



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Urban Design Consultation Response

The following notes are associated with Urban Design aspects only and do not include comments on wider Planning matters.

Reference Nos.	UTT/23/3113/PINS S62A/2023/0030
Applicant	BAYA Group
Site Location	Land West Of The Cricketers, Clatterbury Lane, Clavering, Essex
Proposal Description	Outline application with all matters reserved except access for up to 28 dwellings (class C3) including public open space, sustainable drainage systems, landscaping and associated infrastructure

General

The proposal is for 28 dwellings on an undeveloped site in the village of Clavering, adjacent to The Cricketers pub. There are number of listed buildings in the vicinity and a Conservation Area to the south of (but not including) the site.

It is noted that the site has been the subject of previous unsuccessful applications, UTT/13/2228/OP in 2013 for 9 bungalows for retired people and UTT/0507/12/OP in 2012 for 31 dwellings, both of which were refused on the grounds of the site being outside of development limits in the countryside.

The proposal is, in general terms, compatible with the surrounding buildings in terms of scale, massing, and form. However, with regards to layout, the proposal is an introverted, cul-de-sac type arrangement, which is not the prevalent layout typology of Clavering, which, on the whole, has a more linear structure.

As this is an outline application, there is currently insufficient information available at this stage to ascertain the proposals in respect of strategies to minimise water and energy consumption or waste reduction or recycling.

Connectivity

The proposal is set behind screening planting so does not have any significant visual connections with its surroundings, being an introspective development with a single point of vehicular entry and exit. There are three pedestrian points of access along Stickling Green which does provide a good degree of pedestrian permeability, however, it is not clear whether any onward connections beyond the site to the south are proposed or feasible. If it is possible to provide these further pedestrian connections, this would be encouraged.

There is limited detail provided on cycle routes, cycle parking or storage. Given the location and proximity to the nearest shops and amenities, active travel modes should be encouraged and cycling should be prioritised. Separate and convenient storage of bicycles is encouraged, with shed or garage locations discouraged.



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The lack of immediate amenities, other than the pub, nearby playing fields and some employment, will inevitably require a high reliance on cars as the primary transport mode.

Character & Identity

The existing site is a largely flat or shallow-pitched grassed field surrounded by a cordon of trees, which the proposals seek to retain and enhance as screening and buffer planting. Whilst this does visually screen the development from its neighbours, it does create an inward-looking and secluded development which does not integrate with the wider village.

The proposal is described as having two character areas, a 'Rural Edge' and a 'Semi Urban'. The 'Rural Edge' having a 'looser grain' structure and larger homes, whilst the 'Semi Urban' has a 'tighter grain' and 'informal urban streets'. In reality, these two 'character areas' are almost indistinguishable from each other, with a similar layout and relationship of houses to the street, car parking, building typology, and spacing between buildings.

There is a variety of dwelling types proposed, including apartments and large family homes, and the supplied precedent imagery is encouraging. Design of this quality would certainly lead to a characterful development, although it is noted that a number of the images are of terraced housing types, of which there are none proposed in the illustrative masterplan. It should also be noted that all development should be designed as tenure-blind, irrespective of allocation and that affordable housing should be provided as a mix and throughout the development.

Streets and the public realm

Streets appear well defined with the primary street lined with trees and secondary streets appearing as shared surface / homezones. It is encouraging to see the homezones linked up with pedestrian footways which aids navigability and wayfinding. There is insufficient detail at this stage to ascertain the extent to which the buildings interact with the street, there would appear to be active frontage and passive surveillance from the houses to the street and homes appear to have a defensible planted zone between building line and pavement. Further information would be required on edge and boundary treatments at the right time.

It is acknowledged that this is a small-scale development, but it would be beneficial to have some form of centre or focal point to the development, as there is little to distinguish one part of the development from another and the landscaped area around the attenuation basin is tucked into the south-west corner of the plot with little relationship to the majority of homes.

It is not clear from the illustrative masterplan if there is a dedicated cycleway or how cyclists connect into the wider context. As mentioned previously, cycle parking should be in a secure and convenient location to encourage a modal transport shift. Car parking is off-street and on-plot, predominantly tandem bays adjacent to homes. These should be overlooked by adjacent properties.

The illustrative masterplan indicates a pedestrian footway to one side of the street and no raised tables at junctions, which do not prioritise pedestrians.

The landscape strategy is clear, and the use of swales and wildlife meadow and pond are encouraging, however these feel slightly marginalised being located in the farthest corner of the



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development. They will also require careful management and stewardship in order to maintain a landscape as indicated in the aspirational images on Strategic Landscape Masterplan.

Summary

The proposals are for a cul-de-sac type development accessed from a single point of entry and egress. As such, this form of development and its inherent layout are contrary to the linear, ribbon type development that has historically formed the village of Clavering. Furthermore, development of this scale with the limited outward connections and sustainable travel options will, in all likelihood, be overly reliant on cars for the majority of journeys. This coupled with the introverted nature of the layout risks creating a dormitory development that does not fully integrate with its neighbourhood.

Submitted by	Nick Phillips
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Date	24 January 2024