

Land North of Occupation Road Wye

Planning Statement

On behalf of Tele-Property Investments Ltd

Demolition of former college buildings and glass houses and redevelopment with forty dwellings with associated garages, parking, internal estates roads, open space and car park

HPPC Ref: 31063

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement is to support the planning application for the erection of 40 houses on land to the north of Occupation Road, Wye.
- 1.2 In the statement we outline and discuss the relevant planning considerations, including a description of the site, planning history, the relevant planning policy context for the proposal, details of the development , design and access considerations, the key planning issues and from this draw our conclusions in support of the proposal.

2 SITE AND LOCATION

- 2.1 Wye is a large village located centrally within the Parish of Wye with Hinxhill. The total population of the parish is estimated as 2470 with approximately 1150 households. The majority of the population live in the village which is situated within the North Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty some three miles north north east of Ashford.
- 2.2 The application site area is 2.02 hectares. The accompanying site plan indicates the site and its surroundings. It is located adjacent to Wye School and was formerly part of Wye College. It is located on the northern side of Occupation Road and has been developed with glasshouses and buildings used for horticultural activity and research by the college. The North Downs Way long distance footpath crosses Olantigh Road to the west before running along Occupation Road along side the site and eastward across the fields and up onto Wye Downs.
- 2.3 The site falls outside of the Wye Conservation Area boundary, which is some 140 metres to the south. The nearest listed buildings to the site are located within the Conservation Area. The site is not identified as being within an area of archaeological interest. The site does not directly impact on any nationally or locally defined heritage assets.
- 2.4 The site is within floodzone 1, and so is therefore land at least risk of flooding. The proposed development seeks to provide up to 40 dwellings with associated access, internal estate roads, open space, SUDs and landscaping buffers around the edge of the site. There are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on the Wye and Crundale Downs within 1200 metres of the application site.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site has been included within two EIA screening requests submitted in conjunction with proposals for the site. The 2014 request ref.14/0019/EIA/AS relates to a proposed comprehensive redevelopment of the wider Wye College site by Imperial College, this was abandoned. The request made under ref. 19/00001/EIA/AS was made by the applicant of this application in respect of the proposed redevelopment being pursued for 40 houses. The screening opinion advised that the development did not require an ES to accompany the planning application.
- 3.2 The site has not been subject to any specific planning applications since the closure of Wye College. It was formerly used by Wye College in association with education and research purposes and contains a number of small free standing single storey modern buildings and a range of large commercial glass houses. Part of the site was subsequently occupied by Wye Bugs and used for commercial purposes in connection with their business, they have subsequently relocated to the south side of Occupation Road.

4 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposed development site is previously developed land, a significant range of buildings remain on the site from its former use, with about 60% of the site covered by buildings, glasshouses and hardsurfacing, floorspace totalling approximately 3,288 m². Before this brownfield site can be redeveloped it will require significant remediation works to be carried out. There is a significant cost implication for the removal of the existing buildings, glass houses and associated heating systems and piping the serve the structures, these were all constructed at a time that the use of asbestos was commonplace and in accordance with the safeguarding legislation, such materials will have to be dealt with in the appropriate manner. As a result before the development can take place the applicant will incur significant clean up costs, it should therefore be noted that the viability of this site is not comparable to a greenfield site.
- 4.2 The proposed development seeks to provide 40 dwellings with associated access, internal estate roads, open space, SUDs and landscaping buffers around the edge of the site. The scheme includes areas of open space and a small car park located adjacent to the Pilgrims Way. All the houses meet the council's requirements in terms of minimum space standards, parking provision and garden size.
- 4.3 The housing mix has been considered to provide a wide range of housing to meet different areas of market need, with housing suitable for first time buyers, people looking to downsize and medium sized and larger sized family housing all catered for. The dwellings provide the following housing mix;
- 4 x 2 bedroom terraced
 - 23 x 3 Bedroom (8 terraced 10 semi-detached 5 detached)
 - 8 x 4 bedroom detached
 - 5 x 5 bedroom detached
- 4.4 In terms of the provision of affordable housing the applicant requests that the council apply the vacant buildings credit to the provision of the affordable housing. The level of affordable housing to be provided should therefore be calculated with regard to the reduction from 40% taking into account the amount of existing floor space within buildings on the site which should be deducted from the overall affordable housing contribution calculation. Further discussions with the Local Planning Authority on this matter are expected during the consideration of the application.

