree works are undertaken and this

is acknowledged as part of the scheme. The works proposed on the trees are set out in the Schedule of Works for the trees issued by Hayden's in their report mentioned above. In essence, the proposed development will require the removal of three trees. It should be noted that under the proposals set out in the arboricultural report issued by Hayden's, there is a proposed new planting scheme for new trees as shown on drawing number 03.07.1355. The recommended species have been chosen and sited to provide landscaping that will blend in with the surrounding trees whilst providing a garden interest and screening at a reasonable distance from the dwellings. It should be noted that the third tree being one of the young beech trees can be retained to compliment the new planting design.

2.5.8 The proposed development encroaches within the root protection area of the lime tree. This involves the construction of the access drive to garaging facilities as part of the redevelopment proposal. It should be noted that the scheme will involve the use of a "no dig" construction method as detailed in the arboricultural report issued by Hayden's. The footprint of the proposed new garage closest to the lime tree extends within the root protection area and as such it will be necessary to use specialised foundation design comprising a pad and beam to ensure that the root system suffers no undue disturbance. Given the proximity of the garage to the lime tree, it will be necessary to provide the higher grade protective fencing in accordance with figure 3 of BS5837: 2005 as shown in Appendix 2 to the arboricultural report issued by Hayden's. This is required to be

positioned along the line of protective fencing shown on drawing no. 03.07.1355 where it coincides with the designated “no dig” area. The same approach should also be adopted to protect the young beech tree which will be retained at the northern end of the site.

2.5.9 All fencing with reference to the protection of the trees on the site will be erected prior to any proposed redevelopment on the site. This will ensure maximum protection. The fencing will be constructed with weld mesh panels on a framework of scaffolding driven into the ground to a suitable depth to ensure its stability and in line with BS5837:2005. The fencing, once erected, will be regarded as sacrosanct and will not be removed or altered without the prior consent of the arboricultural officer retained by the Local Planning Authority.

2.5.10 Remedial planting is proposed once the redevelopment scheme has been completed which will soften and ameliorate the appearance of the development. The remedial planting scheme is shown on the indicative plan submitted in support of the Planning Application. The species choice has been made to ensure that the trees and hedges will provide stature and compliment the wider landscape. The professional view expressed by the independent arboricultural advisor is that when the development has been implemented as proposed then the detrimental impact arising from necessary tree removal will be negligible. In fact, the arboricultural advisor considers that the proposed works will enable proper and appropriate maintenance of the remaining trees as part of the development

through both good arboricultural management and the implementation of the proposed landscaping scheme for the site.

2.5.11 With reference to the front gardens of each of the four new residential properties, it should be noted that each front garden will be laid as a lawn. With reference to the driveways to the properties, it should be noted that within Bennett Avenue generally, the existing approach is to include concrete or tarmac drives. Neither surface is aesthetically pleasing and both increase surface water run off and potential flooding. After researching green alternatives, a gravel surface has been specified. The base is formed by recycled plastic in which the gravel sits. The appearance is of gravel but it suffers none of the problems of gravel finishes such as compaction or spilling onto the road. It remains free draining so avoids surface water run off or flooding problems.

2.5.12 The Circular accompanying the Regulations says that a Design and Access Statement must explain how landscaping will be maintained. In this case, all of the space is private space and the owners of the new four residential dwellings will each maintain their appropriate part of the landscaping scheme.

## 2.6 **Examination of relevant planning policies**

2.6.1 In considering the Policy Framework, one should first consider National Planning Guidance and then the policies in the Local Statutory Development Plan. Clearly,

National Planning Guidance now favours the better use of existing urban land. It is clear that the appeal site is located within the urban settlement within an area allocated for residential development. National Policy as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note Number 3 clearly supports the recycling of residential land where it will achieve a more efficient form of development. The current proposal clearly puts forward a scheme for the more efficient use of a very substantial area of land within the existing settlement boundary.

2.6.2 The current proposal also clearly supports provision of additional much needed residential development within the area and in accordance with the general character of the area. It should be noted that the appeal site is located within an area where the predominant form of residential development is the small executive detached residence. The appeal proposal suggests similar development to that already existing in Bennett Avenue.

