

PLANNING STATEMENT

Hampton Park, Littlehampton

In respect of Proposals for (i) the Central Wetland Area and
(ii) the Central Wetland Area Bridge Structures



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Central Wetland Area: Form and Function
3. The Central Wetland: the two Main Spine Road/ Bridge Structures
4. The Central Wetland Area: the Green Swales
5. Conclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies the Reserved Matters application in relation to Persimmon Homes' land at North Littlehampton. The original Outline application was approved in 2013 under reference LU/47/11, and subsequently amended under a s73 application (LU/182/15/PL), which included a Development Framework document and masterplan.
- 1.2 The Development Framework Document (2017) provides the guiding principles for the overall development, including the Central Wetland Area. This application, for the Central Wetland Area, is being brought forward under the aegis of reference (LU/182/15/PL)/ Reserved Matters.
- 1.3 Woven into the fabric of the Phase 2B and Phase 5 proposals is the main infrastructure and the core of how it ties together the land parcels either side of the Central Wetland Area. What follows provides further details in relation to that key piece of infrastructure: the CWA.
- 1.4 The design parameters have been established through a close examination, by the consultant team responsible for the North Littlehampton Development Framework Document (November 2017) and the approved masterplan therein. That process has arrived at the following Reserved Matters /support documents, all of which are attached concurrently:
 - i. Design Statement
 - ii. Detailed Landscape Proposals
 - iii. Arboricultural Assessment
 - iv. The detailed engineering drawings
 - v. Ecology Statement
 - vi. Site Wide Flood Compensation: Technical Note
- 1.5 Fundamentally, the CWA installations will allow the housing parcels to the east of the Central Wetland and the community hub to be brought forward, via the pivot of a central band of POS. There are two elements covered here, which together take in some 7.8 ha of land:
 1. The two Central Spine Road 'bridge' structures;
 2. The overall Central Wetland Area elements and installations;
- 1.6 We begin, below, in reverse order to cover the many details and facets of the CWA.

2. CENTRAL WETLAND AREA: FORM AND FUNCTION

(a) Background Details

- 2.1 Contextually, the Central Wetland Area is the main green space and flood storage facility within the neighbourhood-wide development at Hampton Park. It has been designed to include a variety of features for a rich user-experience including parkland, water features and the retention of existing mature trees arranged in a woodland setting.
- 2.2 The landscape structure show how pedestrians and cyclists can move conveniently through the space, and how linkages are formed between parcels either side of the Central Wetland Area.
- 2.3 Although the wetland area is a large moderately sunken space, centrally positioned within the development, it also acts as a 'gateway' and visual link to the Black Ditch, further north, and the landscape features have been designed to maintain an open prospect northward to the area beyond. To this end, the area is widest at its northern edge, to capture flood water, and tapers to its narrowest point, toward the southern boundary, where there is a more woodland character. This gives the space something of a 'funnel' shape through its longitudinal axis.
- 2.4 On the southernmost tip of the open space, is the Community Hub: it plays an important role in anchoring the public open space while allowing hub-users immediate POS access. The southern area then leads toward Toddington Lane, where the setting is more rural.
- 2.5 Immediately west of the Central Wetland Area is the recently consented Phase 2B proposals, for 46 units. And immediately east of the CWA is the Phase 5 proposals, for 261 units. Both of these housing schemes frame and overlook the open space, providing good natural surveillance – giving a safe / overlooked area for children to explore and travel more broadly through the amenity areas.

(b) Flood Storage

2.6 In addition to its aesthetic qualities and broad parkland character, the CWA is the main flood storage basin within the overall scheme: a shallow depression / swale feature has been designed through the length of the space, including a pond, to store and direct surface water toward the Black Ditch and southwards. And, conversely, it also has capacity to receive flood water from the Black Ditch and from the development parcels either side.

2.7 The submitted supporting details set out how the area will be re-profiled to receive flood water:

“The scheme re-profiles the whole of the CWA west of the water main to a level of 1.38m AOD with a profile to allow flood waters to drain back toward the Black Ditch to the north. The land to the east of the water main will be re-profiled to a level of 1.60m AOD to provide sufficient cover to the pipe through an 8m corridor along the pipe’s alignment”.

2.8 The supporting details conclude:

“Most of the compensation can be provided in a lowered Central Wetland Area, running between the two development platforms, with the rest being provided through land lowering to the proposed playing fields to the east of the development.