5 PLANNING POLICY

National Plan Policy Framework

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy framework (the Framework) was published in February 2019. At the heart of the Framework is a “presumption in favour of sustainable development” and promotes “approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay (paragraph 11)
- 5.2 Paragraph 11 addresses both decision making and decision taking, from allocating sites to granting planning permission for a scheme and required consideration of three objectives of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) set out in paragraph 8.
- 5.3 The framework requires Local Planning Authorities to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. The Framework requires the delivery of a sufficient amount and variety of land (paragraph 59) and identifies the important contribution that small and medium sized sites make in meeting the housing requirement of an area (paragraph 68). The Framework requires at least 10% of housing requirements on sites no larger than 1 hectare (paragraph 68).
- 5.4 With regard to residential development in rural areas paragraph 78 of the framework states;
To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
- 5.5 In respect of the need for sustainable development, the Framework recognises that rural areas are less well served by public transport and in such instances it is important to ensure development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable. (paragraph 84).
- 5.6 The Framework requires effective use of land (paragraph 117) and the creation of high quality buildings and places (paragraph 124), to locate development on sites at lowest risk of flooding and that do not increase flood risk elsewhere (paragraph 158 & 163). The Framework requires planning policies and decisions to protect and enhance valued landscapes and provide net gains for biodiversity, (paragraph 170). Great weight is given to conserving and enhancing Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (paragraph 172) and it requires development to assess;

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

Ashford Local Plan 2030

- 5.7 The Ashford Local Plan 2030 Submission version was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in December 2017. An Examination in Public was held in May and June 2018 and the Inspectors report was published on 2nd January 2019. The plan was subsequently adopted by the borough council in February 2019. Therefore for the purposes of this application the Ashford Local Plan 2030 is considered to provide the most up to date and relevant planning policies for the consideration of this application.
- 5.8 The Strategic Objectives of the plan are set out in policy **SP1**. This requires development at accessible and sustainable locations, to conserve and enhance the boroughs natural environment. It aims to promote the highest quality design which is sustainable, accessible, and safe and promotes a positive sense of place through the design of the built form, the relationship of buildings with each other and the spaces around them, and which respond to the prevailing character of the area.
- 5.9 The plan identifies an objectively assessed need for the plan period of 16,872 dwellings, of which 1,000 are required to be provided through windfall sites. The plan identifies the need to provide development in villages to encourage the small scale evolution of some smaller settlements that may otherwise stagnate (paragraph 3.31.3) and goes on to state that;

Overall, the strategy seeks to direct new development towards the most sustainable villages where services are more extensive and well established and public transport connectivity is greatest, consistent with the thrust of the NPPF. The settlement hierarchy for the borough sets Ashford town at the highest level, with Tenterden immediately below this, the settlement hierarchy then identifies the larger villages of Charing, Hamstreet and Wye as rural service centres. Wye therefore has an important role to play in terms of its contribution to meeting the boroughs housing and employment needs.

- 5.10 Policy **SP2** sets out the strategic approach to housing delivery within the plan. It identifies the

need for residential development in rural areas and in this respect states;

Development in the rural areas will be of a scale that is consistent with the relevant settlement's accessibility, infrastructure provision, level of services available, suitability of sites and environmental sensitivity. With this in mind, in addition to existing commitments, new land allocations to deliver 1,590 dwellings are proposed.

Windfall housing development will be permitted where it is consistent with the spatial strategy outlined above and is consistent with other policies of this Local Plan, in order to ensure that sustainable development is delivered.

