

12 September 2013

[REDACTED]
Walsall Council
Darwell Street
Walsall
WS1 1DG

Your Ref CH6

Dear [REDACTED],

RE: SITE ALLOCATION DOCUMENT - ALLEN'S LANE, PELSALL.

I am please to write to you with ecological survey of the land at Allens Lane, and a schematic plan showing a housing development for some 105 dwellings ranging from modest affordable house types to larger executive homes.

We have already submitted the Allen's Lane site as a result of Walsall Council's Sites Allocation process. The site reference number is CH6.

The schematic plans have been prepared to show a typical layout having due regard to the flood risk area and our intention to create a nature reserve and recreation area to compliment the adjacent Memorial Garden. Please see the attached Flood Risk Map.

The Extended Phase One Habitat and Protected Species Survey carried out by [REDACTED] and Associates Ltd identifies species likely to be on site such as greater crested newt, bat species, nesting birds, and unimproved grassland species and trees which provide diverse habitat for invertebrates and small mammals. Please see Appendix One and Two of the report.

The report includes, at Appendix IV, a plan showing the extent of the proposed Nature reserve and recommendations for the improvement of wildlife habitat. The Nature Reserve will compliment the existing Memorial Garden site by providing a larger area dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and buffering the stream to protect it. The plan overlaid with the aerial photograph shows the close relationship of both areas and how they compliment each other.

The report is intended to identify what is on site, protect it and improve the site for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of local residents. It will also ensure that a "green corridor" is maintained to the south of the housing site, mainly on land along the brook, identified as potentially liable to flooding. This scheme will preserve and protect wildlife habitat by formalising the extent and ecological objectives of the nature reserve which will expand and preserve wildlife habitat, and provide a buffer zone to absorb run-off close to the water course which will help to alleviate potential flooding downstream.

It is envisaged that the developer and Council will enter into a legal framework (Section 106 Agreement of similar) for creation and the on-going protection and if required, the maintenance of this area designated "Nature Reserve".

The full enjoyment and educational benefits of the adjacent Memorial Garden are hampered by lack of suitable parking provision and this scheme will provide betterment to parking arrangements which are currently ad-hoc roadside parking which compromises highway safety. A public parking area suitable for coaches if educational visits are to take place will be provided as depicted on the schematic plan. The car park can also provide local information about the memorial garden and nature conservation objectives of the Nature Reserve.

The scheme incorporates an area for play or out door gym equipment which can be specified by Walsall Council's Sport and Leisure Department based on local requirements and consultation with local residents. Sports pitches and cycle tracks are also a possibility on land between the housing development and Nature Reserve.

Obviously in order for the things identified above to be able to happen the developer will need to secure planning permission for houses on the remainder of the site. The schematic plan shows 105 dwellings ranging from two bedroom apartments to larger family homes. The precise mix and tenure will be agreed at a later date, but will be in line with Walsall Council's Supplementary Planning Document on affordable housing.

The site is large enough to accommodate affordable housing mixed throughout the scheme to offer wide ranging accommodation in terms of size and tenure. If deemed more appropriate, a commuted sum shall be paid by the developer for the provision of affordable homes elsewhere, subject to the findings of a viability assessment for the site.

Securing the affordable homes and the on-going occupation of the affordable homes will be controlled through the use of a suitably drafted Section 106 Agreement.

This site is well located in terms of public transport routes and links to employment areas and local services. The site is capable of providing a significant number of market and affordable homes towards the predicted shortfall identified in the Walsall Housing Needs Survey.

The site is available for immediate development, being free of long term tenants and believed to be free of serious contamination unlike other existing brown field sites in the borough.

The site has the ability to offer betterment to the environment and to the local community through the creation of the Nature Reserve and improved access to the Memorial Garden. The creation of the Nature reserve will provide a buffer zone of vegetation that will absorb and slow the passage of run-off to the brook which will in turn reduce the likelihood of flooding downstream.

The scheme has the capacity to provide valuable outdoor recreational facilities that are desperately needed in the locality. These will include out door play areas for children, information boards about wildlife conservation and biodiversity and walks through the Nature Reserve and Memorial Garden. Allotments and sports pitches can be incorporated if required along with cycle tracks and other appropriate facilities to redress local deficiency in this area in line with Policy LC1 of the Walsall UDP. Advice will be sought from Council Officers about the best use of land and resources to achieve this.

I would be grateful if you can let me have your comments once you have had the opportunity to review the information submitted.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to call me or e-mail me at

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Mid West Planning Ltd