

SJK Planning

Chartered Town Planners

HARDINGS FARM, HARDINGS LANE, FRYERNING, INGATESTONE, CM4 0HZ

**Demolition of existing buildings
and replacement with five dwellings**

Amendments to Approved Scheme



Planning and Heritage Statement



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Appendix 1 – Comparison of existing and proposed development

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement has been prepared by SJK Planning in support of a planning application to redevelop a brownfield site to provide five dwellings. A previous application was approved by the Planning Committee on 4th September 2019 (ref 19/00421/FUL).

1.2 Hardings Farm comprises a complex of buildings extending over some 2 hectares. It had operated for a number of years as a stud farm for race horses, and the site and many of the buildings are still used in connection with equestrian activities. Amongst the buildings is Hardings Farm House, a Grade II Listed building dating back to the Early C16, and renovated in 1969. Alongside the site is a substantial 1970s built house currently subject of a pre-application inquiry.



1.3 The site has been sold to Daniel James Developments Ltd, a company that specialises in high quality village developments. They want to retain the “farm

courtyard” concept of the approved scheme, described in the officer’s report to the Planning Committee as follows-

“Plots 1 to 3 would be arranged in a courtyard arrangement taking inspiration from the historic pattern of buildings on the site (P6 of the heritage statement shows a similar courtyard arrangement on the site from a map dated 1896). Notwithstanding the drawing together of buildings the proposal creates a greater sense of openness within the group of buildings with the large central open courtyard.”

1.4 It was agreed that by greatly reducing the scale and extent of the buildings, contracting the developed footprint, and introducing more green space, the development would have a significantly reduced impact on the openness of the Green Belt. House designs reflect the style of traditional buildings, with narrow spans, steep pitches, and low eaves.

1.5 This statement first describes the site. It then looks at the approved scheme and sets out the proposed changes. A pre-application inquiry was carried out earlier this year and the proposals respond to the advice.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The application site is located at the end of Hardings Lane, which connects to Mill Green Lane, 200m to the west of the site. It comprises a Listed Farmhouse, a second house constructed in the early 1970s, and a range of buildings related to equestrian use. Hardings Farm was formerly within the Chelmsford Borough boundary.

2.2 The Myson family purchased the property in 1969. It became established as a successful Stud Farm, with stabling for some 30 horses. The “Gallop” ran to the north of the stables, and can still be seen on older photographs and plans. It doubled up as a private runway, with one of the adjoining buildings having been used as an aircraft hangar. When the Stud Farm use came to an end, much of the land was set aside.



The original farm house is at the centre of the site, with Hardings House to the east. Stables and associated buildings enclose the Listed Building on the other three sides.

2.3 The Farmhouse was Listed in 1994, and is described as follows:-

“INGATESTONE AND FRYERNING TQ6999 723-1/14/367 04/06/92 HARDING'S LANE, Mill Green Harding's Farmhouse II House. Early C16 and C17, renovated 1969. Timber-framed, roughcast rendered with some exposed framing, roofed with handmade and machine-made red clay tiles. Short main range facing W, C17, possibly incorporating part of an earlier hall range, with C18 external stack at right end. Wide 2-bay cross-wing to left, early C16, with C17 external stack to left of it, C18/19 single-storey extension to rear, and later single-storey extensions beyond. 2 storeys.”



Historically the Farm House had a more open setting, with a courtyard of farm buildings to the north. (Plan from 1896).

2.4 Planning permission for Hardings House, adjacent to the Listed Building was granted in 1969. It is described as “Replacement of existing farm house with new farm house”.



Hardings House, constructed in 1970, is a substantial building with a footprint extending to some 560 sq metres.

2.5 Alongside the two dwellings are a number of other buildings. A full topographical survey has been carried out and they comprise the following:-

- 1) Hay and Feed Store 276 sq m (1773 cu m)
- 2) Former Aircraft Hangar 130 sq m (561 cu m)
- 3) Stables and Hay Storage 532 sq m (1862 cu m)
- 4) Stable Block 259 sq m (948 cu m)
- 5) Former Jockey Quarters 86 sq m (372 cu m)
- 6) Various outbuildings and toilet block 62 sq m (214 cu m)
- 7) and 8) Workshop and outbuilding 160 sq m (612 cu m)
- 9) Former stables 294 sq m (1026 cu m)

Total = 1799 sq m (7368 cu m)

2.6 There has been a limited amount of farming activity on the site since the 1960s. Grass was cut and stored in some of the farm buildings, but mostly used for feeding horses. The site therefore comprises previously development land as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF.