- 5.11 Wye is a settlement listed in policy **HOU3a**. The listed villages are regarded as suitable for residential development and infilling of a scale that can be satisfactorily integrated within the built confines of the existing settlement. Although no built confines are defined by the plan for any of the villages, the preamble to the policy provides the following definition at paragraph 6.51

Therefore, and for the purposes of this Plan, the built-up confines of a settlement are defined as:

'the limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (e.g. garden areas)'.

This definition may, however, include sites suitable for 'infilling' which is the completion of an otherwise substantially built-up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap.....

- 5.12 In addition paragraph 6.54 of the plan states in respect of the settlements listed in **HOU5**, which also includes Wye, that the identified villages are suitable locations for growth on sites outside settlements. Suitable sites are expected to adjoin or be close to existing settlements and considered against the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic, environmental) as defined by paragraph 7 of the NPPF. Policy **HOU5** specifically allows for development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines of Wye provided that each of the following criteria are met;

- a) *The scale of development proposed is proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day to day service provision currently available and*

commensurate with the ability of those services to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in this Local Plan and committed development in liaison with service providers;

- b) The site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement, and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;*
- c) The development is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area;*
- d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;*
- e) The development must conserve and enhance the natural environment and preserve or enhance any heritage assets in the locality; and,*
- f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design and meets the following requirements:-*
 - i) it sits sympathetically within the wider landscape,*
 - ii) it preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement,*
 - iii) it includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside,*
 - iv) it is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used,*
 - v) it does not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents,*
 - vi) it would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and / or adjoining area and not adversely affect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENV1.*

5.13 The local plan recognises that in rural locations there will inevitably be greater reliance on the private car for transport. It also recognises the need for good public transport links which together with cycling and walking routes can help to reduce reliance on the private car and enable better accessibility to services. In this respect paragraph 6.58 of the local plan identifies 800 metres as a distance considered acceptable for sites to be considered sustainable. The plan specifically states;

Basic day to day services such as a grocery shop, public house, play / community facilities and a primary school should be within a generally accepted easy walking distance of 800

metres in order to be considered sustainable, although the specific local context may mean a higher or lower distance would be a more appropriate guide.

- 5.14 Policy SP6 seeks to promote high quality design. While policy **ENV9** requires the provision of sustainable drainage. The requirements for affordable housing delivery are identified in policy **HOU1**. All new residential development is required to meet internal space standards in accordance with policy **HOU12** and external space standards in accordance with policy **HOU15**, as well as provide satisfactory parking, policy **TRA3(a)** and bicycle parking policy **TRA6**. The need to conserve and enhance biodiversity is required by policy **ENV1** and to protect landscape character of the AONB in accordance with policy **ENV3b**.

Wye Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030

- 5.15 A neighbourhood plan (WNP) has been adopted for Wye, the plan pre-dates the adoption of the Ashford Local Plan 2030, having been prepared against the policy background of the borough's Core Strategy 2008 (CS) and the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document 2010 (TRSDPD). The WNP recognises the allocation of the WYE3 site for development as identified by policy WYE3 in the TRSDPS. Policy WNP6 of the WNP looks to guide the future development of the site. Both policy WYE3 and policy WNP6 identify the preparation of a Masterplan for the WYE3 sites to establish the nature, scale, location, mix of uses and to deliver the proposals in a phased manner. Policy WNP6 expects the WYE3 sites to be delivered in accordance with the agreed masterplan. Table 5.1 of the WNP identifies an approximate level of development of 50 dwellings delivered by WYE3 sites, but clearly identifies that this matter will be subject to the masterplan. While policy WNP11 specifically sets out general principles for the type and approach to development across the WYE3 site.

Former Wye College (Wye3) Masterplan

- 5.16 A draft Masterplan for WYE3 has been prepared by the applicant in consultation with the borough and parish council. The process has been subject to significant stakeholder consultation and community involvement. Subject to minor modifications the borough council has resolved to adopt the masterplan.
- 5.17 The extent of the confines for the development sites in WYE3 are established by the Masterplan. The confines for WYE3 are identified as including Land and Buildings at Occupation Road, in this respect the land to the south of Occupation Road is identified for commercial purposes, with the area of land to the north being identified for residential development for 40 dwellings.