The provision of the flood compensation scheme together with the associated landscape management provides a volumetric net gain of 324m³ of flood storage...”

2.9 Thus, there is a net increase in flood compensation of 324m³ up to the 1,000-year flood event. The result is that the finished floor levels on the plots will be set at a minimum of 500mm above the modelled flood event to safeguard homes. In terms of design, this allows properties to sit higher than the open space, with gentle grassed embankments rising up to the homes. It creates a valuable surveillance adjunct to the public open space.

2.10 To create the appropriate levels of storage, the Central Wetland Area will be remodelled - ground levels will be lowered to 1.38m AOD - from an existing level of approximately 1.6m -- to create the required storage volumes. In addition, the drainage channels that weave through the proposals will have a depth of 400mm. These low-flow channels are designed to direct the flow of water through the development and include oversized box culverts where they interface with a footpath.

- 2.11 It should be noted that for the majority of the time, there will be no water in the Central Wetland Area, except in a rare flood event. In other words, the area and the footpaths will be dry for the most part.
- 2.12 Detailed discussions are underway with the Council's specialist officers to (i) reach agreement on the proposals and (ii) ensure compliance with Policy W DM2 (Flood Risk) and Policy W DM3 (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems). The basis of the dialogue is that the Central Wetland Area incorporates a SUDs design that integrates with the housing parcels either side and the overall drainage strategy for Hampton Park; and which contributes positively to the scheme's aesthetic. In that sense, Policy QE SP1 (Quality of the Environment) is fully embraced.

(c) Trees

- 2.13 There are a number of mature trees of notable quality within the Central Wetland Area that are being retained as part of the woodland character aesthetic. These are concentrated toward the site's southern end, and will be important in creating an 'established' green framework to the CVWA. The Barrell Tree Consultancy report notes:

"Most of the trees to be lost because of this proposal are low category because of their poor condition or small size. Some moderate category trees will also be lost but their loss will have no long-term detrimental impact on the present character of the area. No high category trees will need to be removed".

- 2.14 In terms of creating a verdant and woodland setting, as part of the landscape proposals by WYG Consultants, the report remarks:

"There is plenty of space for tree planting and a comprehensive new landscaping scheme is included as part of the proposals. The size of these new trees and their future growth will significantly enhance the contribution of this site to local character and more than compensate for the loss of existing trees."

- 2.15 Therefore, the high-quality trees will be retained as part of the theme of providing established woodland setting, and these will be supplemented with new tree planting that will enhance the local sylvan character.
- 2.16 As noted earlier, there will be longitudinal ground lowering/ re-modelling to create water storage areas; this means that some of the ground, including the base of some trees, will sit proud of the ground. To obviate that, the gradient between the trees/ flood storage will be adjusted to 1:20 so there is no issue around safety or root impact.

(d) Ecology

- 2.17 The site was previously dominated by the previous horticultural operations and associated buildings which have all been removed, thus there is very little by way of ecology on this part of the site. Nevertheless, detailed ecological surveys have been carried out over several years to determine whether any notable or protected species are present, including a bat activity survey, reptile survey, water vole survey, badger survey and bird survey.
- 2.18 Unsurprisingly, there was no evidence of water voles, reptiles and badgers recorded during these assessments across what has been a long-established brownfield site. Hence, the CWA presents a very positive opportunity to create biodiversity-betterment (as set out in the Ecology Mitigation Management Plan by ECOSA). The wildlife recommendations therein have been integral to the design process and include, inter-alia, the creation of log piles, retention of existing mature trees.

(e) Footpaths

- 2.19 To enhance the user-experience and enjoyment through the Central Wetland Area, a series of 3m (in width) footpaths and cycle paths are proposed, that connect the development parcels adjoining the POS. As noted above, for the majority of the time, the footpaths will remain dry and the SUDs system will obviate localised ponding. The pathways will be suitably surfaced to fit the open space aesthetic; details are given in the attached landscaping report.

(f) Management and Maintenance

- 2.20 It is proposed that the Central Wetland Area will be maintained by the approved Management Company for the Hampton Park development while the bridge structures will be adopted by West Sussex County Council as part of a s38 Agreement.