The site has provided stabling for up to 30 horses. Several buildings were converted to provide stabling for the stud farm. There are many substantial buddings on the site, surrounded by extensive areas of hardstanding.

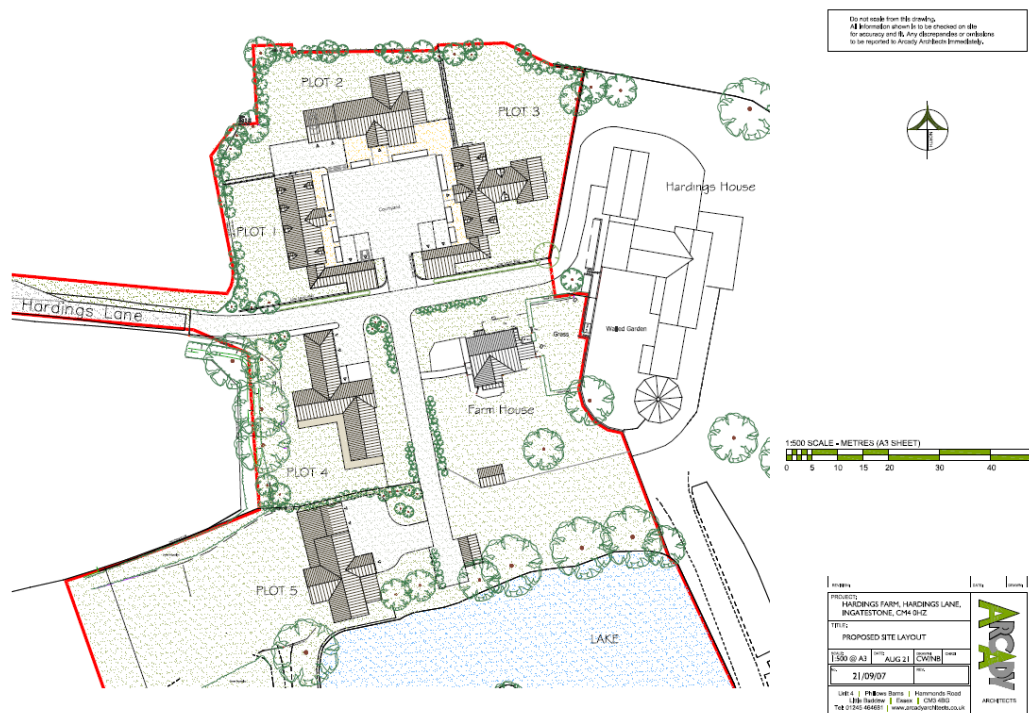


The lakes and established landscaping on the edge of the site.

2.7 The site connects via Hardings Lane to Mill Green Lane. Hardings Farm occupies a sustainable location close to the A12 and a main line station at Ingatestone.

3.0 The Approved Scheme and Proposed Amendments

3.1 The approved scheme shows the removal of the buildings on the site and their replacement with a development comprising five dwellings. The design, layout, and style of the new dwellings very much followed the advice from officers, particularly in respect of preserving the openness of the Green Belt, protecting the setting of a Listed building, and referencing an historic farm courtyard.



The layout and design follows detailed pre-application discussions and advice. Development is proposed in the form of a traditional farm courtyard, as shown on historic maps of the site.

3.2 Although it is recognised that a numerical comparison between the existing and proposed developments may not form part of planning policy and guidance, it has become established as a method by which, on an initial basis, the likely impact on openness can be assessed. It can then be followed by a more qualitative assessment and comparison, with reference to the height and scale of the proposed dwellings, the spread in relation to the existing buildings, and the how views into the site from the surrounding open Green Belt might be enhanced.

3.3 The proposed amendments to the scheme are as follows:-

1) Changes to the layout of the courtyard which include:-

- Increase in the depth of the courtyard from 27.8 metres to 30 metres. This allows for improvements to the turning and parking arrangements, with the cart

lodge garages accessed from inside the courtyard. The courtyard has been kept at the same width in response to pre-application advice.

- Creation of a more open layout with the central island now removed.
- Front entrance to plot 3 now facing onto the courtyard rather than accessed from the south side, where it was directly opposite the listed building.

3.4 Overall the changes are of a minor nature and would it is felt improve the courtyard narrative, retaining a strong reference to the historic farm layout.

2) Changes to the design of units 1, 2, 3 and 5.

- Changes to the design of the attached cart lodge garages to Units 1 and 2 to allow the formation of a utility/boot room. They would have a narrower span and lower pitch than the approved cart lodge garages.
- Changes to the design of Plot 2. Increase in depth of the house resulting in a minor increase in ridge height. The eaves height is unchanged.
- Changes to the window positions of Plot 3 to reflect the change in orientation to face the courtyard.
- Increase in depth of Plot 5 resulting in a minor increase in ridge height. The eaves height is unchanged.