Occupation Road Concept Plan from the masterplan document

5.18 The masterplan contains the concept plan for Occupation Road set out above and also identifies the following points;

- Vehicular traffic re-routed from North Downs Way, now pedestrian/cycle only
- Linear Park incorporating SUDS Ponds between North Downs Way and new vehicular route
- Further Linear Park running north to south, with SUDS Ponds, to provide local amenity space, and green “break” to development, when viewed from the east/North Downs Way
- Long distance views through development, along North Downs Way, new vehicular route and within residential development, across Linear Park
- Residential density reduces from west to east, towards edge of the village
- New dwellings of 2 or 2½ storeys (2 storeys plus rooms in roof space).
- “Strawberry Field” shown as grazing land, existing former orchard retained, new public footpaths provided

- This area is considered to have potential for future residential development, in a future review of the Ashford Local Plan/Wye Neighbourhood Plan/Masterplan, such a review would take account of:
 - The need for any new residential development
 - Whether the “Strawberry Field” is to be preferred, compared to other possible alternative sites in Wye
 - Detailed proposals should reflect the reduction in density from west to east, which forms an agreed parameter of the Masterplan
- New public car parking for North Downs Way users
- New strategic planting on eastern boundary
- Development contributions to meet needs arising directly from the proposed new dwellings and which are fairly related in scale and kind to those needs

Kent Downs AONB Planning Guidance

- 5.19 The Kent Downs AONB Unit has produced the Kent Downs Management Plan 2014-2019 on behalf of the constituent authorities. The AONB Management Plan and its supporting documents identify the distinctive features and characteristics of the landscape and provide the framework for the management and spatial planning of the AONB. The Management Plan does not formulate land-use planning policies but is a component of the decision-making process in planning applications. The status of the Management Plan, combined with the thorough process of plan making and review, means that the AONB Management Plan and its policies are a material consideration in planning matters and should be afforded weight in decisions. The Planning Practice Guidance confirms this, and supports the evidence and principles established in the Management Plan being taken into account in local planning authorities’ Local Plans and in Neighbourhood Plans.
- 5.20 National and Local planning policies are very clear that highest priority should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Kent Downs AONB unit is associated with the local planning authorities which host the area has produced the Kent Downs Management Plan 2014-2019. Whilst the overall aim of the designation of

the AONB is to “conserve and enhance natural beauty,” this document seeks to provide a framework to protect the special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB, but with recognition that it is a living, working environment within which people live their lives, and which as a result will create development pressures. The plan aims to balance these conflicting aims to ensure that necessary development is accommodated within the AONB without harm to the overall quality of the environment. The AONB legislation specifically states;

“In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, and other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment”

The aim of the designation is not therefore to stop new development but to ensure that it is necessary and carried out in an appropriate manner. Local Authorities are expected to adhere to the policies of the management plan in their decision making for planning applications (MPP2). As well as local character and sustainability, consideration must be given to design and the setting of development and for mitigation.

Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook

- 5.21 The AONB Unit has also published design guidance for the AONB aimed at ensuring that new development is carried out in a manner that will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the special characteristics of the AONB as a whole, and the distinctiveness of its individual character areas. The AONB wide landscape design principles contained within this document provide guidance on the integration of development within the landscape of the AONB, including the need to reflect and respect the settlement character and form and its relationship with the surrounding landscape. The design principles identified are as follows;

- Ensure new development respects and complements rural settlement form, pattern, character and its landscape setting, reinforcing local distinctiveness.
- Conserve sensitive parts of settlement settings. Maintain a direct relationship between the old settlement core and the surrounding landscape, allowing views in and out.

