



PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Land at Station Road Steeple Morden

September 2017



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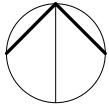
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Land at Station Road, Steeple Morden

Steeplefield

Scale 1:1,250 at A3

drawing Steeple01



Figure 1 Location Plan (drawing Steeple01 reproduced application drawing)

1.01 This statement has been prepared by Beacon Planning Ltd on behalf of Steeplefield Ltd to support an outline planning application on land between numbers 12 and 14 Station Road Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire for:

Construction of up to 12 dwellings with all matters reserved except access.

1.02 This statement demonstrates how the illustrative layout has been informed by a rigorous process of assessment, evaluation, consultation and design. This statement sets out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development in terms of:

- Amount of Development;
- Layout;
- Scale;
- Landscape;
- Appearance; and
- Access.

1.03 This statement also:

- Demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account in relation to its proposed use;
- Explains access arrangements that will ensure all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings, spaces and the public transport network.

1.04 In addition to the application form and certificate, the following documents are submitted:

Plans – for determination

- Location Plan (drawing Steeple01); and
- Site Access Plan (drawing Steeple04).

Plans – Illustrative only

- Illustrative Site Planning Diagram (drawing Steeple02);
- Illustrative Layout Plan (drawing Steeple03);
- Tree constraints (drawing ATS0139-01); and
- Tree Protection (drawing ATS0139-02).

Statements and Reports

- Planning, Design & Access Statement (Beacon Planning Ltd);
- Transport Statement (SLR Consulting);
- Appraisal of Ecological Interests (Susan Deakin Ecology);
- Arboricultural Report (Argenta); and
- Bat Habitat Assessment Report (Denny Ecology).

Site location

2.01 The site is located to the west of Station Road, Steeple Morden, approximately 24km south west of Cambridge and 8km west of Royston. The A505 and the and the mainline station of Ashwell and Morden is some 4.8km to the south. The village has a population of some 1070 people (mid 2012 estimate) with some 470 dwellings.

2.02 The application site is located immediately adjacent to the village Development Framework which runs along part of the northern, all of the eastern and all of the southern boundaries of the site. The Conservation Area boundary borders a short section of the application site in the north-east corner and immediately to the south of the site is the Grade II listed Well Cottage.

2.03 A Public Right Way (PROW) runs along approximately half of the northern boundary of the site which links Station Road with Ashwell Road to the south west.



Figure 2 Photos of context 14 Station Road (Well Cottage)



Figure 2 Photos of context Cottages Station Road (Conservation Area)



Figure 2 Photos of context 27 Station Road (houses east side of road)



Figure 2 Photos of context Church



Figure 2 Photos of context Village church and pub



Figure 2 Photos of context Application site north boundary abuts PROW for 22m from hedge seen to left of photo

Site Description

2.04 The site subject of this application is some 0.75 hectares in area and is part of a larger site owned by the applicants of some 2.409 hectares. It is roughly rectangular in shape and has a street frontage of some 100 metres.

2.05 The site is part of a former orchard which has been unused, unmanaged and not harvested since the 1940s. The conditions across the application site do not vary significantly and comprise remnant Bramley fruit trees with several self-sown young Ash trees and a small number of mature Ash trees. (Variations in the location of existing elements within the site are described in the Arboricultural Report and the Appraisal of Ecological Interests). The main characteristic of the site is the dominance of Ivy both as a ground cover and in its arboreal phase, forming a dense 'closed canopy' within and connecting the branches of the remnant Bramley trees and many of the Ash trees. A considerable proportion of the canopy is dominated by Ivy and consequently the ground is shaded even during the winter months.

2.06 The front of the site is open to sunlight and its appearance from Station Road belies the conditions further back. The front boundary is defined by an unmanaged hedgerow including the majority of relatively healthy mature Ash trees as well as a few Hawthorn, Elder and Cherry trees extensively overgrown with Ivy.

2.07 There are no buildings on the site and there are no openings or points of access by vehicles.

2.08 The topsoil is a calcareous clay overlying Chalk Marl.

2.09 The site is on the west side of a subtle ridge with Station Road and Hay Street following the spine. The high point of the ridge is south of the village and the predominantly linear form of the village follows the curve

of the ridge dropping gradually towards the north. The site slopes imperceptibly to the west at a gradient of about 1:140. The site is fairly flat with the levels varying within a range of about 1.10 metres. Levels within the adjacent carriageway slope down to the north from 51.53 AOD by the SE corner to 50.50 AOD by the NE corner at a gradient of about 1:97.



Figure 2 Photos of site (Station Road)



Figure 2 Photos of site (north boundary and internal)

Village History

2.10 The village has origins as far back as Domesday and has mainly been devoted to arable farming, with fruit growing from the C19. In the later Middle Ages the village was more populous than its neighbour Guilden Morden but thereafter, until the C20, only slightly smaller.

2.11 The historic core of the village is centred around the Church of St Peter and Paul's which was constructed in the C13 at the junction of Hay Street with Cheyney Street. It is noted that most of the roads from the village were straightened at enclosure in 1808. The Victoria County History notes that until the later C19 most houses stood beside a street running north and south past the church.

It was called Hay Street from the C13 to the C19, when there were c. 30 houses north of the church, while others, almost 40 by the 1860s, were spreading southwards along land formerly unbuilt on. Up to 10 more houses stood at the western end of the road, called by 1800 Cheyneys street, leading east from the church towards the rectory and Cheyneys manor house.

