

Statement in relation to Canterbury City Council's "Call for Sites" 2020

Site at Butlers Court Farm, Blean Common, Blean

Goddard Planning

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement explains our proposals for the redevelopment of Butlers Court Farm. The site is accessed from Blean Common by a lane which leads between Broadlands Industrial Estate and frontage development on Blean Common. There is a line of housing extending on either side of the lane. It becomes more open, leading to a further dwelling, 108 Blean Common and then to Butlers Court Farm.
- 1.2 The site contains a number of former agricultural buildings and land which are in a range of commercial uses. These include liveries with ménage, buildings used as light and general industrial workshops and for storage. There are also external areas of vehicle, plant and material storage. The buildings and land have been used in this way for significantly more than 10 years. There is no planning history. They have a lawful use through the passage of time for a mixture of uses.
- 1.3 None of these buildings is of any architectural or historic importance. The external storage is exposed to view from several public vantage points, including the Crab and Winkle long distance footpath/bridleway/cycle route. There is also a public footpath which extends from Chapel Lane across to the southern edge of the site and then in a westerly direction to Blean Common (A290). The footpath extends from Chapel Lane just south of Arbele Farm in a northerly direction linking up with the Crab and Winkle Way. To the west of the site and separated by a field and some woodland is the Druidstone Wildlife Park.
- 1.4 The lane which serves the site is single track, metalled but with vehicle passing bays. The commercial use of the site generates a significant number of commercial and private motor vehicle movements to and from the lane.

2 THE PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The site has no planning history. Nor are there any specific landscape, conservation or ecological designations which impose particular constraints on development.
- 2.2 Only 444 homes were delivered in the District during the period 2018 to 2019, against the required number of 900. The government's report on the housing delivery test in February 2020 concluded that Canterbury fell short of what is required and an action plan is necessary.

- 2.3 The September 2019 Popes Lane appeal followed a long inquiry during which the council's housing land supply was examined forensically. The inspector reported extensively on this matter in paragraphs 14 to 37 and paragraph 101 of his decision letter. He concluded that the council's supply was either 4.8 or 4.7 years (paragraphs 35 and 36 respectively).
- 2.4 Footnote 26 of the NPPF refers to Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015. This requires local authorities to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are required to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
- 2.5 In view of the lack of a five-year housing land supply - paragraph 11d) of the NPPF is engaged and the 'tilted balance' applies.
- 2.6 The proposals involve a residential redevelopment of the site. We envisage a Kentish agricultural vernacular development with buildings laid out in an informal pattern. The scheme would not have a suburban character. Its appearance would reflect its previous use for agricultural purposes and its rural location. There would be a variety of single and two storey houses, some with their own individual curtilages and others in courtyard form. The number would be around 9 individual houses.
- 2.7 In conclusion, this is an existing brownfield site with a range of employment and storage uses which generate substantial vehicle flows. The uses and the large areas of external commercial storage are incongruous in this rural setting. There is an opportunity to create additional housing in a relatively sustainable location with good access to village facilities and in a way which would respect that rural context and result in an improvement in the character and appearance of the surrounding area.