2.6.3 It is also considered that proposed development is entirely consistent with the policies set out in the Statutory Development Plan. The following policies are relevant:-

(a) Policy ENV17 on resource conservation states:-

“The retention and appropriate management of existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands will be encouraged for their economic, landscape and

ecological value and historic interest. Applications for the removal of hedgerows which are deemed to be important according to the criteria set down in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 will not be acceptable. Where serious harm to the landscape or wildlife would result from tree felling, District Councils will, where appropriate, impose Tree Preservation Orders. The local planning authorities will carry out planting themselves, will support planting by others and provide advice on the conservation of the landscape.”

The above policy ENV17 on resource conservation is taken from the Suffolk Structure Plan.

It should be noted that the proposals set out in the Planning Application are clearly consistent with the terms of the policy statement. The Appeal proposals do not contravene any part of the policy statement.

(b) Policy H3 on housing development in villages states:-

“Within settlement boundaries, applications for housing development will be considered in relation to the appearance and character of the village, the effect on nearby residential amenity and highway safety, the availability of services and facilities and policies for the protection of visually important open spaces and the surrounding countryside.

Residential development within the settlement boundaries of villages will normally take the form of:-

the infilling of small undeveloped sites unless it is desirable to retain a site in undeveloped form as an important amenity or open space in the village scene; or

a small group of dwellings, up to 5 in number, well related to its surroundings and the character of the village; or

in those villages where a wider range of services and facilities exist, groups of up to 9 dwellings well related to each other and the character of their surroundings.

In villages, housing development in the form of estates of 10 dwellings or more will be permitted only on sites allocated in the local plan.”

The above policy H3 on housing development in villages is taken from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

It should be noted that the proposals set out in the Planning Application are clearly consistent with the terms of the policy statement. The proposals do not contravene any part of the policy statement.

(c) Policy H13 on design and layout of housing development states:-

“New housing development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design and layout and be of a scale and density appropriate to the site and its surroundings. Proposals for residential development should take account of the following:-

design and layout should respect the character of the proposal site and the relationship of the proposed development to its surroundings;

design should complement the scale, form and materials of traditional building in the area;

amenities of neighbouring residents should not be unduly affected by reason of overlooking or loss of daylight;

dwellings should have adequate privacy, sufficient daylighting and sunlighting and be provided with private amenity space or gardens;

landscape features including hedges and trees should be retained unless this is impracticable or unnecessary;

historical, ecological or architectural features of a site should be retained unless this is impractical or unnecessary and where possible enhanced;

road layouts should be designed to the standards and requirements of the county highways authority;

road layouts should reduce traffic speeds in residential areas and provide for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists;

dwelling should have satisfactory access to the adjacent highway and car parking provision in accordance with the approved parking standards of the district planning authority.

When granting Planning Permission the district planning authority may include conditions to secure the satisfactory provision of a landscaping scheme and its subsequent maintenance for a period of not less than 5 years.”

The above policy H13 on design and layout of housing development is taken from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

It should be noted that the proposals set out in the Planning Application are clearly consistent with the terms of the policy statement. The proposals do not contravene any part of the policy statement.

(d) Policy H15 on development to reflect local characteristics states:-

“Proposed new housing should be consistent with the pattern and form of development in the neighbouring area, the character of its setting, particular site constraints such as access and drainage and the configuration of the site including its natural features.

On sites allocated in the local plan for new housing in the form of estate development, the district planning authority will generally encourage net densities in the range 25-37 dwellings per hectare (10-15 dwellings per acre).”

The above policy H15 on development to reflect local characteristics is taken from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

It should be noted that the proposals set out in the Planning Application are clearly consistent with the terms of the policy statement. The proposals do not contravene any part of the policy statement.

(e) Policy H16 on protecting existing residential amenity states:-

“To protect the existing amenity and character of primarily residential areas, the district planning authority will refuse:-

change to non-residential use where such a change would materially and detrimentally affect the character and amenity of the area by means of appearance, traffic generation, nuisance or safety;

the loss of open spaces which contribute to the character or appearance of an area and which are important for recreation or amenity purposes;

development that materially reduces the amenity and privacy of adjacent dwellings or erodes the character of the surrounding area.

The cumulative effect of a series of proposals will be taken into account.”