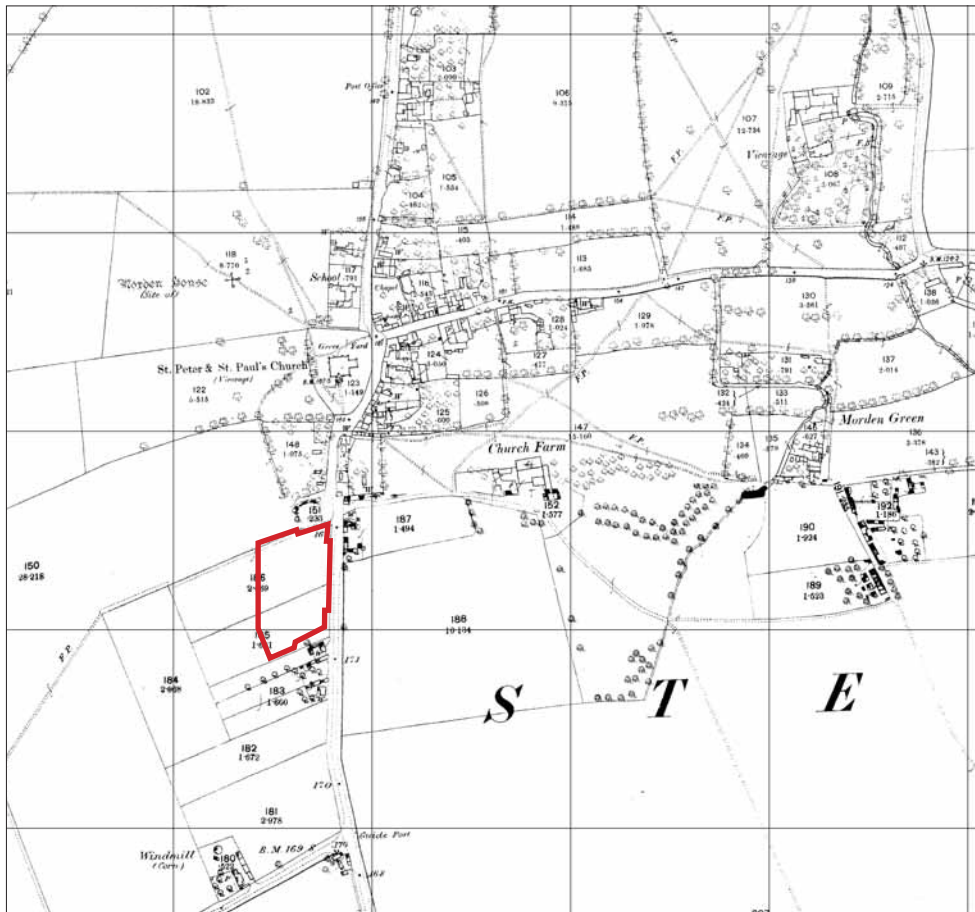


Figure 4 Ordnance Survey map of 1887

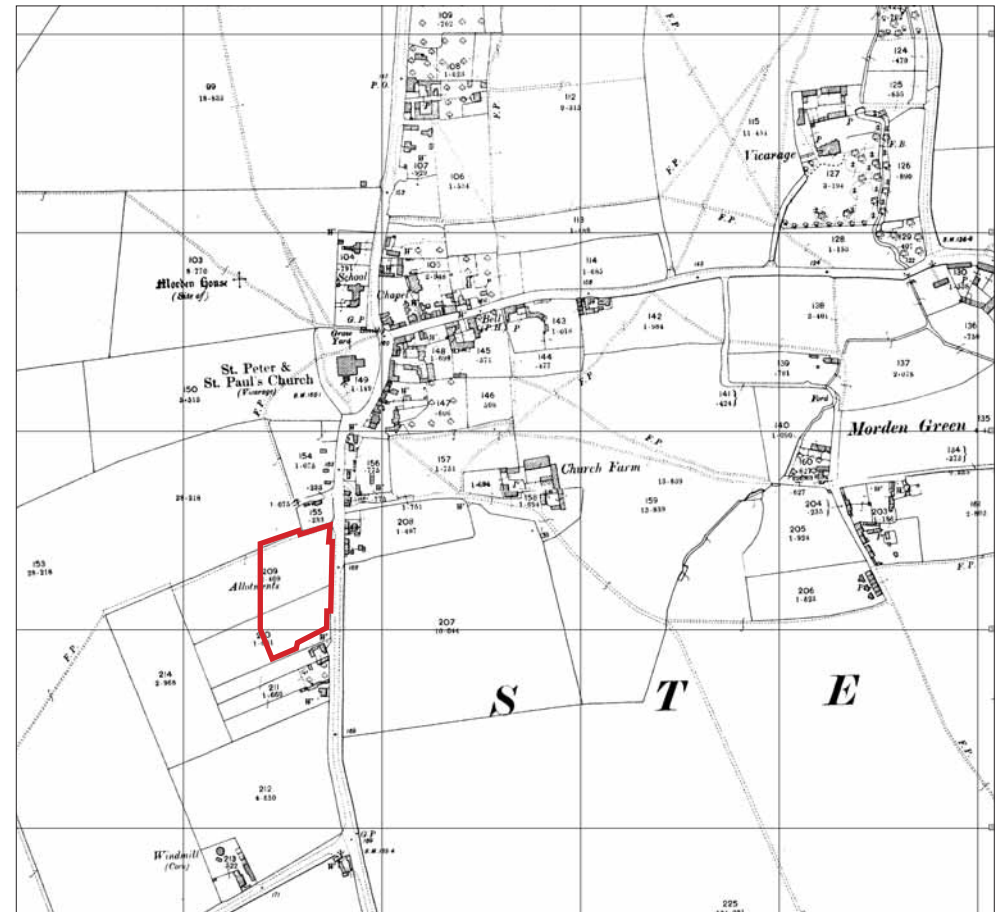


Figure 5 Ordnance Survey map of 1903

2.12 Although the village economy was historically derived from arable farming, from the end of the C19 onwards there was an increase in market farming and orchards. It is noted that by 1925 there was 8,000 trees within the village including some 5,500 apples and 2,300 plums.

2.13 The 1887 Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Fig 4) shows the Church at the centre of the village with housing to its north, east and south.

2.14 The 1903 OS map (Fig 5) shows little change. The same pattern of development is seen in the 1925 OS map (Fig 6) and is it not until the 1947 OS map (Fig

7) that the village begins to grow with housing now built along the eastern side of Station Road opposite the application site.

2.15 The 1975-6 OS map (Fig 8) shows a similar layout to the 1947 map, however development has increased to the south near the junction of Station Road and Ashwell

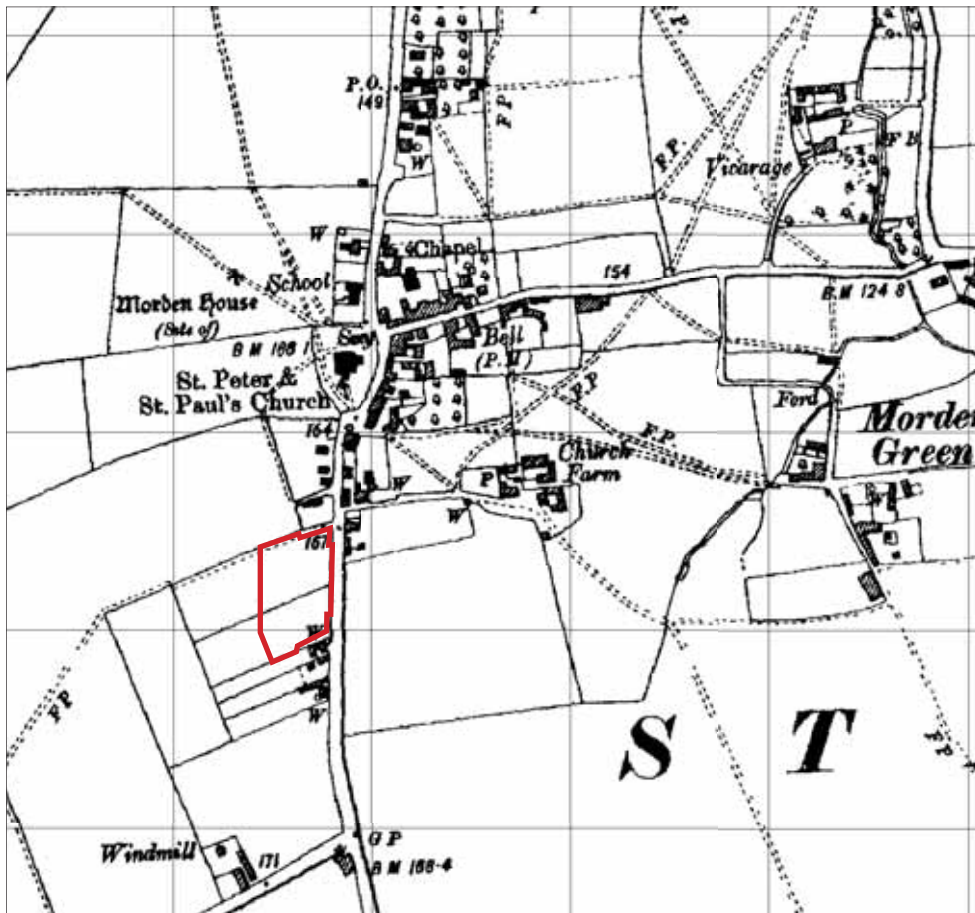


Figure 6 Ordnance Survey map of 1925

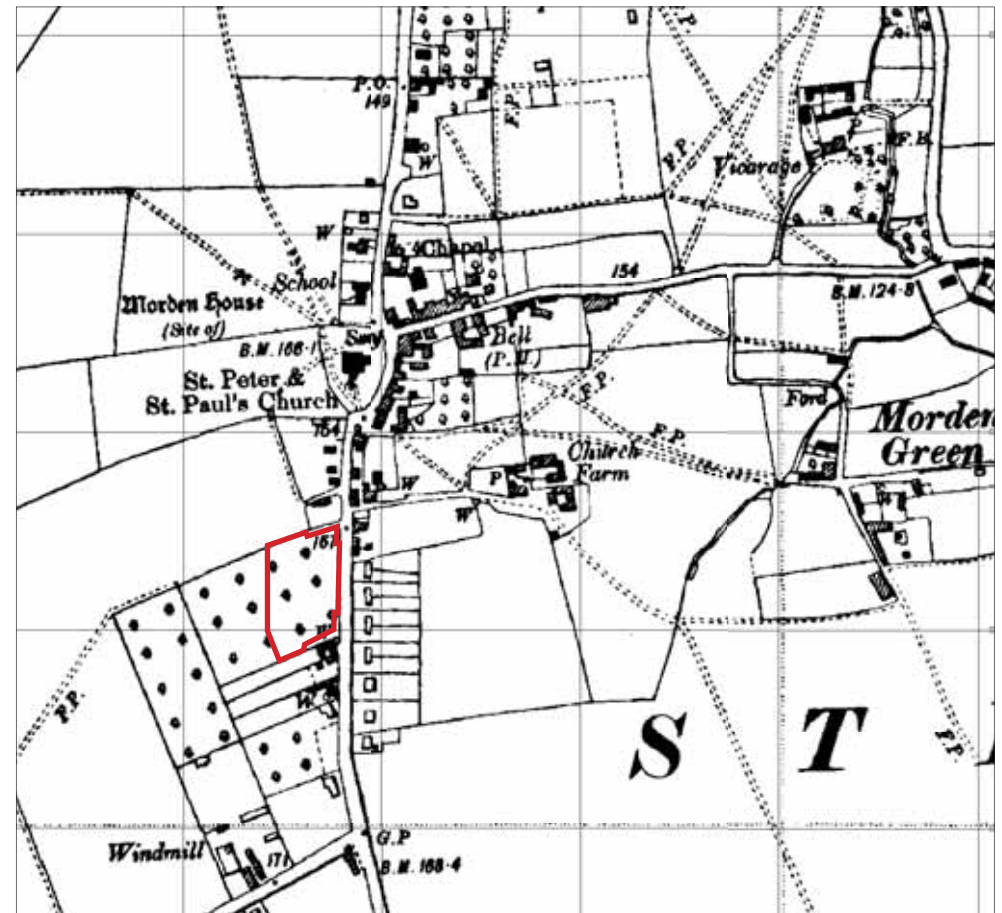


Figure 7 Ordnance Survey map of 1947

Road and to the north where housing estates have been established at Craft Way, Russell Close and Jubilee Way. The application site is still illustrated with trees.

Site history and use

2.16 The land edged blue on the application location drawing Steeple01 (figure 1) formed part of a farm including Home Farm farmhouse and cottages in Cheyney Street and several fields purchased from Rt. Hon Thomas Charles, Viscount Clifden of Wimpole Hall



Figure 8 Ordnance Survey map of 1975

in 1911 by John Franklin and his son William Franklin. In 1943 it was passed to William's wife Beatrice Emily Franklin (nee Rule) and subsequently through the Rule family to the present owners. The land edged blue on the application drawing is all that remains of that estate.

2.17 The Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (figure 4) shows field boundaries much as they are today. The farmland south and west of the church was known as 'Church Field' and was partly divided into smaller units. The application site (edged red on the application drawing) is part of fields 185 (subsequently renumbered 210) and 186 (renumbered 209). The land in the ownership of the applicant includes the northern part of field 184 (renumbered 214). The access to the land was via a track from Station Road in the north-east corner along the north boundary. It is likely that at this time only the cottages opposite and Well Cottage to the south existed as dwellings near the site and south of the church.

2.18 The Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1903 (figure 5) shows the northern part of the application site as allotments (field 209). That notation is not shown on the 1925 map (figure 6). Subsequently fields 209 and 210 were planted as an orchard of Bramley trees. The Ordnance Survey map of 1947 shows all three fields as orchards. Field 214 to the west of the application site was formerly a pig enclosure as well as an orchard of desert apples and cooking pears. It is assumed that the neglect of the site since the 1940s led to the Ordnance Survey to change the mapping so that only field 3915 (formerly 214) is shown as orchard on the map of 1975 (figure 8). This reflects the neglected and overgrown state of the trees since the 1940s which has persisted to the present time.



