

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 78

**Town and Country Planning Appeals (Determination by Inspectors) (Inquiries
Procedure) (England) Rules 2000**

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

of

Gary Osmond BA Arch. MA LRTPI

**Planning Appeal against refusal to grant full planning permission for the
development of residential development of 61 no. dwellings, with associated
public open space, landscaping and amenity areas with access off Satchell
Lane.**

Land at Satchell Lane, Hamble-Le-Rice, Southampton

Appeal by Foreman Homes Ltd

Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/W1715/W/22/3292580

Eastleigh Borough Council Reference: F/20/89488

October 2022

Contents:

- 1.0 Summary**
- 2.0 Introduction**
- 3.0 Site Context**
- 4.0 Previous Scheme**
- 5.0 Comparison of Previous Scheme and Appeal Scheme**
- 6.0 Reason for Refusal 4**
- 7.0 Conclusion**

Appendices:

- Appendix GO-1: Previously allowed appeal scheme masterplan drawing
- Appendix GO-2: Figure & Ground diagram provided in Appellant's design statement
- Appendix GO-3: Council's Landscape Consultant's consultation response
- Appendix GO-4: Extract from 'Trees and Development' Supplementary Planning Document, adopted April 2022

1.0 Summary

- 1.1. The appeal scheme was refused for seven reasons, relating to the principle of development and the impact on the character of the countryside; accessibility and highway impacts; poor design; inadequate drainage information; and an absence of developer contributions and mitigation.
- 1.2. This Proof of Evidence focuses on Reason for Refusal 4 and how the poor design quality of the appeal scheme, and lack of consideration for the site context and that of the surrounding area, would result in a poor quality, car-dominated development which fails to take available opportunities to provide safe and appealing routes, well integrated and attractive recreational spaces, landscaping and tree planting, or provide a defined sense of place or character which takes appropriate account of its surroundings.
- 1.3. This Proof of Evidence explains the reasons why the development does not accord with local or national planning policy, or best practice design guidance, in all these regards.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1. My name is Gary Osmond, I am currently a Senior Planning Officer at Eastleigh Borough Council but held the position of Urban Design Officer at the time of the Appeal application. I have an Under Graduate Bachelor's Degree in Architecture, a Post Graduate Master's Degree in Planning Policy and Practice, specialising in Urban Design. I am a Licentiate Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I have almost 19 years' planning experience, all with Eastleigh Borough Council, and have experience of dealing with a wide range of planning applications, both as case officer and as a specialist consultee. I have also been involved with the Winchester and Eastleigh Design Review Panel since 2005.
- 2.2. This Proof of Evidence concerns Planning Application F/20/89488 which was refused on 13th August 2021. The application proposed development of the

Appeal Site for 61 no. dwellings, with associated public open space, landscaping, and amenity areas, all accessed from Satchell Lane. This Proof is written with particular reference to Reason for Refusal 4 which states as follows;

“The proposal, by means of its scale, form, layout, design and appearance would result in a poor quality and car dominated development, which fails to take the opportunity to provide safe and appealing footpath routes, fails to provide well integrated and attractive recreational spaces and landscaping, and fails to provide a defined sense of place which takes account of its surroundings. The proposal is therefore contrary to Saved Policies 59.BE, 73.H & 100.T of the adopted Eastleigh Local Plan (2001-2011), Draft Policies S10, S13, DM1, DM13 & DM35 of the submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036; and provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council's Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document.”

2.3 This Proof of Evidence will provide justification for this Reason for Refusal and should be read in conjunction with Proofs of Evidence of:

- Cllr Keith House, the Leader of the Council;
- Miss Altman, who covers planning policy matters;
- Mrs Butcher, who covers landscape and visual impact matters;
- Mr Grantham, who covers highway matters; and
- Mrs Howbrook, who covers housing and land supply.