The above policy H16 on protecting existing residential amenity is taken from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

It should be noted that the proposals set out in the Planning Application are clearly consistent with the terms of the policy statement. The proposals do not contravene any part of the policy statement.

2.6.4 It is contended that the proposed development scheme is entirely consistent with the objectives set out in all of the above policies. Given the fact that the proposal is for a form of development consistent with the character of the area and in particular the predominating style and design of properties in the area, it is abundantly clear that the proposal cannot be rejected on policy grounds.

2.6.5 Clearly, the policies in the local plan must, of course, be considered and interpreted in the light of National Planning Policy Guidance. The relevant National Planning Policy Guidance is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Statement No. 3 on Housing. It is clear from the National Planning Policy Guidance set down by Central Government that there is an expectation that new residential development will primarily be located within the settlement boundaries of existing urban settlements. Furthermore, there is an expectation that this will inevitably require the recycling of existing developed urban land. It therefore follows that there is an expectation that existing built areas will be examined for the purpose of increasing the existing urban capacity.

2.6.6 Given the above points, it is quite clear that the proposal to demolish the existing large house on the site and to erect four detached executive homes on the site constitutes the recycling of existing urban land. It is clearly in accordance with the objectives set down by Central Government because it enables existing urban land to provide more homes for people without in any way affecting the open countryside located outside the settlement boundary. In essence, the opportunity in this case will form part of the opportunities which are designed to relieve the pressure for development on open countryside.

2.6.7 It is also clear that another principle objective behind Central Government Policy within urban settlements is to establish a higher density for residential development. Accordingly, the proposal contained in the current application is also fully in accordance with the objectives of Central Government as expressed in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3 on Housing and also in subsequent announcements. Clearly, the proposal to site four detached dwellings in a site which currently only supports one dwelling is a more efficient use of land which will produce a higher density and will therefore fully accord with Central Government Policy.

2.6.8 It is also clear that Central Government favours new development in sites which are regarded as acceptable in terms of sustainable development. It is contended that the appeal site in this case fully accords with the principles relating to

sustainable development. In particular, it is quite clear that the site is well served by existing public transport links together with all of the necessary local support services within easy level walking distance. It should be noted that Elmswell is a very large village which could almost be described as a town in its own right. It has all of the main support services required of a town within the settlement boundary. It therefore follows that the appeal site is a sustainable site given its close proximity to existing services. Accordingly, the proposal to place four residential properties on the site is an ideal opportunity to ensure that more people can be housed in close proximity to existing services.

2.6.9 In order to provide further assistance in considering the policies in the Planning Policy Statement No. 3 on Housing, we now set out in the following points:-

“Maintaining a Supply of Housing

The Government is committed to promoting more sustainable patterns of development by :-

concentrating most additional housing development within urban areas;

making more efficient use of land maximizing the re-use of previously-developed land and the conversion and re-use of existing buildings;

assessing the capacity of urban areas to accommodate more housing;

adopting a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing development;

managing the release of housing land; and

reviewing existing allocations of housing land in plans and planning permissions when they come up for renewal.

### Re-using Urban Land and Buildings

The Government is committed to maximizing the re-use of previously-developed land and empty properties and the conversion of non-residential buildings for housing in order both to promote regeneration and minimize the amount of Greenfield land being taken for development.

### Making the Best Use of Land

Local planning authorities should avoid the inefficient use of land. New housing development in England is currently built at an average of 25 dwellings per hectare but more than half of all new housing is built at less than 20 dwellings per hectare. That represents a level of land take which is historically very high and

which can no longer be sustained. Such development is also less likely to sustain local services or public transport, ultimately adding to social exclusion. Local planning authorities should therefore examine critically the standards they apply to new development particularly with regard to roads, layouts and car parking, to avoid the profligate use of land. Policies which place unduly restrictive ceilings on the amount of housing that can be accommodated on a site irrespective of its location and the type of housing envisaged or the types of households likely to occupy the housing, should be avoided.

#### Rural Housing – Village Expansion and Infill

In terms of overall housing provision, only a limited amount of housing can be expected to be accommodated in expanded villages. Whilst occasionally a village could be the basis for a new settlement where, for example, the development accords with the policy of developing around major nodes in transport corridors, most proposals for additional housing will involve infill development or peripheral expansion.