KEY	
	Site
	Public right of way
◆	Primary school
◆	Village Hall
●	Shop/post office
	Recreation ground
	Children play area
▲	Listed buildings
	Conservation Area boundary
●	Bus stop
	Village framework

(c) Getmapping plc 2017

Figure 9 Context plan (annotated aerial photograph)

Site Constraints

2.19 An initial analysis of the site has identified its opportunities and constraints (Fig 9). These include:

- The site is located adjacent to the development framework for Steeple Morden;
- The site has a frontage onto Station Road which has existing residential properties adjacent to the site and opposite;
- The site frontage does not have the designation 'Important countryside frontage'.
- Part of the site is adjacent to a public right of way;
- The site is in Flood Zone 1, therefore not in an area at risk of flooding.
- The site is not within the Conservation Area (except for a short length of public highway), but the boundary abuts the site at the north east corner;
- The adjacent Well Cottage is a Grade II listed building and there is a group of listed buildings to the north east of the site;
- The site forms part of a block recorded as 'woodland' and 'woodland improvement' on the government's website 'Magic';
- Neither the site nor the land in the same ownership is shown as 'traditional orchard' on Magic;

- The east boundary of the site with the highway is defined by a hedgerow including mature Ash trees; and
- No tree preservation orders have been served on the site;

Distance to facilities in the village

2.20 The application site is approximately 465 metres from the southern edge of the village (development framework) and 1.03km from the northern edge.

2.21 Distances by road from application site to notable features:

- Church 200 metres;
- Post office 438 metres;
- School 365 metres;
- Recreation ground 445 metres;
- Public House 125 metres;
- Farm shop on Ashwell Road 1.17 kilometres; and
- Main line station Ashwell and Morden 3.90 kilometres.

Surrounding building styles and development density

2.22 The existing residential buildings near the site vary considerably in architectural style. Opposite the north-east part of the site a row of cottages, some dating from 18th century, comprise a linear feature very close to the carriageway and a positive visual connection with the core of the village to the north. The upper storey of these houses is contained within the roof structure (photograph Figure 2)

2.23 The application site is on the boundary between the tight-knit character of the streetscape near the church north of the site and the loose streetscape of Station Road.

2.24 A listed building exists on the south boundary of the site (Well Cottage photograph Figure 2). It can be considered as an outlier of the quality of buildings and spaces within the conservation area around the church.

2.25 Opposite the site on the east side of Station Road a row of inter-war semi-detached houses are set back from the road with large front and rear gardens (photograph Figure 2).

2.26 South of the site the arrangement of houses has a low density, suburban character with most houses having been built since the 1960s. There are typically between six to nine houses per 100 metres of frontage. Any variation in architectural style and quality is masked by the repetitive arrangement of buildings and drives

with the street. Most of the houses face the road and have individual drives and car parking visible from the street. The space for vehicle access and parking has a significant detrimental effect on the appearance of the street. There is a great variety of treatments of hard surfaces and boundary features. This results in a lack of visual coherence and a disconnection from the characteristics of the conservation area.

2.27 By contrast, in the core of the village the arrangement of houses is considerably more tight-knit and the appearance of the streetscape less affected by arrangements made for cars.

Landscape Context

2.28 Steeple Morden lies within a low-lying landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills. The village has developed along a ridge of higher ground between two shallow valleys (Cheney Water and West Brook chalk springs) which drain towards the River Cam catchment approximately six kilometres to the north-east.

2.29 The characteristics of landscapes have been formally assessed and described at various scales and administrative levels to enable the evaluation of development and the management and enhancement of specific, primarily rural landscape characteristics. The following landscape character designations apply to Steeple Morden.

- Landscape Character Area 87 'East Anglian Chalk'.
(National Character, Natural England 2014).
- Landscape Character Type 'Lowland Village Chalklands'.
(East of England Regional Landscape Framework 2009).
- Landscape Character Type 'Chalklands'.
(Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines 1991).

2.30 The landscape surrounding the village is characterised predominantly by large arable fields with limited woodland cover and expansive, long-distance views. Tree cover is mainly concentrated in tight association with settlements and along the chalk streams. Roads typically take direct routes bisecting the landscape or following higher ground. As a result the experience of the landscape is of a strong separation between the visual containment of trees and buildings within villages and the relatively open surrounding countryside.

2.31 The application site is within a former group of small fields historically associated more with the daily activities of the village than with the large-scale surrounding landscape (Figures 4 to 8 inclusive). The small fields have been used for pig farming, allotments and as an orchard of fruit trees. Hedgerows exist on the outer edges of the group and mature Ash trees exist within the former orchard land to the west of the application site.

2.32 The application site lies between areas of leafy residential gardens with houses in irregular spatial arrangements and low density on the west side of Station Road.

2.33 As a result of these various factors, the immediate landscape context of the application site is assimilated with the topography, features and appearance of the village. It is significantly separated from the surrounding landscape both in terms of landscape characteristics and views. Only 22 metres of the north boundary joins the adjacent arable field. The west boundary joins the derelict and unmanaged former orchard of which the application site is a part. The west boundary is 108 metres in extent.

2.34 Although the application site is undeveloped it does not register as a projection of the characteristics of the rural landscape into the village and neither does it provide a view out towards the arable landscape context of the village. For these reasons the primary landscape context of the application site is with the characteristics of Station Road and the central part of the village.

2.35 The site frontage to the road is defined by an un-managed hedgerow containing a group of mature Ash trees. This feature forms a break between the partly suburban characteristics of Station Road and the contrasting 'hub' of the village where many buildings are close to the pavement. The vegetation frames the view of the church steeple in views approaching the church from Station Road. The height of a few of the trees within the

site is sufficient for the tops of them to be visible in views to the south from within the conservation area.

2.36 These aspects of the visual context of the proposed development have been seen as the most significant factors in assessing the opportunities and constraints arising from the proposed development. They underlie the site planning strategy illustrated by figures 10 and 11.

Pedestrian, cycle, public transport and vehicle connections

2.37 The site is well located to access wider connections. Station Road is provided with a formal footway on the eastern side of the carriageway from the Southern edge of the village. This leads up into the centre of Steeple Morden providing a direct link to the available services and facilities and the bus stop, which is on Hay Street, 400 m north of the proposed access into the application site. Services from this bus stop run between Guilden Morden and Royston at two-hourly intervals through the daytime, Monday to Friday.

2.38 Ashwell and Morden railway station is adjacent to Station Road, 3.9 km south of the development site. This station lies on the Cambridge to London King's Cross line. Direct trains to Cambridge take between 25 to 30 minutes and those to London between 45 to 60 minutes.

2.39 The Manual for Streets (DoT) identifies that walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes or 800 metres walking distance of residential areas. However, it is also noted that this is not an upper limit and that walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 kilometres. Section 3.5 of the accompanying Transport Statement identifies that important services and facilities lie within a reasonable and comfortable walking distance of the site. These include the post office, primary school and village hall.

Socio-Economic context

2.40 There is a significant need for additional housing both nationally and locally. The building of new homes will also sustain jobs in the construction industry. Once completed the residents within the development will contribute to the long-term viability of the local services and facilities in and around the village.

03 PLANNING HISTORY

3.01 The planning history of the site is set out below:

3.02 Since the last application was submitted to the Council, in 1985 the applicant has put forward representations to the Local Plan, for the site to be included within the development framework for Steeple Morden. In September 2012 a representation was submitted at the 'Issues and Options' stage of the Local Plan review for the site to be allocated for residential development.

LPA Planning Reference	Description of Development	Outcome
SC/0410/62/O (1962)	Outline consent for residential development.	Refused 26/9/62
SC/0546/72/O (1972)	Outline consent for residential development.	Refused 3/8/72
SC/1251/72/O (1972)	Resubmission of earlier application for residential development but including quantum of development of no more than 5 houses to the acre i.e no more than 20 houses in total.	Refused 1/3/73 Appeal dismissed – decision notes that a more modest proposal to development on the frontage of the site, particularly if the existing hedges and trees were retained might be more appropriate.
S/84/0263/O (1984)	Outline application for 8 houses.	Refused 9/4/84
S/0526/85/O (1985)	Outline application for 5 houses.	Refused Appeal dismissed 1985

4.01 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 came into force in September 2004. It carries forward the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, giving statutory force to a plan-led system of development control. Under section 70(0) of the 1990 Act and Section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Planning Policy

4.02 In this case the adopted Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is the Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007 and Development Control Policies 2007.

4.03 The key policies and documents identified as relevant to this application are:

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2007)

- ST/2 Housing Provision;
- ST/6 Group Villages; and
- ST/11 Plan Monitor Manage.

Development Control Policies (2007)

- DP/1: Sustainable Development;
- DP/2: Design of New Development;
- DP/3: Development Criteria;
- DP/4: Infrastructure and New Developments;
- DP/7: Development Frameworks;
- CH/4: Development within the Curtilage of Setting of a Listed Building;
- CH/5: Conservation Areas;
- HG/1: Housing Density;
- HG/2: Housing Mix;
- HG/3: Affordable Housing;
- SF/10: Outdoor Play space and New Development;
- SF/11: Open Space Standards;
- NE/1: Energy Efficiency;
- NE/3: Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development;
- NE/4: Landscape Character Areas;

- NE/6: Biodiversity;
- NE/9: Groundwater;
- NE/9: Water and Drainage Infrastructure;
- NE/11: Flood Risk;
- NE/12: Water Conservation;
- NE/15 Noise Pollution;
- TR/1: Planning for More Sustainable Travel;
- TR/2: Car and Cycle Parking Standards; and
- TR/3: Mitigating Travel Impact Policy.