2.4 The evidence I have prepared and provide in this Proof of Evidence is true and has been prepared and given in accordance with the guidance of my

professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

3.0 Site Context

- 3.1. The Appeal Site is located outside the urban edge of Hamble-le-Rice, and within designated countryside. The proposal, being for general housing development, is not a use deemed to be acceptable in such a location and, as such, is contrary to Policy S5 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036. However, it is acknowledged that outline planning consent to develop the site for up to 70 dwellings has previously been granted at Appeal, albeit in very different planning circumstances and the consent has now lapsed.
- 3.2. The site lies at the northern tip of Hamble-le-Rice, where Satchell Lane turns west away from the river. To its south is a ribbon of loose-knit residential development of principally detached single storey dwellings and chalet bungalows, fronting the western side of the lane and dating from the 1950s/60s onward. To the eastern side is later 1980s estate development of relatively modest link-detached two storey dwellings in a typical cul-de-sac layout. To the north of the site, opposite the proposed entrance and hidden behind dense boundary and tree planting, is a set of terraced properties known as the 'Halyards', with the 'Riverside' holiday park behind this, and 'Mercury Marina' and the River Hamble further beyond.
- 3.3. The site is roughly triangular in shape, having northern, south-eastern and western boundaries. The shortest side is to the north and fronts Satchell Lane. To the west is a very straight north-south boundary running along the edge of the former Hamble Airfield, which is now used for general recreational purposes. The south-eastern boundary is a little more disjointed and forms the rear garden boundaries to the properties which front Satchell Lane. Boundary treatments vary: the northern boundary is fairly dense at its western end but thins out as it gets closer to built-up development to the east; the western boundary with the airfield is a little more consistent, but not as high or dense; whilst the south-eastern boundary varies from dense hedge to simple post and

rail fencing, allowing views from these gardens out to the currently open paddock and former airfield beyond.

- 3.4. In terms of topography, the site slopes down from the north-western corner across to the south-eastern boundary, and beyond to the river. Land to the west, which forms the former airfield, continues to slope up, albeit more gently, before levelling off.
- 3.5. Given the site's current use for grazing, there are no trees within the site. However, there are a number of trees forming the site boundaries, principally to Satchell Lane, a number of which are quite substantial, and some to the southern end of the western boundary.
- 3.6. The site forms part of the clear semi-rural/edge of village character of the immediate surrounding area, helping to provide a soft and gradual transition from the higher open airfield to the north and west, with the edge of the built-up area boundary on lower ground to the east. Whilst clearly demarcated on the adopted Local Plan policies map, in reality the urban edge in this location is less obvious, given the variety of generally soft and unobtrusive garden boundary treatments which blend the character of the two land uses. This gradual transition is also assisted by the majority of existing built development being set back from the urban edge boundary and of a predominantly single storey scale, bungalows or chalet bungalows.
- 3.7. In order to devise a successful scheme, there needs to be an understanding of the site and its surrounding context and character. This can only be achieved through an analysis of the site and its surroundings, in order to establish basic facts such as orientation, topography, and physical constraints, through to more subjective issues of existing character and townscape/landscape quality. This analysis should then be used to guide an appropriate design response, and if undertaken well, can be used to justify that being proposed.
- 3.8. In the case of the Appeal application, however, and for the reasons I outline in this Proof of Evidence, an inadequate assessment of these considerations was

undertaken, with insufficient understanding or acknowledgement of the character and sensitivity of the site.

3.9. A supporting Design and Access Statement and Supplementary Design statement were submitted with the application (CD1-1.38 & CD1-1.39) which highlighted a number of not unreasonable high level urban design concepts, but failed to provide any detail as to how the design of the scheme evolved or why the approach chosen was acceptable. Neither did it demonstrate how the proposed development would meet NPPF and Local Plan requirements of providing well-designed and well-built places. Instead, it heavily relied on the Appellant's argument that the proposed scheme was not materially different to that previously allowed at appeal. I have, however, undertaken a comparison of the two schemes to demonstrate how the two schemes are materially different, and why that which is now proposed is unacceptable.

