

PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING MATTERS RELATING TO DESIGN & ACCESS

Planning Application for 23 Homes including Associated Infrastructure and Landscaping

Land at Casa-Mia, Harras Road, Harras Moor, Whitehaven

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for twenty-three dwellings on land at Harras Road, Whitehaven, Cumbria.

2.0 Site and Planning History

2.1 The site currently agricultural land located on the northern side of Harras Road, Whitehaven. The site frontage extends West to East along Harras Road. The extensive development of The Highlands housing estate is located immediately to the south of Harras Road. The Highlands estate effectively extends the entire southern length of the site and beyond. Development at Harras Moor fronting onto to Harras Road is located to the east. This takes the form of detached and semi-detached housing in a frontage arrangement in large plots extending in a northerly direction from Harras Road. The exception to this arrangement is the adjacent property Casa-Mia which is a large dwelling in a large plot orientated north to south. The extent of the frontage curtilage to Casa-Mia creates a substantial separation distance between Casa-Mia and the boundary to the application site.

2.2 On the 21 March 2019 outline planning permission was granted for residential development consisting of nine serviced self-build plots (4/18/2347/001) was approved. Subsequently on the 11 August 2021 reserved matters was approved for matters relating to appearance and landscaping for Plot 1 only and landscaping for boundaries of the entire site pursuant to the outline planning permission (4/21/2268/0R1). Conditions 4, 5, 6 and 8 from the outline application were discharged by consent 4/21/2263/DOC on the 21 September 2021.

2.3 On the 17 January 2022 development was commenced in the form of a material operation to form the access thus securing the planning permission in perpetuity.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The proposal creates three distinct groups of dwellings, arranged in groups of 6, 7 and 8 dwellings respectively. The development approved under 4/18/2347/001 for the development of nine large detached houses was formed mainly as frontage development with the exception of one plot adjacent to a field access road. The developable areas of the plot were formed by a cut and fill arrangement effectively stepping down Harras Moor Road. This would involve significant civil engineering works to form retaining walls and associated structures between plots. As self-build plots it is reasonably expected that there would be a variation in design and it would prove more difficult to achieve a comprehensive landscape scheme and boundary treatments.

3.2 Furthermore, the central access point for additional paired accesses was proposed onto Harras Moor Road creating a total of five accesses in total.

3.3 The proposal which is the subject of this application seeks to replace the scheme approved under the above planning permission for a revised arrangement of twenty-one dwellings. The dwellings will be orientated with the access roads running south to north allowing the development to respect the contours of the site and make more efficient use of the site area.

3.4 The first group of eight dwellings is located between the eastern boundary of the site and the proposed field access. The group contains a mixture of house types including two detached bungalows (two bed), one bungalow (three bed), two pairs of semi-detached houses (three bed) and one house with rooms in the roof space (four bed). This gives a wide choice

of house types and sizes to meet a range of house needs. The pair of semi-detached houses on plots 6 and 7 will be allocated as affordable housing units.

This reduces the overhaul height and bulk of development on the higher part of the site. This section of the site is individually landscaped with indigenous planting to the eastern and western boundaries. The site boundaries of this section of the site reflect that approved under planning permission 4/18/2347/001.

3.5 The second group of seven dwellings is again predominantly single-story units or dwellings with rooms in the roof space. The northern boundary extends approximately 15m beyond the rear boundary approved under 4/18/2347/001. Again, this group is individually landscaped with comprehensive landscaping to the site frontage and eastern boundary. The western boundary adjoins a landscape strip of tree planting which will divide the second and third group of dwellings. This is to soften the impact of the development which will both enhance the scheme from views outside the site and separate the mass of the development.

3.6 The third group of eight dwellings again comprises of a mix of dwelling units. This again includes dwellings with rooms in the roof space but with larger dwellings to the western boundary of the site.

3.7 To the west the boundary is then further extended from the approved site area 4/18/2347/001 to solely create a landscape area. This area will include some underground service infrastructure but will be predominantly laid to grass with individual tree planting. This will enhance the appearance of the development travelling from the west along Harras Moor.

3.8 The entirety of the site has been considered by a landscape architect who has produced a landscape layout together with a comprehensive schedule of planting with a variety of species both specimen species to enhance development within plot boundaries and the development

itself but also indigenous species to create hedgerows and planting bands around the perimeter of the site and landscape planting zones.

3.9 The Application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, Drainage Strategy and Operational Maintenance Plan which together demonstrate a sustainable form of surface water drainage.