3. THE CENTRAL WETLAND: THE TWO MAIN SPINE ROAD/ BRIDGE STRUCTURES

- 3.1 The spine road through the overall scheme, links the northern roundabout of the Lyminster Bypass, to the retail quarter and Phase 2 / Phase 2B, and then toward the Central Wetland Area. This central spine road continues across the CWA, via two crossing points, providing linkages through the eastern parcels via a circular route.
- 3.2 The road will be built to adoptable standards as directed by West Sussex County Council Highways, with a minimum width of 6.2 metres, plus a grass verge and separate footpath / cycle path along its length.
- 3.3 Continuing through Phase 5, the spine road crosses the southern edge of the Central Wetland Area and joins Toddington Lane, with a change in priority junction. This part of the spine road enables the delivery of the primary school, the youth facility, community centre and housing parcels further east.
- 3.4 Where the road interfaces with the Central Wetland Area, two abutment-linked crossing structures are proposed, to the north and south. Consideration has been given to the design and form of these structures to create a high-quality feel for the development. We propose that the embankments are grassed, with relatively few abutment-features - to maintain the open vista toward the Black Ditch.
- 3.5 In practical terms, the landscaped crossing structures will sync with the green setting of the open space, and undertake the engineering across the CWA. The northern structure is described as follows:

“The northern crossing of the CWA has been raised out of the flood plain with a central culvert 12.8 metre wide by 1.9 metre high that provides the connection between the larger compensation areas to the south with the Black Ditch to the north. This existing network of ditches in the land to the north of the development will assist with drainage back to the Black Ditch”.

- 3.6 Visually, the crossing structures will appear as gentle grassed embankments with a 1:3 slope. The attached drawings show an arched bridge / tunnel that will allow flood water (and wildlife) to move and recede through the Central Wetland Area. At its apex, the tunnel will be 1.9 metres in height and will be ‘fenced’ (in a low-key manner) to avoid people accessing the tunnel.
- 3.7 Turning to the southern edge of the Central Wetland Area, a similar, smaller road crossing is being created – that links to Toddington Lane. This, second, installation will incorporate a wildlife corridor and drainage channel.

- 3.8 For ecological considerations, a mammal tunnel is also proposed, comprising a pipe with a 600mm diameter to allow badgers, and other wildlife, to move unimpeded through the wetland area.

4. THE CENTRAL WETLAND AREA: THE GREEN SWALES

- 4.1 An attractive feature within the Phase 5 composition is the planned incorporation of green swales, one dividing the area in two, with a second green swale on the eastern edge. These longitudinal green fingers have a north-south alignment that will receive surface water drainage from adjoining properties and direct the flow toward *the Central Wetland Area* in a controlled manner. At the same time, they will provide an important amenity break within the new parcels. They have been an integral part of the landscape design and the overall drainage strategy linked to the Central Wetland Area.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 These infrastructure elements are an integral part of the overall scheme - both in terms of enabling delivery of Phase 5's housing, the primary school and community hub and for the creation of a central parkland area. The CWA sits at the heart of the development and provides a key aesthetic component, giving the development an enhanced form, and special sense of place.
- 5.2 Clearly, the central spine road has to unite homes in the separate areas of Phase 2B and Phase 5, but not at an aesthetic cost to the cohesive continuity and structure of the POS. That is what the plans have been tasked to do – in their synthesis of visual appeal and engineering function.
- 5.3 For its part, the Central Wetland Area provides the main area of open space / green infrastructure / ecological mitigation for Phase 2B and Phase 5, and in effect, that will be extended by the Black Ditch to the north, where there will be wide-ranging views available across the countryside beyond.
- 5.4 The landscape, tree, engineering, drainage and flood compensation components have all been considered in the design's evolution. The proposals work functionally and aesthetically to create an attractive space for existing and new residents. Also, and importantly, the parkland will be safe, and overlooked, because it is to be attractively framed by a sequence of new homes that sit above and alongside in Phase 2B and Phase 5.

- 5.5 In terms of the policy framework, the proposals align with the guidance set out in the Development Framework Document (2017) and the Local Plan policies particularly around drainage and the quality of the environment. The Framework document (approved during the s73 application) provides the masterplan and guiding principles for the overall development, including the Central Wetland Area; and these proposals fully embrace the approved guidance in that document.
- 5.6 In view of the foregoing, Persimmon Homes commend these proposals as an appropriate response to the site, its setting, the overall aspirations of the masterplan and the fulfilment of the Local Plan's requirements and policies.
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