4.0 Previous Scheme

4.1. Whilst the only detailed matter considered as part of the outline Appeal consent was the site access, an indicative masterplan and site layout was submitted in support of the application (Appendix GO-1). This layout proposed a series of perimeter blocks, accessed by a single main spine road, with secondary cul-de-sacs and shared driveways off these. The whole development was surrounded by a reasonable landscape buffer which incorporated SuDs, new tree planting, a children's play area, and a perimeter path linking to the existing public right of way and Satchell Lane in the north-west corner of the site. It also gave the option to link to the right of way in the southern corner of the site adjacent to the play area.

4.2. The layout was partly determined by the presence of a gas main which crosses the site from east to west in its northern half, but also by the importance attached to the ability to appreciate the river from the site's high spot in the north-western corner in a south-easterly direction. Whilst the river itself may not be visible, woodland on the opposite bank can be seen from this vantage point and it is clear that the site forms part of the river valley. Working with the

physical constraint of the gas main, and the conceptual importance of appreciating its location close to the river, gave the indicative layout interest and provided opportunities for views and vistas within the site.

- 4.3. Another aspect of this layout was the looser and less regimented built edges, which would provide a softer transition between the built development and surrounding land, in particular the open airfield to the west, and better reflect the existing loose character of the urban edge at the northern end of Hamble village.
- 4.4. Whilst this indicative layout was by no means perfect, it nonetheless would have been a good basis for further design development and demonstrated what a well-considered scheme could look like.

5.0 Comparison of Previous Scheme and Appeal Scheme

- 5.1. The Appellant submits that there is no material difference between the current Appeal Scheme site layout and the indicative layout put forward in support of the previously allowed Appeal for outline consent. That being their case, and given the support of the previous Appeal Inspector, their view is that the design is acceptable despite the concerns expressed by the LPA.
- 5.2. When comparing both schemes, I would agree that there are some similarities. However, these go no further than the formal site boundaries, the position of the access from Satchell Lane, and the fact that both schemes proposed residential development consisting principally of two storey scale dwellings. Other than these general points, there are some clear material differences between the two, which, in the LPA's view, significantly reduces the weight of the Appellant's argument.
- 5.3. In the interests of clarity, I have set out my comparison of the two schemes in a tabulated form under relevant headings. Given the indicative scheme went no further than a masterplan layout and did not include any indications of

architectural style, materials etc., I have limited this comparison to the level of site layout and the relevant design aspects which that includes.

Previously Allowed Appeal	Current Appeal
<i>General Layout</i>	
<p>A series of clear perimeter blocks accessed via a single central spine road, with a relatively generous buffer between built development and site boundaries.</p>	<p>A fairly regimented series of linear runs directly fronting a number of access roads, including two lengthy dead-end streets which are predominantly routed around the periphery of the site. Development is also pushed up close to the site boundaries.</p> <p>The differences in the nature of the two layouts are clearly discernible in the figure-and-ground diagrams provided by the Appellant (Appendix GO-2).</p>
<i>Street Hierarchy</i>	
<p>A clear hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary streets/routes which are differentiated through surface materials, widths, and the presence or otherwise of footways, together with the relationship to built development.</p>	<p>Limited differentiation between streets in carriageway widths, predominant use of a single surfacing material (tarmac), and a confused relationship between street and fronting development, i.e. a 'formal' setback frontage on one side and no frontage on the opposite side.</p>

<i>Boundary Buffers</i>	
Relatively generous buffer between built frontages and all site boundaries, with the space being used to provide additional trees, soft landscaping and naturalised SuDs. Any routes included in these spaces are low key pedestrian routes or modest domestic scale. Driveways shared between two or three dwellings, finished in a visually softer material i.e. not tarmac.	Spacing between development and boundary edges is narrower and predominantly used to accommodate an engineered highway grade road. Very limited scope to provide any additional planting or reinforcement of existing boundary planting. No buffer provided at all along a large portion of the south-eastern boundary with adjoining properties.
<i>Satchell Lane Frontage</i>	
Scope for significant additional landscaping to add to a generally green space between built development and Satchell Lane frontage. Formal vehicular routes are kept to a minimum and of a very low key nature. Built frontage undulates and provides a softer, informal frontage to the rural character of the lane.	Built development is much closer to the lane and has a very harsh, generally uninterrupted, straight building line. The lane is presented with a roadway and sizable parking area, as well as rear boundaries to a number of dwellings. Scope for additional landscaping is minimal and will provide a very suburban frontage out of keeping with semi-rural character of the lane.
<i>Western Edge</i>	
Relatively few dwellings directly front the countryside edge. Spacing is generous and the building line gently undulates to provide a softer edge to the development.	Countryside edge is presented with a very suburban street scene of formal highway, footway, and an unrelieved building line.

