

## **Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution**

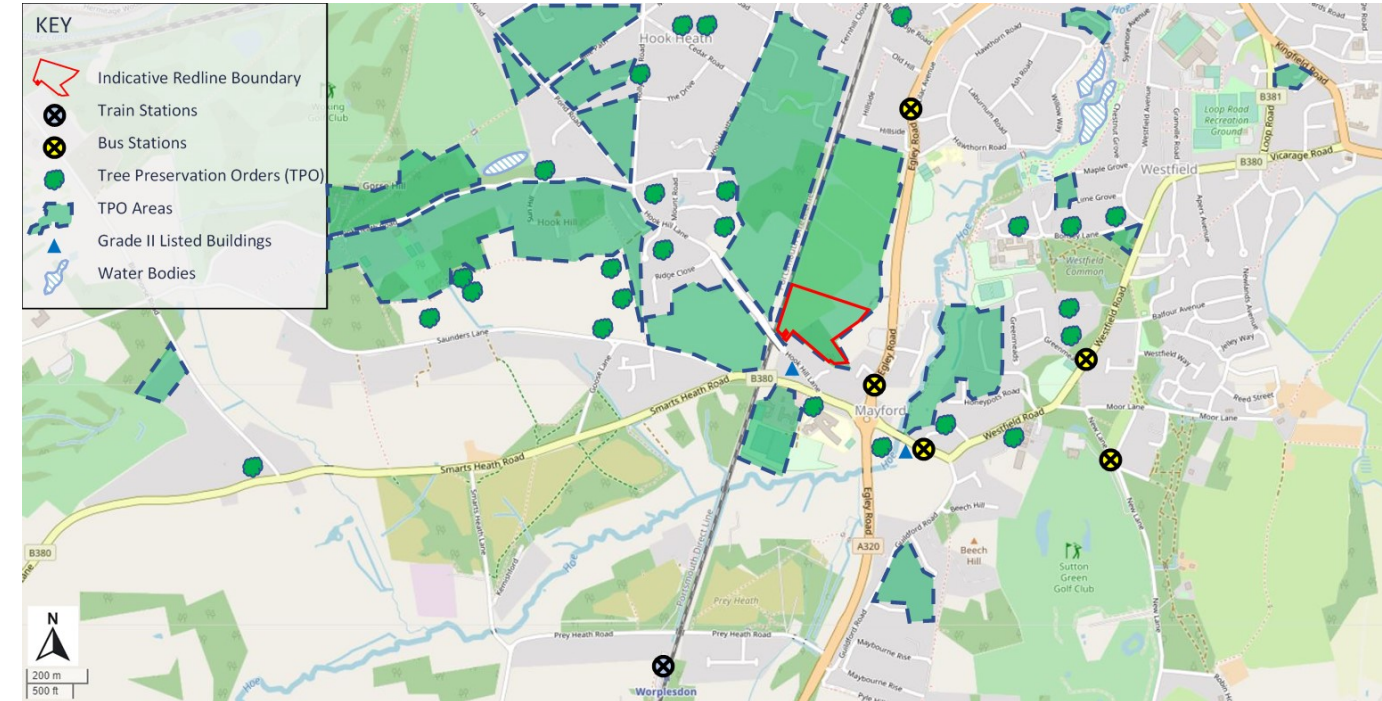
## INTRODUCTION

- 3.1** This chapter summarises the main design alternatives considered by the Applicant and details the environmental considerations (including opportunities and constraints) that have influenced the design. It provides an illustration of the evolution of the design, leading to the current and final Proposed Development.
- 3.2** Following this, a narrative is provided on the evolution of the selected design option for the site, focussing on key design modifications that were made during the design evolution process. Environmental considerations which have influenced the design evolution process are discussed where relevant.