Villages will only be suitable locations for accommodating significant additional housing where:

- a. it can be demonstrated that additional housing will support local services, such as schools or shops, which could become unviable without some

modest growth. This may particularly be the case where the village has been identified as a local service centre in the development plan;

- b. additional houses are needed to meet local needs, such as affordable housing, which will help secure a mixed and balanced community; and
- c. the development can be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the village using such techniques as village design statements.”

2.6.10 The above points clearly indicate that the proposals set out in the current Appeal are fully in accordance with Central Government advice.

### 3.0 **ACCESS**

#### 3.1 **Access to the transport network**

3.1.1 The site is within the built up area of Elmswell. It is well located for pedestrian access to facilities as set out below:-

- a. The local convenience shop – 250 metres.
- b. The local railway station – 1,000 metres.

- c. Doctors – 1.9 miles.
- d. School – 750 metres.
- e. Public open space – 250 metres.

In all cases, there are no steep gradients or major roads to cross thereby giving good accessibility to all in the community.

There is no local special provision for cyclists and it is inappropriate for this development to make any off site provision.

- 3.1.2 Public transport is well provided for in the locality. There are bus stops in adjacent residential roads which are accessible within 200 metres from the site. The service to the nearest large major town, Bury St Edmunds, is 1 hourly during the day between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. The bus service gives access to employment, shopping facilities as well as to evening entertainment.
- 3.1.3 The location of the site is sustainable and with the exception of cycling has good provision for means other than the car.

## 3.2 **Car provision**

3.2.1 The car parking policies are essentially superseded by Government advice in Planning Policy Statement No. 3. This seeks a reduction in on-site car parking. This is reflected in the vehicle parking standards applicable to the area. In a sustainable location such as this, the policy is for a maximum of one car parking space.

3.2.2 With reference to the layout of the proposed development, it is clear that each of the properties will have one garage and a car can be housed within the said garage. At the same time, there are also drives leading to the said garages and from time to time a second car can be located where appropriate on relevant parts of the driveways leading to the said garages.

3.2.3 Consultation has taken place with the Highway Authority at Suffolk County Council. It is agreed that with the low traffic levels in Bennett Avenue, Elmswell, there is no objection to the car parking proposals as set out on the layout plan. The appropriate visibility splays are clearly provided on the road junction layout between the new private access road and Bennett Avenue, Elmswell.

### 3.3 **Inclusive access**

3.3.1 Given that the application is only for the erection of four residential dwellings, the reference to wider consultation in the Regulations is not applicable.

3.3.2 The development site is level and accordingly there are no issues relating to gradients. A level access is provided from the footpath in Bennett Avenue to the front doors of each of the said four residential properties. As mentioned above, a gravel surface is proposed. This is suitable for use by prams and wheelchairs because the textured base means it has a firm surface.

3.3.3 The submitted plans fully comply with the policy and design requirements for the provision of housing suitable for disabled people. It should be noted that some of the criteria however do relate to internal aspects which the Circular accompanying the Regulations indicates do not need to be addressed in a Design and Access Statement.

### 4.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 Elmswell Parish Council were consulted. They were also invited to and attended a site meeting at the site together with the Council's Planning Officer. They did not raise any objections in principle to the development.

4.2 The Highway Authority (Suffolk County Council) was consulted and the access detail incorporates their advice.

4.3 The Environment Agency's website has been checked. This shows that the site is in Zone 1 for flooding. No separate consultation was therefore needed.

4.4 Given that the development relates to the proposed erection of four residential dwellings and therefore do not constitute public buildings, no consultation has been undertaken with any access group.

4.5 According to our records, there is no local amenity society with an interest in Bennett Avenue and accordingly no consultation with such a body was possible.

## 5.0 **CONCLUSION**

5.1 It is therefore recommended that Planning Permission be granted in accordance with the plans submitted.

Albion Planning Consultants Limited  
Selwyn Chambers  
Sampson House  
The Street  
Woolpit  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk IP30 9QN

Tel: 01359 245140

Fax: 01359 245085

Email: [info@albionconsultants.biz](mailto:info@albionconsultants.biz)

Website: [www.albionconsultants.biz](http://www.albionconsultants.biz)