<i>Relationship with Existing Development</i>	
Amount of new development directly facing existing development is kept to a minimum and set well back from the shared boundaries. All existing development backs onto communal open space, landscaping and SuDs, thereby limiting visual impact.	New development is much closer to shared boundaries, with most directly facing, allowing views into gardens due to topography. Most existing gardens would be bounded by rear gardens of new development, with some having an access road immediately on their boundary line.
<i>Internal Street Frontages</i>	
Vast majority of dwellings have a clearly defined street frontage, some quite generous, providing defensible space and separation from vehicular traffic. The nature of the frontage provided allows scope to provide true 'character areas' within the development.	Nearly all dwellings have a very minimal frontage with little to no separation from vehicular traffic. Very limited scope to provide clearly defined character areas or considered variety within the street scene.
<i>Public Realm</i>	
Considerable scope to create multiple spaces/places within the development which would provide interest and legibility throughout the development, as well as reinforce potential character areas. Any areas of more significant public open space, such as the children's play area and the northern link to the public right of way are provided with	Minimal opportunities to provide any obvious 'places' within the development due to general layout and lengthy unrelieved car-dominated streets. Where public open space is provided, this is significantly encroached upon by roads and vehicular traffic, including car parking. Usability and visual quality of public

a visually softer built frontage, i.e. no formal highway.	areas is unlikely to be of an acceptable quality.
<i>Trees and Landscaping</i>	
<p>Despite being drawn up prior to the Council's now adopted 'Trees and Development' SPD, the generous areas of undeveloped space would indicate that the layout could meet, or be very close to, the SPD requirements.</p> <p>General areas of landscaping also make use of above ground SuDs to add to the variety and biodiversity potential of landscaped spaces, making them multifunctional and enhancing the overall quality of the final development.</p>	<p>Whilst some trees are shown along streets, these are not true street trees and would not meet the requirements of the 'Trees and Development' SPD in terms of size or number.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the small central green and children's play area, scope for new tree and soft landscaping is limited to narrow strips of vegetation around the periphery of the site where it would provide little in the way of visual enhancement or other benefits, such as to biodiversity.</p>

5.4. The above comparison between the indicative previous Appeal Scheme and that submitted by the Appellant shows that there are clear and material differences between the two, which in the LPA's view severely weakens the Appellant's argument.

5.5. It should be noted that the illustrative layout submitted in support of the previous Appeal Scheme was purely an exercise to demonstrate that a development of the scale proposed could be reasonably accommodated on the Appeal Site in a manner which would have been generally acceptable and compatible with the nature of the site context and that of the immediate surrounding area. It was by no means the finished article and would very likely have altered to some degree when moving to a more detailed level of design. However, as stated above, whilst it may not have been perfect or, indeed, the

only acceptable design solution for the site, it nonetheless showed promise and would have been a good basis to work from, which was perhaps why it was deemed acceptable by the previous Appeal Inspector.

6.0 Reason for Refusal 4

6.1. Reason for Refusal 4 sets out a number of specific urban design elements which are of concern and unsatisfactory: scale; form; layout; design; and appearance. It also sets out a number of design failings relating to issues of connectivity and the public realm. Whilst each can be considered individually, in reality they are intertwined, each having an influence upon the other. As such, I have set out my evidence under a number of more general headings which incorporate these elements/issues, so as to try and limit repetition.