3.5 The minor changes to the house designs are mostly to provide for the particular requirements of the applicants. There are no changes to the traditional form, character, or appearance of the houses.



Street scene showing plots 1,2 and 3.

3.6 We have looked at how the changes affect the numerical comparisons put forward in supporting the approved scheme. There are relatively small increases as set out at **Appendix 1**. Importantly, in all respects the proposed scheme still represents a significant reduction in built form and consequent contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.

3.7 The design principle behind the scheme is to provide dwellings in the form of traditional farm buildings, grouped around a courtyard. This narrative is wholly retained by the amended scheme.



The house designs follow traditional forms, but also have a strong individual character. This will then compliment both the Listed Farmhouse and Hardings House.

4.0 Planning Policy

4.1 This section looks at both national and local planning policies. It is important to mention that local policies are in the process of being reviewed in order that they follow the new government guidance. An emerging local plan is going through the consultation process.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework says that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that:-

“c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. 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.”

4.3 The framework requires that development should be of good design and appropriately located, stating that:-

“126. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”

4.4 In respect of the Green Belt the Framework states that:-

“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”

4.5 The Framework states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. One of the exceptions to this is described as:-

“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”

4.6 The definition of previously developed land is laid out in Annex 2 of the NPPF and reads:-

“Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.”

4.7 It is clear that the site and buildings had been used for a number of years as a stud farm, and the equestrian use, although on a smaller scale has continued. It is therefore reasonable to classify the site as previously developed land. Notwithstanding the designation, the redevelopment of a brownfield site is only considered an exception from inappropriate development if “it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt”.

Local Policy

4.8 The Brentwood Replacement Local Plan is the Borough's current development plan, formally adopted by the Council on 25 August 2005. There is an emerging Local Plan 2015-2030.

4.9 The emerging plan states that:-

“Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with national policy and guidance. Development within the Green Belt will only be permitted if it maintains the Green Belt's openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt or harm its visual amenities.”

4.10 Policy 9.9 states that the replacement of existing buildings may be allowed provided the visual mass of the new building does not exceed the mass of existing buildings and the proposal would not lead to an expansion or intensification of activity on the site.

4.11 Policy 9.11 in respect of previously developed land in the Green Belt, states that:-

“Proposals for redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield) within the Green Belt will be permitted where redevelopment:

- a. contributes towards local housing needs or provides new jobs;
 - b. would not have significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - d. provides community benefits to both the new and existing local community;
 - e. supplies or improves travel links to nearby existing communities, such as villages;
- and

f. contributes to the Borough's sustainable development principles as set out in other policies in the Plan.”

5.0 The Planning Considerations

5.1 This section first considers the principle of development. It then considers design, character and appearance, heritage impact, residential amenities, trees and landscape, and sustainability. It considers whether any new planning considerations might result from the amendments to the scheme.

The principle of development

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reinforces previous advice that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. One of the exceptions is limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

5.3 The report for the Planning Committee for the previous application noted that:-

“In general terms the proposed building is drawn away from site boundaries. The proposed north-south spread of buildings would be reduced to 105 metres in comparison to the current spread of 145 metres. The proposed east-west spread of buildings would be 49 metres in comparison to 35m in the central area, though the existing spread is 72 m overall taking the outlying buildings (in the north west corner and another in the south west corner) to be removed into account. It can therefore be seen that the spread of buildings over the site as proposed in comparison to the existing situation would be reduced.”

5.4 With regard to the spread of development the amended scheme compares in the same way.

5.5 The NPPF requires that the replacement development should have “no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.” Making this judgement requires both a quantitative and qualitative assessment, as follows:-

Quantitative assessment

5.6 The proposed development would represent a reduction of 43.6% in volume and an equivalent net contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. This constitutes a substantial reduction in built form.

5.7 The proposed dwellings comprise 4 No. one and half storey, and one single storey. All the proposed dwellings are lower in height than modern two storey dwellings.

Qualitative assessment

5.8 The concept of openness in the Green Belt cannot be limited to a comparison of relative size and scale. An assessment should also therefore include a qualitative judgement.