- Use native woodland, shaw, hedgerow planting as appropriate to local character and open space to integrate new development. Use advance planting of native local trees and shrubs.
- Avoid the introduction of features such as close board fencing, suburban style walls and fast growing conifers, particularly on the boundaries with rural lanes or with the wider landscape (see Detailed Guidance for alternatives).
- Seek the use of appropriate local materials.
- Seek to minimise the impact of new residential accesses by retaining existing hedgerows or traditional walls where possible. Use new native hedge species and sympathetic grass mix verges where new sight lines are necessary. Where possible, use local provenance wildflower/grass seed mixes.
- Avoid the introduction of urban bollards, concrete block paving and highly coloured signage.
- Use local stone, and 'conservation' kerbs and surface dressings to complement local materials for carriageways and pavements.
- Consider the need for lighting and minimise the impact, using high pressure sodium lights. Lighting should be mounted on buildings.
- Refer to Village Design Statement if there is one available.

5.22 It is considered that the proposed development meets with these design requirements and is otherwise policy compliant with the applicable planning policies in the local plan and the specific guidance and policies relating to the AONB.

6 Planning Benefits

- 6.1 The purpose of this section is to set out the benefits of the development proposals in relation to the three dimensions of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

Social Benefits

- 6.2 The provision of market housing will boost the supply of land for housing, providing for high quality market family housing within a sustainable location. The provision of affordable housing will likewise support the provision of housing for people unable to enter the private market. The development proposals will make a valuable contribution to the council's 5 year supply. The proposals will assist in helping to maintain and enhance the vitality of the community and support local services.

Economic Benefits

- 6.3 The economic benefits of the proposed development will be apparent from both the construction and the operational impacts of the subsequent occupation of the houses. The construction will involve spend on the works and provide employment opportunities. Whilst the housing once completed will add to the district's economically active population and add to the gross household expenditure which in turn will support further local employment. On top of this the additional housing will provide additional council tax income to the borough council.

Environmental Benefits

- 6.4 The proposed development will add to the ecological biodiversity of the site. The proposal aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the enhancement of the habitats through the provision of areas of planting as well as ecology and wildlife benefits. Habitat creation measures to ensure biodiversity is retained with enhanced hedgerow planting. These measures will ensure a net biodiversity gain in accordance with requirements of NPPF. In addition the provision of domestic gardens which provide an opportunity to improve biodiversity over and above the current use of the majority of the site.
- 6.5 Further material environmental benefits are obtained from providing surface water drainage designed to attenuate water run-off to less than the existing greenfield run-off rate and take account of future climate change in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance.
- 6.6 The proposals also provide significant enhancement to the route of The Pilgrims' Way as it enters and leaves the village. The attractiveness of the route of this well used public footpath will be significantly enhanced by the proposed development.

7 Key Issues

7.1 The key issues are;

- Need for the development;
- Appropriateness of Location;
- Character and Appearance;
- Landscape impact;
- Traffic and Access;
- Drainage and Flood Risk;
- Ecology and
- Other Matters.

Need for the Development

7.2 It is important that all residential development, contributes positively to meeting the borough's housing needs. In this instance there is the opportunity to redevelop this formerly developed brownfield site with 40 new dwellings. The Ashford Borough Local Plan, Wye Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Wye Master Plan for WYE 3 sites all support the need for residential development in the village. These architect designed properties will be constructed to meet modern requirements in terms of space standards and sustainable construction and energy efficiency. The houses are of a high quality design and aimed at addressing demand for housing in this popular village. The proposal will therefore positively contribute towards meeting a specific need in the district's housing stock and maintaining this stock so that it is kept up to date and fit for purpose as well as making best use of previously developed land.

Appropriateness of Location

7.3 The site is in a highly sustainable location and presently under utilised since the closure of the college. The provision of 40 dwellings provides a significant opportunity to make better use of the site and to enhance the quality of both the appearance, quality of construction and energy efficiency of the houses as well as the overall standard of accommodation it provides. The site is within the built confines of the village of Wye and appropriate for development in accordance with policy HOU3a. The site is well within the identified 800 m walking distance to services within the village. Wye itself is a highly sustainable location having a significant range of services available within the village, including a main line railway station, both secondary and primary school, Doctor's Surgery and a range of retail and recreational facilities. Its proximity to Ashford mean access to a wider range of services, by means of public transport, cycling and by a short car journey are readily achieved.