## SITE SURROUNDS – DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

- 3.3** The site currently comprises open field, with one building located in the north-east of the site. As noted in *ES Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction*, the site is bound to the:
- North by Woking Athletic Club (including a sports field) and Hoe Valley School;
  - East by large retail warehouses (Woking and Wyevale Garden Centre, Maidenhead Aquatics Woking), with Egley Road (A320) further beyond;
  - South by residential dwellings; and
  - West by railway tracks and open fields.
- 3.4** The wider local area is predominantly comprised of residential dwellings, educational facilities, woodland and open spaces. Commercial and retail uses become more prominent further to the north of the site, where Woking town centre and Woking Station are located (approximately 2.5 kilometres (km) to the north-east of the site). The site context is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**
- 3.5** The immediate surrounding buildings of the site are predominantly two storey residential buildings; whilst Hoe Valley School to the north is up to three storeys.
- 3.6** The draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)<sup>1</sup> allocates the site (site allocation GB7) as a development and infrastructure site within the existing Green Belt, for use as residential (including affordable housing), recreational/open space and education.
- Townscape and Built Heritage**
- 3.7** The site will be in a visible location and the Proposed Development, whilst of small-scale, will result in the introduction of buildings on currently undeveloped, open land. This will physically transform a noticeable extent of the townscape area, providing 'landmark' qualities in the context of the existing site.
- 3.8** There are no Listed buildings located on-site and the site does not fall within a Conservation Area. However, a number of listed buildings / structures are located within the surrounding environment of the site. These include, but are not limited to:
- Sunhill House (Grade II listed and situated approximately 80m to the south of the site);
  - Hunts Farm House (Grade II listed and located approximately 180m to the south-east of the site);
  - Barn 15 Yards South East of Hunts Farm House (Grade II listed, located approximately 195m to the south-east of the site); and
  - Broom Cottage (Grade II Listed), located approximately 600m to the south-west).
- 3.9** The closest Conservation Area to the site is the Mount Hermon Conservation Area, located approximately 1.8km to the north of the site.

**Figure 3.1 Site Context Map**



### Ecology and Open Space

- 3.10** A large portion of the site is designated as Woodland Priority Habitat, identified as requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). There are no other ecological statutory designated areas within the site; however, Mayford Meadows Local Nature Reserve is situated approximately 250m to the east of the site, and Smarts and Preys Heath (a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) is located approximately 580m to the south of the site. The adjacent commons of Smarts Heath and Preys Heath lie either side of Hoe Stream, south of Woking. They consist of a mosaic of heathland habitats including wet and dry heath, scrub, and fringing woodland.
- 3.11** All trees on-site were found to be subject to a Tree Preservation Order (Reference 626/0154/1973). Woking Common (a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC)) is located approximately 600m to the south-west of the site. Additionally, there are areas of Urban Open Space located directly to the north and to the east of the site.

### Traffic and Transport

- 3.12** The site connects to the B380 (Guildford Road and Westfield Road), via Egley Road (A320), and is approximately 30 minutes away from London Heathrow Airport by car; it is easily accessible from the M3 and M25 motorways. Worplesdon Rail Station is located approximately 1.2km to the south of the site and is generally serviced by one train per hour northbound (calling at Woking, Clapham Junction and London Waterloo), and one train per hour southbound (calling at most stations to Portsmouth and Southsea). Woking Station is located approximately 2.5km to the north-east of the site, which is served by regular trains to central London.
- 3.13** Locally, there are a number of bus stops located in close proximity to the site. The Bird Hand bus stop is located on Egley Road to the east of the site, providing services north to Woking town centre and south to Worplesdon Rail Station. The Mayford Arms bus stop is located 100m south-east of the site providing services further south towards Guildford, with additional bus stops on New Lane (600m to the south-east of the site) and Westfield Road (500m to the east of the site)

<sup>1</sup> Woking Borough Council (WBC), (2018); Woking Local Development Documents – Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Regulation 19 Consultation).