The Emerging Local Plan

4.04 The Council submitted its draft local plan to the Secretary of State in March 2014 for examination. Submission of further work and proposed modifications were made by the Council in March and November 2016. Examinations have now closed and the Inspectors' reports are awaited. The Council has advised that it is likely that consultation will take place during Autumn 2017 on Main Modifications prior to adoption of the new plan in 2018.

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.05 The local planning authority (LPA) has also adopted supplementary planning documents. The relevant documents to this application are:

- District Design Guide - March 2010;
- Open Space in New Developments SPD - January 2009;
- Biodiversity SPD - July 2009;
- Trees & Development Sites SPD - January 2009;
- Landscape in New Developments SPD - March 2010;
- Affordable Housing SPD - March 2010; and
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP): Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document - February 2012.

Other Statutory Considerations

4.06 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the relevant legislative framework with regard to listed buildings and conservation areas.

4.07 Section 66 sets out the general duty as respects listed buildings in the exercising of planning functions. Section 66(1) establishes a duty for the local planning authority, or Secretary of State, to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting.

4.08 Section 69(1)(a) of the same act states that conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 72(1) requires decision-makers, when exercising planning functions with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, to pay special attention to 'the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'. It should be noted that this requirement specifically refers to buildings or land in a conservation area, not land within its setting as per the listed building section of the act. As the application site is not on land located in a conservation area, this section of the act is not relevant to the application.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

4.09 The Framework is a material consideration in the determination of applications (paragraph 196) and paragraph 215 states that '*due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework*'.

4.10 In paragraph 14 there is '*a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking*'. In respect of decision taking the Framework states this means:

"approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay"; and "where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

– any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or

– specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."

4.11 Paragraph 47 of the Framework seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing. To boost the supply of housing, the Framework states that LPAs should;

“identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land”

4.12 Paragraph 50 of the Framework states *“To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:*

- *plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community;*
- *Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand.”*

4.13 Paragraph 55 of the Framework states that *“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.”*

4.14 Section 12 of the Framework ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ at paragraph 128 requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. At paragraph 132 it requires *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”*. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.’ At paragraph 134 it states *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including securing its optimum viable use.”*

Five Year Housing Supply

4.15 The Council do not dispute that they cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing as required by the Framework. The Annual Monitoring Report (SCDC Dec 2016) sets out that the authority have a 4.3 year supply of housing land with a 5% buffer or a 3.7 year supply with a 20% buffer. These calculations are

made using the Sedgefield Methodology which is widely considered the most suitable approach in relation to the NPPF, and the need to boost significantly the supply of housing. This is also apparent in all correspondence to date and in reports to Planning Committee in August 2017 and recent appeal decisions. The recent appeal decision at Land east of Highfields Road, Highfields Caldecote, Cambridgeshire, dated 5 July 2017 (Ref: APP/W0530/W/16/3149854) confirms this. The Inspectors reports states that *“I accept that the Council is taking significant steps to address the level of supply, but at the current time, the shortfall is increasing. There is a pressing need for new housing types.”*

Relevant Policies for the Supply of Housing

4.16 The second part of Paragraph 49 of the Framework is applicable where there is no five-year housing land supply. This states:

‘Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.’

4.17 The recent Supreme Court Ruling has identified that whether the policy is or is not a relevant policy for the supply of housing is irrelevant and ‘unnecessary’. The ‘important question’ is whether the LPA have a five year land supply in accordance with paragraph 47 of the Framework and states that:

‘it matters not whether [a failure to have a five year land supply] is because of the inadequacies

of the policies specifically concerned with housing provision, or because of the over restrictive nature of other non-housing policies.’ The ‘shortfall is enough to trigger the operation of the second part of paragraph 14.’

4.18 With this context, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged, ‘unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole’.

4.19 The planning balance therefore has to consider whether the wider benefits of this proposed development are enough to significantly and demonstrably outweigh any conflicts with the Development Plan.

Housing White Paper (Fixing our broken housing market) February 2017

4.20 This report is considered to be a material consideration as it sets out the most up to date government thinking on the delivery of new housing. Whilst it is accepted that the paper has been published for consultation in respect of potential solutions it does set out a clear assessment of the current position in terms of the planning for, and delivery of, new houses.

4.21 Matters most relevant to this application include:

- The need for more land for homes where people want to live;

- Building homes faster;
- Opening up the housing market to smaller builders;
- Making it easier for people to build their own homes;
- Encouraging modern methods of construction.

South Cambridgeshire Services and Facilities Study (March 2014)

4.22 This document sets out what services and facilities there are within Steeple Morden

Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA) (2013)

4.23 The SHMA sets out the dwelling mix required within the Cambridge sub-region to be:

- 1% bedsit;
- 3% flat/house with 1 bedroom;
- 13% flat/house with 2 bedrooms;
- 26% flat/house with 2 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms, or 3 bedrooms and 1 reception room;
- 24% flat/house with 3 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms;

- 16% house with 3 bedrooms and 3 reception rooms or 4 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms; and
- 17% house with 4, 5 or more bedrooms.

South Cambridgeshire Recreation and Open Space Study (July 2013)

4.24 This study, prepared to support the new Local Plan, identifies quantity and quality of provision of recreation and open space in the District and how this meets local need. It is to guide the Council and Parish Councils as to where and how to improve facilities. An audit of provision in each village is provided.

5.01 The Localism Act (2011) introduced the recommendation for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for proposed development, in order to give them the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

5.02 It is considered important that this development is both appropriate to the village and takes account of local concerns.

5.03 The applicants attended two consultation meetings with representatives of the local community in order to sound out opinions on the scale and form of development which might obtain the support of the residents of Steeple Morden. The meetings were held with the district councillor and the chair of Steeple Morden Parish Council. In both of these meetings the site planning strategy was strongly supported, in particular the approach to the site frontage. The scale, number and footprint of dwellings were also supported provided that 40% of the houses would be provided on affordable terms eg. by a Registered Social Landlord. It was concluded that, in the light of the 2010 Housing Needs Survey, the affordable element would be strongly supported and that, if possible, the accommodation should include the provision of houses for single persons.

5.04 The applicant intends to make a presentation to the Parish Council during the consultation period of the application as agreed with the chair of the Parish Council.

06 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

6.01 The application is in outline with all matters reserved except for access. The aim of the application is to establish the principle in terms of use and maximum quantum of development.

Development Principles

6.02 The proposed development affords the opportunity to provide a high quality residential development in a sustainable location and attractive setting to meet the identified housing needs of the area. The illustrative site plan demonstrates one way in which 'best practice' can be applied to this site to create a successful addition to the village. In particular, the illustrative site plan offers a scheme which seeks to:

- Effectively and efficiently use the site, whilst allowing diversity of building forms and types to add visual interest;
- Draw on local characteristics of residential development with a density that reflects the site's context and edge of settlement character;
- Retain existing trees where possible and enhance the biodiversity of the site through new planting around the boundaries and within private gardens;

- Respect the Conservation Area to the east and nearby listed buildings;
- Promote sustainable travel modes as a consequence of its location close to the village centre;
- Provide a clear definition between private and public space, ensuring that rear boundaries are secure and that houses are orientated to maximise the natural surveillance of streets and parking areas;
- Provide a mix of house types and affordable units to meet local housing need.

Use

6.03 The application is for residential development. Vehicle access will be provided off Station Road.



Land at Station Road, Steeple Morden

Steeplefield - Site planning diagram
Scale 1:1,000 at A3 drawing Steeple02



- A** Buildings with scale/appearance related to cottages opposite and conservation area characteristics. Front doors to street. No car parking in front. Max. height 6.5 metres.
- B** Retained trees and new planting of native species to maintain scale and appearance of streetscape in views approaching church. No car parking or individual plot vehicle access. Single point for vehicle access.
- C** Buildings with scale/appearance related to clusters of farm buildings. Compact footprint and linked buildings. Orientation of living areas to south and west for sunlight. Paths to street and public footpath. Max height 9.5 metres.
- D1** Planted areas (wildlife buffer and link).
- D2** Community orchard planting, grassland habitat.
- E** Gardens contiguous with vegetation to west.

Figure 10 Illustrative Site Planning Diagram (drawing Steeple02)



Scale 1:500



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Land at Station Road, Steeple Morden

Steeplefield - Illustrative Site Layout
Scale 1:500 at A3 drawing Steeple03

Note: This drawing to be read together with Argenta drawings ATSO139-01 and -02
which schedule trees to be removed and trees to be retained and Arboricultural Report, Argenta September, 2017.



Figure 11 Illustrative Layout Plan (drawing Steeple03)

Site planning strategy

6.04 The applicant has established a number of site planning objectives based on the assessment of site context described above. These are shown on Figure 10 (Illustrative Site Planning Diagram drawing Steeple02).

Layout

6.05 The layout would be determined at reserved matters stage. However, the site planning and design has been undertaken to a very high level of detail in order to test the feasibility of achieving all the objectives as set out below and to confirm the precise location for vehicle access (figure11 Illustrative Layout drawing Steeple03 and Site Access drawing Steeple 04).

6.06 The resultant composition of new buildings, external spaces and retained existing features demonstrates the site's potential for a sensitive scheme to be realised providing benefits for the local community.

6.07 The site planning and design has been undertaken in tandem with detailed studies carried out by an ecologist and an arboricultural consultant.

6.08 The proposed footprints have been tested in terms of internal and external space standards and requirements for controlling overlooking.

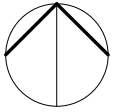
6.09 The arrangements for vehicles follows the best practice in the Department for Transport's document Manual for Streets and accord with parking standards and the spatial requirements for the refuse vehicle used in the area. The layout responds to SCDC's supplementary planning documents 'Affordable Housing' and 'District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire'.