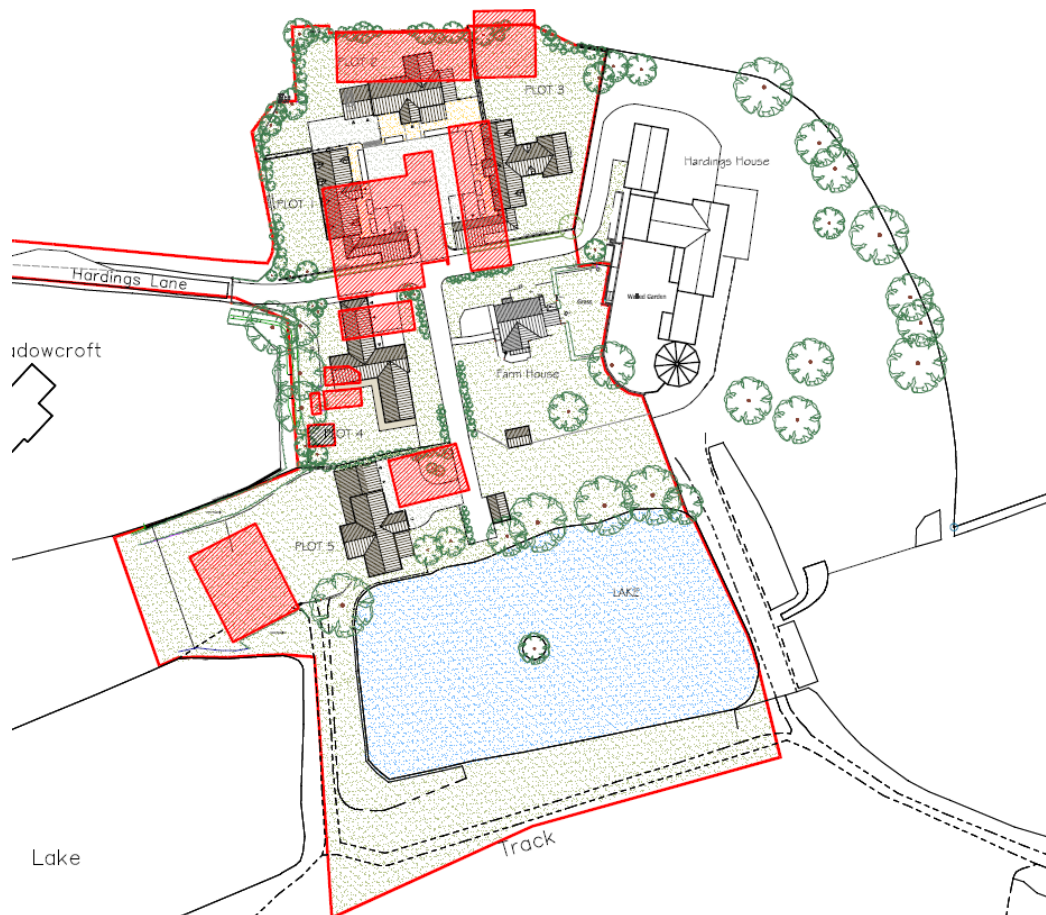
5.9 The character of the site, stemming from its use as a stud farm, is intensely developed in character, with buildings scattered over a wide area, connected by extensive areas of hardstanding.

5.10 Part of the process in this respect is to consider the relative spread of existing and proposed development across the site, and how this impacts on views of Hardings Farm from the surrounding countryside. In this respect the very wide spread of existing buildings has been considerably reduced to form a significantly more compact

development. Importantly also, this provides the opportunity to reinforce the landscape setting of the site, particularly as viewed from the north.

5.11 The very large areas of hardstanding will be replaced with gardens and open landscaped areas.

5.12 The proposed dwellings are located where they best relate to each other, the access, and adjoining properties.



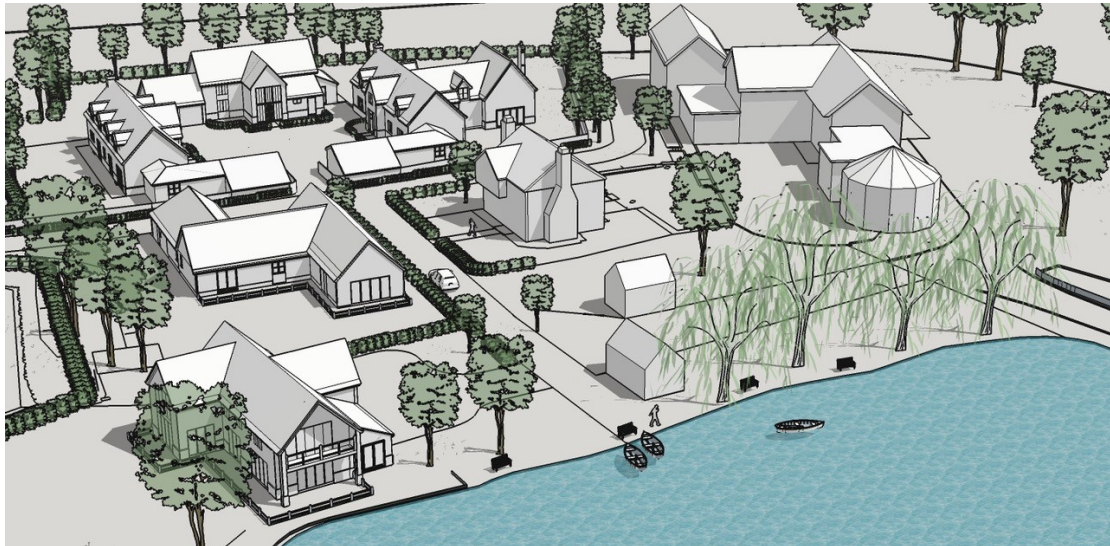
The existing buildings as overlaid in red have a far greater spread and impact on openness than the proposed buildings.

