

Growth & Environment
Executive Director Mark Doran



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TEL: [REDACTED]
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REF: 5/2025/0068
DATE: 30 JANUARY 2025

Dear Case Officer,

REFERENCE: 5/2025/0068
PROPOSAL: Section 62a designation - Erection of eco-village comprising 9 dwellings and community hub with associated access, parking and landscaping
ADDRESS: Land At Colne Spring Villa Coursers Road Colney Heath St Albans Hertfordshire

Thank you for consulting the Herts landscape service on the above proposal. The following comments are given with regards to landscape matters in line with national and local policy requirements, British Standards, and industry accepted good practice guidance.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK¹

The National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF) confirms that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing **valued landscapes**,³ and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Decisions should also ensure that new developments, are sympathetic to **local character** and history including the surrounding built environment and **landscape setting**, support healthy lifestyles through the provision of safe and accessible **green infrastructure** and an appropriate amount and mix of green and other **public space**, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and **effective landscaping**.

The NPPF recognises that **trees** make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and serves to ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities

¹ Note: The list of national and local policies and guidelines is not comprehensive, refer to the national planning policy framework, planning practice guidance, local development plan, and other relevant strategies and guidance documents for all relevant policies and guidelines

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2021

³ In a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan

are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the **long-term maintenance** of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Policy 1 Metropolitan Green Belt
- Policy 69 General Design and Layout
- Policy 70 Design and Layout of New Housing
- Policy 74 Landscaping and Tree Preservation
- Policy 75 Green Space within Settlements
- Policy 80 Floodlighting
- Policy 143A Watling Chase Community Forest

Design Advice Leaflet No.1 – Design and Layout of New Housing

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT, STRATEGY & GUIDELINES⁴

The site lies within landscape character area 30 – Colney Heath Farmland

The landscape character is described as a medium-scale landscape contained by adjacent urban areas and transport routes. There is a good network of hedges, field trees and tree belts to the urban areas that visually contain the largely arable character. Mineral extraction has created a number of disturbed and new landscapes that are still young. Areas of heath and seminatural grassland are locally important at Colney Heath and Smallford gravel pits.

The condition is assessed as Moderate and the strength of character is assessed as Moderate, the overall strategy for managing change is to Improve and Conserve.

ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT⁵

It is understood that 12no individual, 3no. groups and the partial removal of 1no group of trees are required for removal to facilitate the proposed development.

It is noted however that the Proposed Landscape Plan_A3 outlines that 38 new trees are proposed across the scheme as well as wildflower and shrub planting.

We acknowledge the submission of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan that highlights the existing trees proposed for retention and removal across the site. It also outlines the impacts the proposed development would have in regard to the Root Protection Areas for the existing trees.

The Tree Protection Plan submitted outlines the proposed location of the Tree Protection Fencing and Ground Protection Measures.

Where hard standing is proposed within the RPA it is proposed to construct this entirely above the existing soil level. Where foundations will impact RPA's they are to be designed in conjunction with Arboriculturists.

⁴ Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines for Southern Hertfordshire, The Landscape Partnership 2001 <http://webmaps.hertfordshire.gov.uk/environmentpublic/index.htm>

⁵ Comments are given in line with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations.

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT⁶

We note that no LVIA has been submitted alongside this application. However, it is noted that the strong vegetative boundaries to the site are to be retained which currently enclose the site and will provide strong screening to the proposed site.

It is acknowledged that the proposed building heights of the dwellings are to be limited to single storey and double storey / loft component. This will limit the visual impact upon the surrounding area by ensuring that the proposed development does not break the vegetative skyline.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

As mentioned above we are supportive of the extensive landscaping scheme provided for the site with the inclusion of 38 new trees as well as wildflower and shrub planting. There is some concern regarding the proposed trees that are located within the rear gardens of the proposed dwellings, this can lead to future pressures from residents for felling. We would support proposals to relocate the proposed trees into the public open space and street scene.

We note from the Flood Risk Assessment that Green Roofs are proposed on each of the bin stores within the development. This is a supported approach and will aid in the integration of the built form within the natural setting of the site.

It is also understood that the surface water will drain into an existing unfinished pond (off site) that is to be repurposed as an attenuation basin.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

There is no in principle objection to the proposed development and should the LPA decide to grant planning permission we would suggest that the following conditions be applied.

C565 – Landscape Design Proposals

C566 – Soft Landscape Works

Yours sincerely,

Adam Rumble
Landscape Officer
Herts LEADS (Landscape Ecology Archaeology Design Sustainability)

⁶ Comments are given in line with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental management and Assessment (GLVIA3)