6.10 The key aspects of the site planning strategy are to:

- provide a mix of housing types but within a cohesive composition and spatial arrangement;
- retain and perpetuate the sylvan character of the site frontage in oblique views from the street;
- retain individually significant healthy mature trees;
- provide space for extensive planting of native trees and shrubs (applicable to 15 metre depth on frontage and areas on boundary);
- reflect the scale and character of the cottages opposite (applicable to 1.5 storey houses fronting Station Road);
- reflect the scale, form and tight-knit character of building clusters adapted from farm houses and associated buildings (applicable to group of 2 storey houses set back from street);
- extend the streetscape character of the conservation area further south;

- provide only a single point for vehicle access from the street;
- arrange access and parking to the rear avoiding a repetition of conditions south of the site; and
- contain the developed footprint within an area equivalent to the depth of adjacent residential use.

6.11 Appropriately dealing with motor vehicles will be an important part to the success of the final design and the illustrative site plan demonstrates that parking can be incorporated into the final detailed design of the site in accordance with the Council's car parking standards.



Land at Station Road, Steeple Morden

Steeplefield - Illustrative Schedule of Occupancy
Scale 1:500 at A3

Schedule of house occupancy - illustrative layout Steeple03											
	Type	Storeys	Afford/market	Double room	Single room	Persons	Car on plot	Other car	Total cars in layout	Parking Average on-plot	Parking Average inc. visitors
Plot 1	Semi-det	1.5	Afford	1	1	3	1				
Plot 2	Semi-det	1.5	Afford	1	1	3	1				
Plot 3	Semi-det	1.5	Afford	1	1	3	1				
Plot 4	Semi-det	1.5	Afford	1	1	3	1				
Plot 5	Semi-det	2	Afford, wheelchair	2		4	2				
Plot 6	Semi-det	2	Market	2		4	2				
Plot 7	Semi-det	2	Market	2		4	2				
Plot 8	Semi-det	2	Market	2		4	2				
Plot 9	Link-det	2	Market	2		4	2				
Plot 10	Det	2.5	Market	2	3	7	3				
Plot 11	Semi-det	2	Market	2		4	2				
Plot 12	Semi-det	2	Market	2		4	2				
						47	21	5	26	1.75	2.17

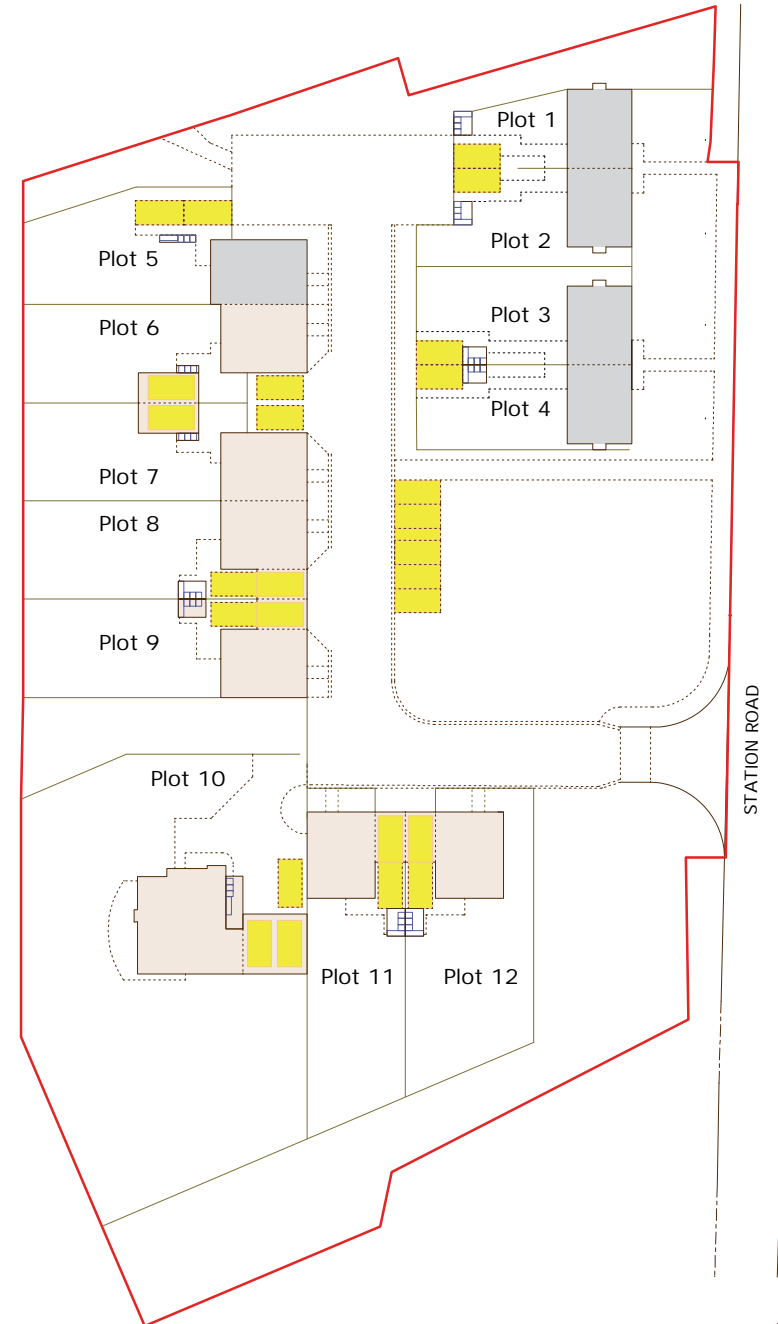


Figure 12 Illustrative Schedule of Occupancy

Building type, appearance and scale

6.12 The application seeks to establish the principle of development for the construction of up to 12 dwellings on a 0.75 hectare site. The overall density of the development is approximately 16 dwellings per hectare, which is reflective of other nearby developments within the village. The density respects the site's context and the characteristics of the street and affords scope for the creation of a high quality residential environment within an appropriate landscape setting. It also demonstrates that the necessary infrastructure associated with the

development can be provided on the site including car/cycle parking and bin storage and collection.

6.13 An indicative schedule of accommodation has been produced from the arrangement of building types and scales shown in the layout (Figure 12 Illustrative Schedule of Occupancy).

6.14 The buildings on the site frontage are intended to be low in scale with bedrooms within the roof structure (Fig 13 Station Road Scale & Proportion). The cluster to the rear would be two storey. A single larger house (2.5 storey) is included as an anchor for the cluster to the rear

of the site. The mix of units and the detailed design will be agreed at Reserved Matters stage.

6.15 Details of appearance are not part of the outline application and would be put forward for approval by the Council at the Reserved Matters stage. However, certain strategies for materials and appearance would fit with the proposed development. The objectives underlying the layout would be reinforced by a strategy for appearance and materials reflecting local precedents as follows:

- 1.5 storey cottages on site frontage to have set back dormers, slate roofs and rendered walls.



View from footway east side of Station Road looking south



View from footway east side of Station Road looking north



Reference building (development at Madingley)

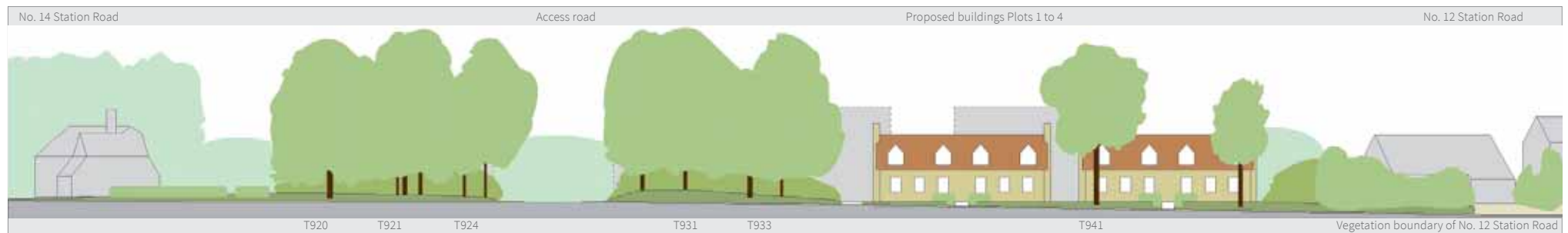


Figure 13 Illustration Station Road Scale and Proportion

Vegetation boundary of No. 12 Station Road
Illustrative elevation Station Road

- 2 storey buildings in red brick bases, stained timber boarded elevations and tiled roofs including roofs over parking and recessed linked accommodation for bathrooms.
- single 2.5 storey house with rendered elevations and tiled roof. A distinctive ‘anchor’ for the adjacent cluster.

6.16 The illustrative site plan responds to the context of the conservation area by a composition of retained trees and low scale buildings positioned opposite the cottages on the east side of Station Road. In this way the existing visual characteristics of the site can be perpetuated and the development integrated with the positive features of the streetscape north of the site. This can be achieved by an arrangement of scale and proportion of the development at the front of the site.

6.17 The photographs in Figure 14 illustrate buildings which have informed the approach envisaged for the relationship between the layout and appearance.

6.18 The plan configuration in relation to solar aspect means that extensive solar panels could be incorporated with an orientation to the south and west without conflict with objectives for building style and streetscape.



Figure 14 Photographs Exemplar and Reference Buildings Cottages Madingley



Figure 14 Photographs Exemplar and Reference Buildings House Madingley



Figure 14 Photographs Exemplar and Reference Buildings Terrace Madingley



Figure 14 Photographs Exemplar and Reference Buildings Cottages Steeple Morden



Figure 14 Photographs Exemplar and Reference Buildings Cottages Chippenham



Figure 14 Photographs Exemplar and Reference Buildings Houses Steeple Morden

6.19 Paving materials will reflect the pedestrian-orientated focus of the development, and arranged so as to reduce the visual dominance of the carriageway. The rear cluster is served by a shared surface thus avoiding the visual characteristics of adopted cul-de-sacs. The front cottages have direct pedestrian access from the street via paths across a wide grass verge.