### Air Quality

- 3.14 WBC have designated two areas within the borough as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) for exceedances of the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> objective. The closest of which “AQMA 2” is located approximately 1.7km to the north of the site. The second AQMA “AQMA for Anchor Hill” is located 3.5km to the west of the site.

### Archaeological Potential

- 3.15 There are no sensitive archaeological receptors (designated heritage assets) within the study area. Additionally, the site is not located within an Archaeological Priority Area as designated by Surrey Country Council (SCC) or a Conservation Area as designated by Woking Borough Council (WBC).

### Flood Risk and Water Resources

- 3.16 Hoe Stream is located approximately 250m to the east of the site and is classified by the EA as a ‘main river’<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.17 There are no source protection zones, groundwater, surface water or potable water abstraction licences reported within 1km of the site. The closest groundwater abstraction is located approximately 1.4km to the east of the site; the closest surface water abstraction is situated approximately 1.7km to the south-east of the site; and there are no potable water abstractions within 2km of the site.
- 3.18 According to the Environment Agency’s (EA’s) flood map for planning<sup>3</sup>, the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (which is classified as an area where the probability of fluvial and tidal flooding would be low in the absence of flood defences); however, Flood Zone 2 (an area where the probability of fluvial and tidal flooding would be medium in the absence of flood defences) is located approximately 160m to the east of the site. Additionally, Hoe Stream, 250m to the east of the site, is designated as Flood Zone 3 (an area where the probability of fluvial and tidal flooding would be high in the absence of flood defences).
- 3.19 EA mapping indicates that the majority of the site has a ‘very low’ surface water flood risk. There are currently some ponded areas with up to a ‘high’ surface water flood risk in the south of the site and adjacent to the western boundary along the railway. The risk of surface water flooding has been assessed as part of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which is submitted as a standalone report to accompany the planning application.
- 3.20 From a review of WBC’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2015)<sup>4</sup>, it is concluded that the site is located in an area with limited potential for groundwater flooding.

## PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

- 3.21 An extensive programme of consultation was undertaken during the design evolution of the Proposed Development. Consultation of all relevant parties was an integral part of the evolution of the design development process and resulted in the evolution of the design and strongly informed the planning application submission.
- 3.22 Consultation has been undertaken with (but not limited to) WBC, Design South East, statutory consultees, local groups and resident associations etc. The design of the Proposed Development has, therefore, been developed to respond to comments, discussions and reviews that have been generated during the planning process.
- 3.23 Meetings were held on the following dates:
- Pre-application meeting – No. 1 – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018;
  - Pre-application meeting – No. 2 – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019;
  - Pre-application meeting – No. 3 – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019;
  - Public Consultation - 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019; and
  - Design South East Presentation – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- 3.24 A variety of topics, with respect to the design of the Proposed Development, arose during consultation including the consideration of:
- Urban sprawl and its effect on the green belt;

<sup>2</sup> Main Rivers described by the EA as following “usually larger rivers and streams”.

<sup>3</sup> EA, (2019); Flood Map for Planning (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>).

<sup>4</sup> WBC, (2015); Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

- The increase in the volume of traffic along Egley Road; and
- Ecological impacts of the developing in this land.

- 3.25 The design evolution, as a result of consultation, is discussed within this chapter (where relevant), as well as in *ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: Air Quality* and *ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Ecology*. During the scoping process, Highways and Transport was scoped out of the ES given that significant effects were not anticipated. Regardless, a Transport Assessment has been prepared to accompany the planning application and is submitted as a standalone document.

## KEY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS

### Design Considerations

- 3.26 The constraints associated with the site were considered to be:
- A large portion of the site is designated as Woodland Priority Habitat, which is also protected by a Tree Preservation Order (Reference 626/0154/1973);
  - Access to the site;
  - Proximity to the railway line, which is a source of noise and vibration, to the north; and
  - Proximity to existing residential buildings to the south and south-east.
- 3.27 A range of opportunities were identified with respect to the site, including:
- The opportunity to provide family homes with largely southerly private amenity space along the residential boundary;
  - Opportunity to provide high quality public realm; and
  - The opportunity to provide a private leisure facility to improve public amenities.

## ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

- 3.28 The following sections review those alternatives to the Proposed Development that have been considered by the Applicant, including:
- The Do-Nothing / No Development Alternative;
  - Alternative Sites; and
  - Alternative Design / Design Evolution.

### Do Nothing

- 3.29 The Do-Nothing / No Development Alternative refers to the option of leaving the site in its current state. The site, however, falls under site allocation GB7, which earmarks the area for “Residential including Affordable Housing, recreational/open space and education”; hence presenting a viable redevelopment opportunity. The development of the site will help WBC to reach their housing target of providing 4,964 net additional dwellings by 2027 (as detailed in WBC’s Core Strategy<sup>5</sup>). Additionally, the provision of a new leisure centre would provide a facility that serves the local community. In a Do-Nothing scenario the benefits associated with the Proposed Development would not be realised.

### Alternative Sites

- 3.30 No alternative sites or locations have been considered for the Proposed Development. The site provides an opportunity, in line with WBC site allocations, to deliver the spatial vision, objectives and development requirements of the Core Strategy. As already discussed, the site falls under site allocation GB7, which earmarks the area for “Residential including Affordable Housing, recreational/open space and education”<sup>6</sup>; hence presenting a viable redevelopment opportunity.

<sup>5</sup> WBC, (2012); Woking Core Strategy (<https://www.woking2027.info/developmentplan/corestrategy/adoptedcorestrategy/>)

<sup>6</sup> WBC (2018); Woking Local Development Documents, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (<https://www.woking2027.info/res/uploads/Site%20Allocations%20DPD%20-%20Regulation%2019.pdf>)

3.31 Therefore, no other sites have been considered, and as such, no alternative sites are assessed in this EIA.

## Alternative Designs / Design Evolution

3.32 Alternative designs have been considered for the Proposed Development (i.e. design evolution), taking into account environmental constraints and opportunities. The design evolution of the Proposed Development is described in the following sections of this ES chapter.

### Layout

3.33 The key element of the Proposed Development which has evolved through the design process has been the layout of the scheme. The layout of the scheme has evolved as a result of the Woodland Priority Habitat, which is also protected by a Tree Preservation Order (Reference 626/0154/1973), located on the site and the potential for associated ecological and landscape impacts.

3.34 Initial designs in July 2018 and April 2019 were proposed that filled the entire site and included the removal of the woodland to the south of the site, see Figure 3.2. Residential was proposed to be located in the southern and western extent of the site, predominately where the existing woodland is located; whilst the David Lloyd Leisure Centre was located more centrally.

3.35 However, upon completion of the arboricultural assessment and a preliminary ecological survey of the site, in addition to consultation with WBC, a more sensitive scheme was agreed to ensure that the potential for ecological impacts was limited. The new scheme proposed the retention of approximately 75% of the existing woodland on site, Figure 3.2.

3.36 In addition, the revised scheme positions the David Lloyd leisure centre to the rear of the site, against the rail line, where it has less impact on the adjacent residential.

### Massing and Articulation

#### David Lloyd Leisure Centre

3.37 The architectural concept for the David Lloyd Leisure Centre was to create a series of curved roofs which followed the tree line of the existing woodland. This series of undulating roof forms would form the roof for under the leisure centre. The scale and mass of the building would be broken up by these curving roof forms.

#### Residential

3.38 The site's surrounding context was a key factor in determining the heights of the proposed buildings - predominantly two-storey dwellings, a garden centre, and two, three-storey schools to the North and South of the site.

3.39 There is a variation of house types along the street all with parking provided to WBC standards. The individual house types are randomly mixed to create unique blocks each with an individual style and character. There are 7 block types within the proposed development creating a bespoke village character.

Figure 3.2 Design Evolution of the Layout of the Proposed Development