3.10 Whilst the development makes more efficient use of the site than the previously approved scheme it also introduces substantial areas of landscaping and retains a relatively low density. The continuous hard and soft landscaping to the front boundary will create a level of continuity which would not have been delivered by the self-build plots approved under 4/18/2347/001.

4.0 Access and Highways

4.1 The proposal will create an arrangement of three groups of dwellings off HARRAS Road together with a field access. This reduces the number of accesses onto HARRAS Road from five to four in comparison to the approved scheme. The replacement of paved driveways with a junction arrangement is considered to represent an improvement.

4.2 The application is supported by an Access Appraisal. Whilst HARRAS Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit the Speed Survey which accompanies the Access Appraisal shows results for the eighty-fifth percentile as exceeding the limit both for the eastern and westerly sections. The proposed development involves the use of speed tables and cushions to reduce vehicle speeds. This allows the visibility to be achieved as shown on the submitted drawings. It should also allow some additional highway safety benefits by reducing the speed of traffic approaching existing development on HARRAS Road from the west. Furthermore, by creating the cul-de-sac arrangements this allows vehicles to be parked clear of HARRAS Road in plot boundaries and discourage roadside parking.

4.3 The site is within relatively easy safe walking distance of Whitehaven town centre allowing access to local services and sustainable forms of transport.

5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 The planning policies relevant to the proposal are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) and the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028. It should also be noted that the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 has completed its preferred options consultation. The outline planning permission granted in 2019 reflected the fact that elements of the development plan are out of date and that the site represented a sustainable form of development consistent with the NPPF. The site is located outside but immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary for Whitehaven. Whitehaven is the borough's principal settlement in the context of development plan settlement hierarchy. As the principal settlement Whitehaven is expected to meet a significant proportion of the borough's housing needs.

5.2 Notwithstanding any variation which may exist between the council's stated housing land supply position between 2019 and the date of this application the presumption in favour of sustainable development provided by paragraph 11 of the NPPF applies. Whilst the site has the benefit of an extant planning permission there are no planning policy reasons that would indicate that this site would not be considered as sustainable if considered on the basis of the 2018 application.

5.3 This proposal is considered to represent a more sustainable form of development than the scheme approved under 4/18/2347/001 in respect of the following:

(a) the increased number of dwellings makes more efficient use the site.

(b) it contains a wider mix of house types to meet local needs.

(c) it includes an element of affordable housing.

(d) the enhanced landscaping scheme both improves the visual appearance of the development and will contribute towards biodiversity.

(e) the site incorporates a higher standard of design.

5.4 The proposal complies with the Development Management Policies contained in the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 and is considered a significant improvement in the context of the following policies:

(i) Policy DM10 – Achieving quality of place

(ii) Policy DM11 – Sustainable development standards

(iii) Policy DM12 – Standards of new Residential Developments

(iv) Policy DM26 – Landscaping

5.5 Whilst the site is moderately larger than the scheme approved under 4/18/2347/001 this contributes positively to its sustainability. A significant part of the extended site will be devoted solely to landscaping whilst the extension which is subject to a level of development encourages the more efficient use of land.

6.0 Affordable Housing

6.1 The application is a major development and paragraph 65 of the NPPF expects 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership. These are homes made available for sale at a price no greater than 80% of the market value.

6.2 As an alternative the Applicant proposes to provide two Build to Rent homes on plots 6 and 7. Complaint with Annex 2 of the NPPF these homes would be let on the following basis:

- (a) let at an affordable rent at least 20% below local market rents;
- (b) be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

6.3 Plots 6 and 7 form an integral part of the development and are identified in design to the open market homes proposed on plots 8 and 9. The proposal would offer a very high quality affordable housing which will contribute positively to the tenure of the scheme and the choice of housing.

6.4 The affordable housing would be secured in perpetuity by a planning obligation to require that the properties remained let at an affordable rent or sold as affordable home ownership.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposal is considered to be a substantial enhancement of the scheme which benefits from approval under planning permission 4/18/2347/001. The re-configured proposal makes more efficient use of the land whilst substantially improving the form, appearance and landscaping of the development. The proposal now includes an element of affordable housing appropriate to the location and character of development.

7.2 The site is a sustainable form of development in the context of paragraph 11 of the NPPF and complies with the saved policies in the Council's Local Plan. The proposal will make a positive contribution to the supply and mix of housing to serve the locality.