Landscape design, trees and ecology

6.20 The illustrative site plan has been developed with a design and landscape-led approach including the assessment of public views from the street and the PROW, and the relationship of the development with adjacent properties. The site plan includes the retention of trees along the boundaries of the site and the mitigation of potential habitat loss. (Refer to Arboricultural Report and Appraisal of Ecological Interests).

6.21 Native planting will be used to enhance the edge of the site and to create a strong boundary framework within which the development can comfortably be integrated. Trees used within the development will be predominantly native species or cultivars of native species.

6.22 In consultation with representatives of the local community and in response to the extended phase one habitat survey the applicant has offered part of the land outside the application site for restoration planting of fruit trees as a 'Community Orchard'. This has been envisaged as a linear feature close to the PROW.

6.23 In addition the illustrative site layout includes the provision of an area for native planting and the retention of existing trees for about half of the site frontage. The plan depth of this area is fifteen metres.

6.24 These elements of the site layout respond to objectives from all three perspectives; ecology, trees and landscape.

6.25 It is expected that provision will be made within the S106 Agreement to identify a process that secures the future maintenance and management of these areas. It is likely that this will begin with engaging the Parish Council to see if they would like to adopt these areas with an initial financial contribution towards their upkeep for a number of years.



Over strength and reduced speed (10% or less)
Restrictions in place in a car's path
without the permission of the local force.

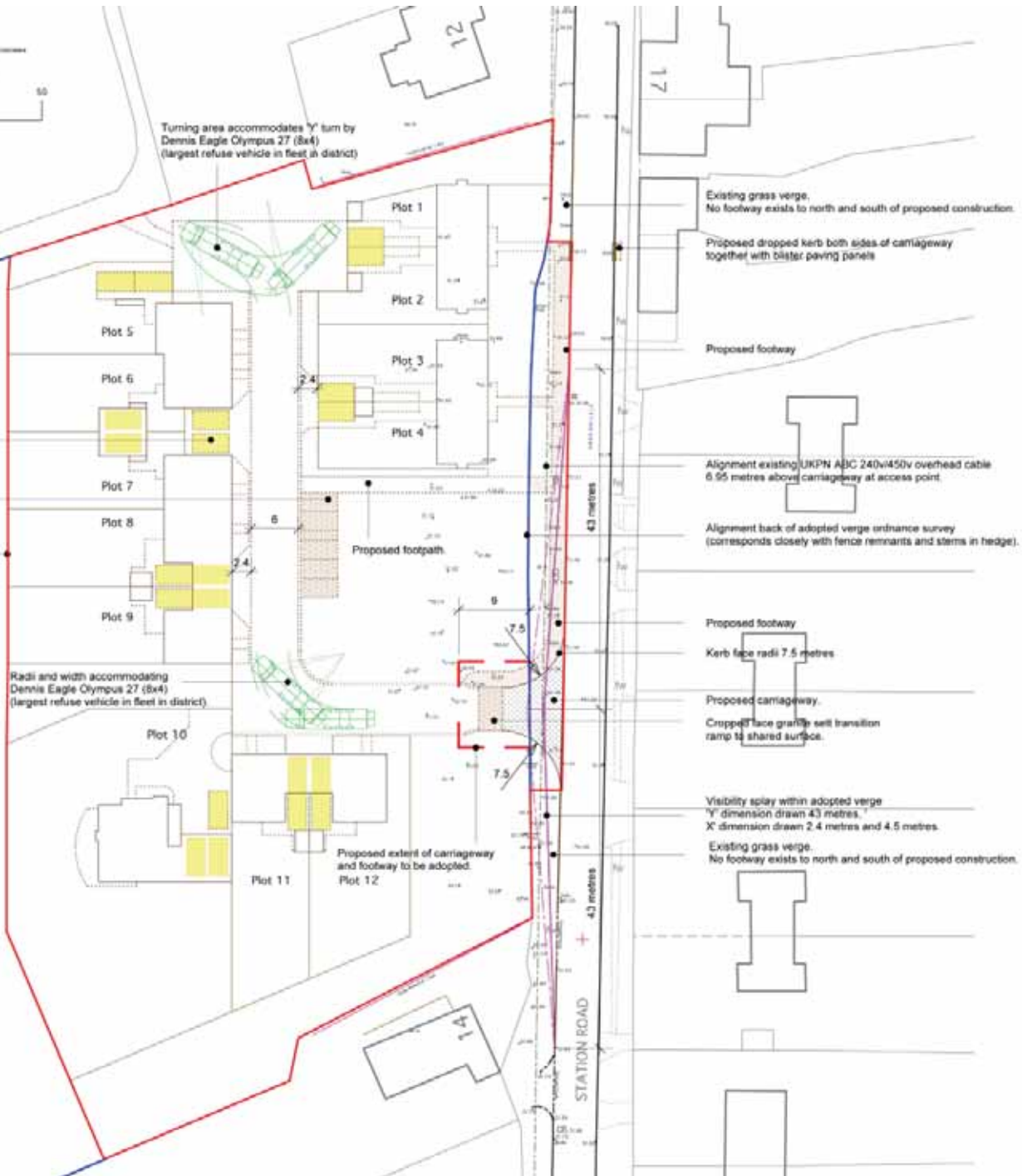
Land at Station Road, Steeple Morden

Steeplefield - Site Access

Scale 1:500 at A3

drawing Steeple04

Turning area accommodates 'Y' turn by
Dennis Eagle Olympus 27 (8x4)
(largest refuse vehicle in fleet in district)



Proposed on-plot car parking spaces shown thus:

Proposed off-plot car parking:

Planning application boundary shown thus:

Radii and width accommodating
Dennis Eagle Olympus 27 (8x4)
(largest refuse vehicle in fleet in district)

Proposed extent of carriageway
and footway to be adopted.
Plot 12

Existing grass verge.
No footway exists to north and south of proposed construction.

Proposed dropped kerb both sides of carriageway
together with blister paving panels

Proposed footway

Alignment existing UKPN ADJ 240v/450v overhead cable
6.95 metres above carriageway at access point.

Alignment back of adopted verge ordinance survey
(corresponds closely with fence remnants and stems in hedge).

Proposed footway

Kerb face radii 7.5 metres

Proposed carriageway.

Crippled face granite self transition
ramp to shared surface.

Visibility splay within adopted verge
'Y' dimension drawn 4.3 metres,
'X' dimension drawn 2.4 metres and 4.5 metres.

Existing grass verge.
No footway exists to north and south of proposed construction.

Figure 15 Site Access
drawing Steeple04 (reproduced application drawing)

Site Access

7.01 The site is located to the west of Station Road and this application seeks consent for the detailed layout of the access point into the proposed development. A Transport Statement and detailed drawings are provided as part of this application to demonstrate that an access to adoptable standards can be achieved in this location.

7.02 The application drawing Steeple04 is submitted for approval demonstrates adequate visibility splays can be provided and that the detailed design and specifications of the vehicle and pedestrian access meet the requirements of the Highway Authority (Fig 15).

7.03 The illustrative site layout has been designed to allow ease of access for refuse and emergency vehicles. The access point and shared surface has been designed to suit the turning and manoeuvring of these vehicles.

Public Transport

7.04 There are bus stops located within 400 metres of the site which provides services to and from Cambridge and Royston.

Inclusive access

7.05 The site is relatively flat and easy to develop to provide level or gently sloping approaches to principal entrances that fully accord with Part M of the Building Regulations.

7.06 The proposed development will include features to facilitate ease of access for all, including those using wheelchairs and prams. By designing spaces for low vehicle speeds, all residents and visitors will be able to feel confident when using the shared surface within the site.

Car and Cycle Parking

7.07 The nature and locations of car and cycle parking provision will be a matter for the reserved matters application.

7.08 The Council's adopted standards set out that an average of 1.5 car parking spaces should be provided per dwelling. A maximum of 2 spaces can be provided per 3 bedrooms in poorly accessible areas. The illustrative layout includes space for 21 cars on-plot (an average of 1.75 spaces per plot) and an additional group of 5 visitor spaces including two for use by the disabled. The

Council's District Design Guide SPD states that parked cars should not dominate the street scene, and that they should be situated within, beneath or at the site or rear of buildings, where this is not achievable parking should be as close to the property as possible. The appropriate level of on-plot car parking is accommodated between buildings or within structures to reduce their visibility from the street.

7.09 The illustrative layout includes the provision for the storage of bicycles within covered structures combined with bin storage.

Future maintenance and management

7.10 It is expected that the proposed access road entrance and part of the construction within the site will be designed and constructed in such a way as to allow it to become adopted highway. In the event the internal road is not adopted it will be maintained by a management company.

8.01 The key planning considerations for this proposal are the principle of development and sustainability. Other considerations include vehicle access, highways and parking, car and cycle parking, residential amenity, drainage, ecology, landscape, trees and heritage. The proposals should in the first instance be considered against the Development Plan policies.

Principle of Development

8.02 Core Strategy Policy ST/2 sets out the strategy for locating new homes and makes provision for 20,000 new homes during the period 1999 to 2016 which includes the rural area and other villages. Steeple Morden is identified as a Group Village under Core Strategy Policy ST/6 which allows for residential development up to 8 dwellings within the village frameworks of Group Villages and allows for development of up to 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site.

8.03 The Proposed Submission Local Plan sets out in Policy S/3 that a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF will be taken. The Development Strategy as set out in Policy S/6 is seeking to provide development in the order of preference of:

a) on the edge of Cambridge;

b) at new settlements; and

c) in the rural area at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.

8.04 The policy limits development in the rural area, referring to rural settlement policies providing for windfall development for different categories of village consistent with the level of local service provisions and quality of public transport access to Cambridge or market town. Within the Submission Local Plan Steeple Morden is defined as a Group Village. Proposed submission Policy S/10 carries forward the provisions set out in adopted Core Strategy Policy ST/6 as outlines above.

