



Our Ref: RJI/NDB/RID1326

11th July 2013

Keiron Dunn
Major Applications Group
Development Management
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Planning & Transportation
PO Box 604
Barnsley
S70 9FE

Dear Keiron

FORMER WILLOWGARTH SCHOOL, GRIMETHORPE, BARNSELY – APPLICATION REFERENCE 2012/0537

I refer to the aforementioned planning application which seeks consent for the proposed redevelopment at the former Willowgarth school site with residential development with appearance, layout, landscaping and scale reserved for future consideration.

Further to various meetings, this letter is intended to accompany the more detailed drawings prepared by NPS as regards the provision of a landscape buffer to the northern boundary which will act as a transitional landscape zone between the new residential development and the Green Belt.

A revised Landscape Impact Statement is submitted which clearly shows how views into and out of the site will be enhanced through this landscape buffer and which will be an improvement, not only in relation to the current scheme, but to the site as a whole through the softening of the boundary treatment.

This correspondence also seeks to clarify the policy position as regards the development of this former school site and I supplement my previously prepared Planning Policy Statement, page 12, with the following comments: -

Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework cites the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt except for six categories of buildings which include and which is relevant in this particular instance, the:-

“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.”

It is understood your policy colleagues are suggesting the NPPF only allows development on the footprint of the former school to be regarded as appropriate development in the Green Belt and that any development on ancillary areas is to be regarded as inappropriate development that needs to be justified by very special circumstances. This is not our interpretation of paragraph 89 and the acceptable forms of development in the Green Belt. There is no reference in bullet point 6 to the

requirement to contain any new buildings within the footprint of any previous building, only that any future development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development.

In order to demonstrate this, it is clear from a comparison of the previous school buildings and the quantum of development proposed by the new residential dwellings that there will be a significant improvement to the openness of the Green Belt as a result of both a reduction in volume of buildings as well as the footprint of the buildings on site.

The proposed development (7,179.5m²) will result in a reduction of floorspace compared to the existing buildings on site (7,259m²) rising to 19,180m² when the areas of hard standing are included, with the volume of the proposed development (55,420m³) also being significantly lower than the volume of the previous buildings on site (79,849m³). It is therefore maintained, given the NPPF requires the complete redevelopment of previously developed sites to ensure any new buildings would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the development is compliant with National Policy and should be regarded as appropriate development in this regard.

The revised Landscape Statement clearly addresses the issues surrounding the character and appearance of the adjacent countryside and the new landscape buffer allows for the integration and transition between the new build development and the Green Belt beyond the application site boundary.

In all respects the illustrative and indicative masterplan shows a well-designed residential redevelopment on this brownfield site which integrates into the fabric of the settlement whilst maintaining large areas of open space within the development site and significant planting to soften the edge of the development which is a clear gain on what was previously there. In all respects, there is a significant improvement to the openness of the Green Belt through the reduced volume and footprint of buildings on site as well as an improvement to the landscape character of the area which results in an opportunity to realise much needed housing on a brownfield site in accordance with the sites identification within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Ref SS2) as being suitable and available for residential development accordingly.

I trust this letter which acts as a supplementary document to the previously submitted Planning Policy Justification Statement clarifies National Planning Policy Framework interpretation and allows you to recommend approval of the application proposal.

However and in the meantime, should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



Richard Irving BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
Director