5.13 In both numerical and visual terms the redevelopment of the site as proposed will have a positive impact on the openness of the Green Belt. This therefore accords with

both national guidance, and the emerging local plan, which provides for the re-use of previously land in the Green Belt.

Design, character, and appearance

5.14 The amended scheme has continued to give careful thought to the character and appearance of the proposed development, having regard for the rural location. The houses are designed with a traditional plan form and detailing, with external materials to complement the farmhouse. The proposed development would be a very high quality design in accordance with NPPF and relevant Local Plan policies.



Heritage Impact

5.15 The consideration in this respect is to determine what Heritage Assets (Designated or Undesignated) and Settings will be affected by the proposals. The NPPF states at paragraph that:-

‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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’.

5.16 The Listed Building is surrounded by buildings, and visually obscured from most directions, particularly on entering the site from Hardings Lane. The scheme provides the opportunity to reinstate the setting of the building. Having regard for pre-application advice, however we have also been careful not to isolate the Listed Building. The layout is such that the farmhouse can form an integral part of the new development.

5.17 There will consequently be positive impacts on the character or qualities of the setting of the Listed Building.

Residential amenities

5.18 Several of the existing buildings on the site are visually intrusive in a rural setting. Their removal will have a significant beneficial effect on the amenities of both the dwellings within and adjoining the site, and on the wider area.

5.19 Good distances are provided to the boundaries, and there will be no loss of light or privacy. They are also located and designed so as to prevent any overlooking.

5.20 There are no precise figures for the amount of traffic that the full equestrian use of the site would have generated. It is clear however that five houses will generate far fewer traffic movements.

Trees and landscape

5.21 A tree survey and impact assessment report has been provided as part of the application. There will be no harmful impact on the trees within or adjoining the site. Much of site already benefits from a mature landscape setting. The spacious layout provides further opportunities for tree planting, with details to be agreed under the terms

of a planning condition. The proposed amendments to the proposals will not impact on any of the trees.

Ecology

5.22 An investigation has been carried out to determine whether the site has the potential to be occupied by protected species, which would be affected if any proposed development were to go ahead.

5.23 Although no evidence of bats was found, it is probable that bats from nearby roosts will forage over the site and in the gardens of adjacent properties. This foraging behaviour would be expected to continue after the completion of the building work and therefore it is considered that the proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population, or on other protected species.

Sustainability

5.24 The two main considerations with regard to sustainability are first the degree to which the scheme will be energy efficient, and secondly to what extent the location, scale, and nature of the development will generate transport by private car.

5.25 Energy efficient design, the incorporation of renewable energy technology and other systems will provide a highly sustainable development. It is designed to meet the Code of Sustainable Homes Level 4, in excess of the current building control requirements to provide high levels of thermal efficiency and low energy usage.

5.26 The application site is a short distance from Ingatestone, and also close to both Chelmsford and Brentwood. The redevelopment of the site for five houses will generate considerably less traffic than the full use of the site as a stud farm/equestrian centre.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 This statement has carefully described the site and its surroundings, the policy context, and the proposals. It is clear that the site and building comply with the definition of previously developed land, as set out in the NPPF, which allows for the redevelopment of such sites, providing that it would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The development would make a net contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.

6.2 The proposed layout and design responds to the character of the locality and the surroundings, to the opportunities the site presents, and to the relevant national and local policies and guidance. In particular, it will greatly improve the setting of a Listed Building. The application is therefore an opportunity to make a significant improvement to the character and appearance of the area.

6.3 Minor changes have been made to the layout of the courtyard and the design of the dwellings. They do not change the narrative of the scheme in relation to the historic setting of the farmhouse or in respect of the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

6.4 The officers are accordingly urged to support the proposals.