8.05 Within the current Local Plan and the Proposed Submission Plan the site lies immediately adjacent to the development framework for Steeple Morden. It is therefore located within the countryside, where policy DP/7 allows only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside. As such, it is considered that the development would not normally meet the requirements of policy DP/7 as it does not comprise one of the specified development exceptions.

8.06 Whilst it is accepted that the proposed development does not fully comply with the

development plan, S.38 of the 2004 Act states that ‘the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.’ A relevant material consideration is whether the local planning authority have a 5 year housing land supply as required by paragraph 47 of the NPPF.

8.07 SCDC have accepted in numerous recent application decisions that they cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. This has been applied by Inspectors in various appeal decisions who agree with the Council’s position. SCDC have a consistent under-supply of housing that needs to therefore be met. In these circumstances paragraph 49 of the Framework applies, with planning policies relating to housing supply considered out-of-date. In a recent appeal decision for 140 dwellings in Highfields Caldecote¹ the Inspector

¹ APP/W0530/W/16/3149854 - Up to 140 residential dwellings (including up to 40% affordable housing) removal of existing temporary agricultural equipment and debris, introduction of structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children’s play area, community orchard and allotments, surface water flood mitigation and attenuation, vehicular access point from Highfields Road and associated ancillary works, with all matters reserved except for the main site access – Land east of Highfields Road, Highfields Caldecote, Caldecote, Cambridgeshire, CB23 7NX

stated that ‘the proposal does not comply with CS Policy ST/6 or with the DPD policies DP/7 and DP1/1a, but the weight to be attached to the conflict with these policies is reduced because of the ongoing shortfall.’ It is therefore considered that the weight that can be applied to policies DP/7 and ST/6 in relation to this planning application is limited, as the policies are out-of-date.

8.08 In May 2017 the Supreme Court issued a judgement on the application of the NPPF, the interpretation of paragraph 49 of the Framework; and the circumstances in which the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 14 of the Framework should apply.

8.09 The Supreme Court emphasised the primacy of the development plan. Therefore Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 remains the starting point for determining the application, i.e. applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework remains a material consideration and its application is a matter of planning judgement.

8.10 With regards to the application of paragraph 49 and what constitutes a ‘relevant policy for the supply of housing’ where there is an absence of a 5 year housing land supply the Supreme Court concluded that this should be interpreted narrowly and only apply to those policies that are limited to numbers and distribution of new housing, such as policies which specifically support development within settlement boundaries.

8.11 However, the Supreme Court decision ruled that consideration as to whether a policy is or is not relevant for the supply of housing is irrelevant and ‘unnecessary’. The ‘important question’ is whether the local planning authority has a 5 year land supply in accordance with paragraph 47 of the Framework. Any shortfall is enough to trigger the operation of the second limb of paragraph 14 of the Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

8.12 Fundamentally, where the LPA cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, the paragraph 14 ‘tilted balance’ is automatically applied and development should be granted unless ‘any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies taken as a whole.’ As part of this balancing exercise, a decision maker would be entitled to attribute less weight to the conflict with development plan policies to the extent that such policies are the cause of the lack of a 5 year housing land supply. The need remains to consider any ‘footnote 9’ policies where the Framework indicates development should be restricted as this could prevent the application of the paragraph 14 presumption.

8.16 Core Strategy Policy ST11 – Plan Monitor Manage, advises that compliance with policies and allocations in the Local Development Framework will be continuously monitored throughout the plan period. If policies and allocations are not being met, the Council will review of housing land supply and allocations, take action to bring forward sites for development and previously developed land and review relevant parts of the LDF.

8.17 It is therefore considered that the principle of developing the site for residential use is acceptable, as limited weight can be given to Development Control Policies DP/7 and NE/17 as they are out-of-date and the proposals would contribute positively to the supply of housing in the District.

Sustainable Development

8.18 The ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ is at the heart of the Framework. For decision-taking, where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means granting permission unless ‘any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits’ or where specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted (paragraph 14).

8.19 The Framework identifies three dimensions of sustainability; economic, social and environmental. With regards to economic: the development will provide employment in the construction industry during the development, and benefits to the local economy through an increase in the use of local services and facilities. The fundamental social benefit of the proposal would be the provision of housing to meet the current housing shortfall in South Cambridgeshire. This will also include affordable housing to meet local needs. Access to services and facilities is discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs. Finally, there would be no detrimental impact on the built or natural environment. These matters are addressed in more detail in subsequent sections of this report.

8.20 Steeple Morden is identified in the Core Strategy as a Group Village. The policy subtext states that ‘group villages are generally less sustainable locations for new development’. However, Steeple Morden does benefit from a variety of services and facilities. These include a village hall, primary school with community room, post office, petrol station, public house and a large recreation ground and children’s play area (Source SCDC: Services and Facilities Study 2014).

8.21 The village is served by bus services to Royston and Cambridge and there is a mainline rail station with access to Cambridge and London. Whilst residents would generally be dependent on travel to the station by car, recent appeal decisions both give weight to the fact that it would allow for some journeys, including commutes to work, to be made for the most part by public transport.

8.22 This reflects the approach within the Framework where a core objective is that planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. However, paragraph 29 of the Framework notes that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. Paragraph 30 states Local Plans should ‘support a pattern of development which where reasonable to do so facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport’, thereby recognising that local authorities should seek opportunities to increase sustainable travel but that this may not always be the case. Paragraph 32

also recognises that opportunities for use of sustainable transport modes depend upon the nature and location of the site. Paragraphs 34 and 35 also highlight that policies and decisions on the use of sustainable transport modes must take into account policies elsewhere in the Framework such as in rural areas. Paragraph 55 says that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

8.23 The proposed development is located where it is close to existing local facilities and services which serve some day to day needs and that there are opportunities for some journeys to be made by public transport for the greater part. The Framework acknowledges that different approaches to urban and rural transport need to be taken into consideration and in this respect. Therefore, this limits the degree of conflict with the aims of DPD policies TR/1- Planning for More Sustainable Travel and DP/1b – Sustainable development. The site can be therefore be considered sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms.

Vehicle access, highways and parking

8.24 This application seeks consent for the detailed layout of the access point into the proposed development from Station Road as set out on drawing Steeple04. A Transport Statement is provided which confirms that an access to adoptable standards can be achieved in this location.

8.25 The application drawing is submitted for approval demonstrates adequate visibility splays can be provided and that the detailed design and specifications of the vehicle and pedestrian access meet the requirements of the Highway Authority.

8.26 The access has been designed to allow ease of access for refuse and emergency vehicles. The shared surface will be designed to suit the turning and manoeuvring of these vehicles as part of a reserved matters application.

8.27 The proposal is therefore in accordance with Development Control Policy TR/1 and paragraph 35 of the Framework by providing sustainable travel options to residents.

8.28 With regards to car and cycle parking this will be in accordance with Council standards, and determined at the detailed design stage.

8.29 The transport impact of the proposed development is therefore acceptable, in accordance with Development Control Policy TR/3.

Amenity

8.30 Given the indicative nature of the proposal plans at this stage, the locations of the dwellings can be subject to change to best mitigate any detrimental impacts on the residential amenity of both neighbouring occupants and future residents of the site. The nearest adjoining residential properties are Nos. 12 and 14 Station Road

and the indicative site plan demonstrates there is ample room to ensure there are no adverse impacts on residential amenity arising from development.

Ecology

8.31 An extended Phase 1 habitat survey has been undertaken by an ecologist and the report has been submitted within this planning application (Appraisal of Ecological Interests August 2017).

8.32 The report sets out several recommendations including the need for a specialist bat survey and an update of the badger survey. Various measures to prepare areas prior to construction, exclude mammals during construction and protect specific existing trees and hedges are prescribed. It recommends time periods for certain activities including limiting the initial site clearance work to the period between September and February in order to avoid disturbance of active bird nests.

8.33 A supplementary visit by a licenced bat surveyor has been undertaken. A copy of his finding is submitted with the rest of the documents.

8.34 As part of the development, biodiversity could be enhanced on the site through planting and the installation of features such as bat and bird boxes. The development creates the potential for the creation of a new linear feature incorporating fruit trees, retained trees and grassland habitat near the PROW. On balance the proposal is therefore considered acceptable on ecology

grounds and therefore in accordance with paragraph 109 of the NPPF and Development Control Policy NE/6 by minimising the impact on, and providing enhancements to, biodiversity.

Landscape and impact on trees

8.35 Whist the application site has the appearance of well-established woodland, this view, particularly of the mature trees along the front part of the site, is deceptive. The majority of the tree canopy is comprised of old Bramley Apple trees in decline and overgrown with ivy. The best trees are all Ash trees and all of those are at risk of Ash die-back disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* – also known as *Chalara fraxinea*). Other than the small proportion of trees such as Hawthorn Field Maple and Cherry, the tree cover of the site is in decline and at risk of loss to disease.

8.36 A survey and assessment has been undertaken by a Fellow of the Arboricultural Association and the report and related drawings accompany this planning application. The process followed BS5837 and in accordance with that standard, the site planning took full account of the location and condition of the existing trees.

8.37 The survey found no trees of Category A (high quality and value) and only four trees were Category B (trees whose retention is desirable and of moderate quality).

8.38 Several trees are recorded as Category C (trees that could be retained and are considered to be of low quality).

8.39 Two substantial Ash trees were recorded as Category U (trees which should be removed for reasons of sound arboricultural management). The vast majority of remnant fruit trees were considered to be in this category due to their very short remaining life expectancy and the survey assessed them as a group. The description for that group states:

‘Group of over-mature and moribund Apple trees and self-set Ash and Hawthorn, completely overwhelmed with Ivy that is present as the only ground flora of note. Many ‘Ivy trees’ (Ivy in arboreal life stage) which have formed a closed canopy in many areas by bridging tree to tree, and in some areas inaccessible due to dense Ivy. Almost without exception, the trees here are at the end of their natural life or beyond renovation through husbandry.’