- 7.4 The new dwellings will make better use of the plot without resulting in any unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupants of surrounding buildings as the works are accommodated without introducing additional overlooking or significantly reduce the distance separations to neighbouring properties that would detract from their privacy, outlook or daylighting properties. The proposed layout has been designed from the outset to be self-contained and to readily be accommodated without detriment to the relationship of existing houses to the new development.

Character and Appearance

- 7.5 The design approach to the site is set out in more detail in the Design and Access Statement. The development proposals have been informed by the current and previous Development Plan and by the Masterplan which was consulted upon in 2018 and sets out the proposed land uses for all the development parcel within the Former Wye College Campus, including the former Occupation Road buildings. The proposals have been developed following a detailed appraisal of the site and surrounding area, focussing on the established townscape, pattern of built development, land uses and prevalent architecture in the area. An assessment of the opportunities and constraints underpins the proposals.
- 7.6 The development has been the subject of pre-application discussions with Ashford Borough Council and has been revised to meet the positive and constructive comments of its officers. The masterplan document identifies a number of characteristics found in Wye and the proposals seek to incorporate these into the proposal.
- 7.7 The houses themselves are designed to reflect the formal red brick vernacular found in Wye with elegant proportions and traditional detailing. The traditional external detailing of the houses is integrated with modern internal living spaces. The houses achieve minimum space standard requirements and the garden sizes accord with the requirements of the local plan. Each house can readily meet bicycle and bin storage requirements and the estate layout is designed to be fully accessible by larger service vehicles. The scheme integrates useable areas of open space that positively contribute to the amenity of the development, through the provision of this open space and it's landscaping. The scheme also provides pedestrian linkages with other development sites within the village and the surrounding public footpath network.
- 7.8 The D&AS concludes that the result is an attractive development that sits comfortably within the landscaped framework and interface between the existing settlement and the wider countryside.

Landscape Impact

- 7.9 The impact of the proposed development on the surrounding countryside is addressed in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal submitted with the application. The surrounding landscape is sensitive being designated as being within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The impact on Heritage Assets, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed buildings and the conservation area within the village together with designated ecological sites within the area of the site are all considered. The assessment has been carried out cumulatively taking into account the impact of other development also coming forward in relation to Wye 3 sites. The report assesses the visual impact of the proposed development and where appropriate any mitigation required to address this impact. The study has been prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance including The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact assessment.
- 7.10 The report identifies that the proposal will introduce new areas of residential development onto previously developed land within the village but that due to the absence of clear views and intervening landform there are a number of identified locations where the proposed development would have no visual impact. The proposed site has a relatively limited visual envelope on a local scale, other than a tract of land immediately to the east of the Occupation Road. This is due to a combination of landform, existing development and areas of significant vegetation. Due to the rising topography of the Stour Valley, however, the proposal potentially has a wider visual envelope on a broader scale. The primary potential viewing window for the site is from the rising topography of Wye Downs Ridge to the east, and the Kent Downs spine to the north-west. A range of selected view points are identified and used to assess the visual impact of the site. Overall whilst the report identifies that there is a change in character between the existing and proposed uses of the site, overall it concludes that the development would result in an improvement in visual amenity through the replacement of the derelict institution building complex with a low density residential development, whilst from certain locations the impact would be masked by existing trees and vegetation or through the provision of additional planting of an appropriate form. In the main the visual impact of the development is found to be neutral.

Traffic and Access

- 7.11 The ability to safely access the site and to provide a satisfactory level of off-street parking on the site is safeguarded by this application. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment, the scope of which has been agreed with KCC Highways. Overall the report

demonstrates the satisfactory nature of the scheme in terms of traffic generation, access and parking.

- 7.12 The report also identifies good accessibility from the site to other services in the village by walking as well as wider cycle linkages that are possible. In addition the good bus and rail connections are also highlighted.
- 7.13 The Traffic Assessment identifies the need to improve the junction arrangement at Olantigh Road and Occupation Road and proposes a village gateway entrance feature along Olantigh Road. Overall the report demonstrates there are no highway matters that would cause grounds for not granting planning permission for the proposed development.
- 7.14 No objection is raised to planning permission being subject to a condition to provide and safeguard the proposed car and bicycle parking facilities that are to be provided. Bin storage is also provided to sufficient capacity to meet the council's waste collection and recycling requirements.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 7.15 The application is accompanied by a Foul and Surface Water Management Strategy and Flood risk Assessment. This identifies the site as being in flood zone 1, land at least risk of flooding. It also does not lie above any groundwater source protection zones but does lie above a major aquifer intermediate groundwater vulnerability zone. Existing surface water from the area drains to the Great Stour. There are also public foul and surface water sewers in the immediate area. The nearest public foul water sewer to the site being found at the junction of Olantigh Road and Occupation Road. The site is currently connected to this via a private sewer running along Occupation Road. The existing sewer network is not a constraint on development as any necessary upgrades will be carried out by Southern Water and paid for by their infrastructure charge.
- 7.16 Surface water from the site will be restricted to the greenfield run-off rate using soakaways, permeable paving and infiltration basins. The scheme incorporates a Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme (SUDS) comprising a series of ponds and swales adjacent to Occupation Road. The SUDS will include suitable ground water protection measures and reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area. Further technical information is contained within the accompanying report, which concludes that the site can be adequately drained and is sustainable in terms of flood risk and the proposals do not increase the risk of flooding to the neighbouring properties.

Ecology

- 7.17 The preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted with the application also includes a reptile survey, this identifies the extent of mitigation required to address the presence of reptiles on the site. A bat emergence survey has also been carried out and shows no evidence of bats emerging from the buildings on the site. There are no other protected species identified on the site that require further mitigation proposals. The application is agreeable to providing a series of measures to enhance biodiversity across the site, these would expected to be addressed via a condition of the planning permission.

Other Matters

- 7.18 The new dwellings have been designed and laid out to make best use of the plot without resulting in any unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupants of surrounding buildings. The works are considered to be accommodated without introducing unacceptable overlooking or to significantly reduce the distance separations to neighbouring properties that would detract from the privacy, outlook or daylighting enjoyed by their occupants.

8 Heads of Terms

- 8.1 The development will be subject of a Section 106 Agreement in respect of planning obligations in association with this development. The scope of the planning obligations to off-set the impact of the development on local services and facilities are expected to be identified by the council during their consideration of the planning application.
- 8.2 The overall level of affordable housing provision should be calculated following the application of the Vacant Buildings Credit, to allow for the extent of existing buildings on the site (and the clean up costs associated with their removal) to be counted against the overall level of affordable housing provision. It is expected that the amount of affordable housing will be agreed with the council as part of the consideration of the planning application and subsequently the agreed provision secured through the s106 agreement.
- 8.3 National Policy in the form of the Framework advises that 'planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development'.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposed residential development of the site would be in accordance with government policy in the NPPF. The site is within the built confines of the village and clearly lies within a sustainable location, the proposal is therefore clearly consistent with the objectives of the NPPF. The site will contribute to the provision of housing to meet the needs of the district.
- 9.2 The proposed development is considered to comply with policies; SP1, SP2, HOU1, HOU3a, HOU12, HOU15, TR3a, ENV1, ENV3b and ENV9 of the local plan. The resultant dwellings will provide a suitable redevelopment of the large area of under utilised land by proposing development that is compatible with the form and scale of the site and adheres with the Wye Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Wye Masterplan. The proposal makes substantially better use of this previously developed site without unacceptable harm to the privacy or amenity of neighbours. Overall the development of the site will result in a positive contribution to local housing need and enhancement to the character and appearance of the local area.
- 9.3 It is therefore considered that there are no grounds to resist granting planning permission for the proposal. The application is sustainable development that accords with the NPPF and local plan policies and should be approved without delay.