8.40 The only significant trees on the site are Ash trees. The arboricultural report notes that the presence of disease known as Ash Die-back Disease has been recorded by the Forestry Commission within about 15 kilometres of the site to the north (2015), east (2014) and south (2016). The report states:

‘Given the rapid spread of Chalara Ash die-back disease in the last few years, it is reasonable

to predict that the disease will very much have taken hold on the UK Ash tree population in the next ten years. The proposed development will provide an opportunity for the introduction of a more diverse range of tree species to provide disease and climate change resilience.

8.41 The current advice of the Forestry Commission is that some mature Ash trees may prove to be unaffected by the disease and that, where possible, they should be retained and monitored. Thus the illustrative site plan enables the retention of the most significant specimens of the frontage Ash trees. In addition, development of the scale proposed and in accordance with the illustrative site plan would enable the visual character of the site frontage to be retained even if the Ash trees succumb to the disease.

Archaeology

8.42 Development Control Policy CH/2 – Archaeological sites, seeks to protect archaeological sites in accordance with national policy. There has been no investigation study directly on the site. This application seeks outline permission and if deemed necessary an archaeological assessment can be secured by way of condition. If any further investigations are subsequently required these can also be secured by way of condition prior to the reserved matters detail coming forward.

Heritage Assets

8.43 There are several heritage assets within the vicinity of the application site. To the south of the application site lies the Grade II listed building Well Cottage on Station Road and to the north east of the site lies the boundary of the Steeple Morden Conservation Area. There is no conservation area appraisal for Steeple Morden. Further to the north east lie three Grade II listed buildings: Nos. 7, 9 & 11 Station Road, Mayflower Cottage, Church Farm Lane, and Formosa Cottage, Church Farm Lane.

8.44 The introduction of built form on the site would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Area. The setting of the conservation area has a residential context largely established by C20 housing developments constructed to the east, and north of the village. Although the site was formerly an orchard which would have contributed to the early C20 character of the village, it has been left unmanaged and is now overgrown. The illustrative plan shows many of the trees along the street frontage retained which could sustain the sites verdant character and therefore maintain its appearance along Station Road. The development of the front part of the site for cottages has the potential to extend the spatial and visual characteristics of the conservation area and thus to some extent offset the adverse effects of the existing houses north of the site. This is considered to have a neutral impact on the setting of the conservation area.

8.45 Well Cottage, listed at Grade II, lies to the south of the site. The building has early C18 origins with C19 and later alterations. It is one storey and rendered with a plain tiled roof, two dormers facing the street and a gault brick ridge stack. The building has been extended to the rear. The building now forms part of the village streetscene following the increase in development from 1947 onwards. However, it had previously been more isolated. The illustrative plan shows the retention of mature trees along the shared boundary and Station Road which could provide in-built mitigation to development in this location. To the south and east of the building are more recent residential buildings, therefore the introduction of dwellings to the north is not out of character within the setting of Well Cottage. The illustrative layout plan and the arboricultural report show that the retention of significant trees and the sylvan character of this part of the street can be perpetuated.

8.46 To the northeast of the application site are three listed buildings at Station Road / Church Farm Lane. These buildings date to the C17 and C18 and are one storey with thatch and tile roofs. They form a compact group which is unusual within the village. These buildings have always been within the village context and were likely farmworkers cottages for Church Farm further along the lane to the east. The development surrounding these building from the late C20 onwards has further bolstered this village context. It is considered that the proposed development will not affect the significance of these listed buildings.

8.47 On balance, the proposal would have no adverse effect on the significance of the heritage assets, with the exception of Well Cottage which has the potential to have some, limited impact. The detailed design of the scheme will be drawn up at reserved matters stage and will take account of the site's relationship with the adjoining Conservation Area to the north-east corner of the site and the nearby listed buildings to the northeast and south. The development is considered to be in accordance with Development Control Policy CH/5 (Conservation Areas) which requires applications to be determined in accordance with legislation and national policy. Whilst it is considered the proposed development complies with Development Control Policy CH/4 related to listed buildings, their curtilage and setting, this policy is out of step with the Framework which requires a balancing act to be undertaken whereby any harm to heritage significance is weighed against public benefits. This assessment is set out in the Conclusions (Chapter 9).

Flood risk and Drainage

8.48 The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not at risk of flooding. The development site is less than 1 hectare thus, in accordance with the Environment Agency's guidance, a Flood Risk Assessment is not required.

8.49 The application is in outline and therefore details of drainage are not submitted. It is anticipated that foul water will discharge to the existing mains and that surface water will be dealt with on site and any necessary discharge off site will be at agreed rates.

8.50 Consequently, adequate drainage systems can be provided to meet the demands of the development, in accordance with Development Control Policies NE/9 and NE/10.

Water Conservation Strategy

8.51 Development Control Policy NE/12 – Water Conservation, requires development to incorporate all practicable water conservation measures. As this is an outline application there are no details at this stage for the conservation of water on site but measures will be designed into the detailed reserved matters such as use of water saving devices, grey water recycling and reducing surface water run-off to meet the requirements of Policy NE12.

Renewable Energy

8.52 Under Development Control Policy NE/3 there is a requirement for all developments larger than 10 dwellings or 1,000 square metres to include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements. Although the application is submitted in outline, the illustrative layout arranges roof pitches to face south and west which is optimal for the application of roof-mounted photo-voltaic systems. The detail of this will be included within the reserved matters application were the applicant will have regard to the policy requirement when producing the design.

Refuse Collection

8.53 The illustrative site plan demonstrated that adequate space for bin storage for recycling and general waste can be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling in accordance with the Council's standards. In accordance with the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide, future residents will make their waste available at the kerbside of the proposed development on the designated collections day. The internal layout will be designed so as to allow a refuse vehicle to enter and leave the site in forward gear. This is in accordance with Development Control Policy DP/3 and guidance contained within the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide. (NB. The applicants made contact with SCDC and the manufacturer of vehicles in the local fleet to ensure that the vehicle in use in this area can be accommodated. This exceeds the dimensions given in Council advice).

Contamination

8.54 There is no history of contamination of the site and it has always been in agricultural use. It is considered that any studies or investigation that are required could be conditioned to the granting of planning permission.

Open Space

8.55 The Open Space in New Developments SPD and Development Control Policy SF/10 require contributions to open space. The proposed development triggers the on-site delivery for a local area of play and informal play space. Informal open space is at a site level negotiation.

8.56 Although the scheme is submitted in outline, no public open space is proposed on-site within the application boundary. Policy SF/10 states that ‘where appropriate, provision will involve all or some types of space within the development site.’ Given the limited size of the site and number of units proposed, on-site provision of open space is not considered to be appropriate in this case. However, the proposal includes the provision of an off-site ‘Community Orchard’.

8.57 The Recreation and Open Space Study (2013) describes the village as having one recreation ground with two senior football pitches, a cricket square, bowls green and two hard tennis courts, together with an associated pavilion and tennis hut. In addition, there is an equipped play area for children and all of these facilities are within easy walking distance of the site.

8.58 It is considered that there is sufficient public open space existing in the area to provide for the needs of the development.

8.59 Financial contributions to off-site provision of open space would be agreed with the Council.

Other planning obligations

8.60 South Cambridgeshire has a draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and a Regulation 123 list which have not been adopted. It is therefore considered that contributions cannot be sought under CIL.

8.61 Under Policy HG/3 a contribution to affordable housing is required on sites of two or more dwellings, therefore this proposal triggers a contribution of 40% affordable housing. This proposal includes provision for affordable housing and is therefore policy compliant.

8.62 DCP Policy SF/6 encourages the provision of public art in new development, but does not require this.

8.63 Any further planning obligations will be subject to negotiations with the Council.

09 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

9.01 The proposed development is for residential development of up to 12 dwellings. The application has been submitted in outline with all matters except for access reserved for subsequent approval.

9.02 The principle of developing the site for housing is considered, acceptable given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. Adopted policies relevant to the supply of housing are therefore out-of-date, as set out in the Framework, and windfall sites that would constitute sustainable development, should be supported. In particular Development Control Policy DP/7 which restricts development within the countryside is out-of-date, a number of recent appeal decisions having confirmed this position.

9.03 This outline proposal demonstrates best practice towards the provision of sustainable development. The site benefits from being immediately adjacent to the village development boundary and is within walking and cycling distance of a number of local services and facilities. Further services and facilities are easily accessible through the bus routes that serve the village and via a main line railway connection.

9.04 The illustrative site plan demonstrates that the site is capable of providing the proposed number of dwellings, having regard to the constraints of the site,

and in a manner which would not materially detract from the character of the area or setting of the village. There are no constraints that would significantly outweigh the benefits of developing the site, and it is considered that any necessary further survey work could be conditioned to a decision on the planning application.

9.05 Even if it was considered there was some harm to the significance of heritage assets this would be at the low end of 'less than substantial' and in such circumstances the Framework requires any harm to be weighed against public benefits .

9.06 The benefits of the scheme are:

- Provision of up to 12 new homes;
- Provision of up to 5 affordable homes;
- Increased population to support local services and facilities;
- S106 contributions to help improve District-wide infrastructure;
- Employment opportunities during construction;
- Landscape-led approach to a high quality residential development;

- Ecological enhancements to support wildlife and biodiversity;
- The provision of an off-site 'Community Orchard' to provide landscape, ecology and amenity benefits for the village; and
- All the economic benefits that may result from the above.

9.07 It is concluded that the benefits of the proposal substantially outweigh any harm and therefore the proposal is therefore in accordance with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance, and as such should be approved without delay.