Layout

6.2. As discussed above, the supporting Design Statement gave little indication as to how the proposed site layout was devised and developed. It clearly does not use the previous outline Appeal consent's indicative layout, as has been established above. Instead, it appears that much of the layout has been based on the position of the gas main which runs across the site. Whilst accepting the location and necessary easement zone for the main needs to be taken into consideration, it does appear somewhat odd as to why a feature which is buried underground and not visible was used to define much of the development's layout.

6.3. The use of the gas main as the principal determining factor in establishing the site layout has resulted in a set of monotonous parallel streets which have no bearing on topography, surrounding natural features of interest, potential views, site access points, or natural desire lines. Internal streets are connected by a single vehicular route which has been pushed up against the most sensitive western site boundary, contrary to the usual approach of trying to provide a softer transitional edge to the adjoining countryside. In fact, the whole development has been pushed closer to all site boundaries, leaving insufficient room to provide any worthwhile landscape enhancements, or landscape setting

for properties which front onto it. It also leaves insufficient space to incorporate high quality SuDs, or biodiversity enhancement, and puts increased pressure on existing boundary planting, as was picked up by the Council's Landscape Consultant at the time of the application (Appendix GO-3).

- 6.4. The layout has also been designed in a manner which gives vehicular traffic movement priority over pedestrians, contrary to best practice guidance such as Manual for Streets, where the primary duty is to ensure streets are designed inclusively ('Manual for Streets' section 3.6, Chapters 6 & 7).
- 6.5. Nearly all vehicular routes are treated in the same manner in terms of width, geometry and materials. Junctions have been over-engineered to accommodate refuse vehicle tracking, and links are generally straight with a forward visibility to enable and encourage higher vehicle speeds, when Manual for Streets recommends that junctions are designed to promote slow vehicle speeds through short corner radii and/or vertical deflections. Wide junctions and turning heads create intimidating, vehicle-dominated environments.
- 6.6. Such overly engineered layouts do not accord with current urban design approaches, including Manual for Streets, and fail successfully to create a sense of place. It is further considered that the highways layout as shown would be disadvantageous to vulnerable pedestrians, especially children, through the creation of highways-dominated, vehicle-orientated environments. This approach fails to encourage sociability, street play, or an attractive and inviting setting for the development.

Sense of Place – Hierarchy, Urban Grain, and Character

- 6.7. Partly as a result of its layout, the proposed development fails to provide a clear hierarchy in terms of street character or the wider public realm. Street hierarchy within a development of this size is important as it helps to provide orientation within the site and gives scope to provide a sense of place which lifts the overall design quality. This is established through more than just the width, alignment, and surface treatment of the road, but also through the form, scale and appearance of the built development which fronts it.

- 6.8. It is the built form which provides physical enclosure of the street, defining its edges and helping to establish the feel and character of the space between. Built development is also more than just buildings, it includes the treatment of the space between building elevations and the carriageway, which can be used to define what is public and what is private through the use of physical or implied boundaries. Hierarchy can also be established through architectural detailing, materials and elevational compositions. Individually, all these elements may appear relatively insignificant, but collectively are hugely important in establishing the feel and character of a development and the quality of the public realm.
- 6.9. Consideration of these elements, and how one impacts upon the others, does not appear to have been given sufficient importance in developing the design of the proposed development, if any consideration has been given at all. This is evident from the lack of any obvious hierarchy or consistency of approach to the character and appearance of each street and other public spaces.
- 6.10. The use of identical parallel straight streets in the form proposed gives little scope to provide interest in terms of urban grain. Whilst this approach may be acceptable in very urban areas where closely and densely spaced layout are used, such as gridiron Victorian terraces, the Appeal Site lies on the edge of the village, adjacent to open countryside, and a looser and less regimented pattern of development would be expected, particularly on those boundaries which abut the countryside. This was something the previous Appeal Scheme's indicative layout did reasonably well.
- 6.11. By way of stark contrast, the current Appeal Scheme fails to use any recognised and accepted urban design principles in terms of layout, form or pattern of development which would help to lift it above that of a mediocre mass housing estate development in terms of overall design quality. There is no regular, repeating rhythm, or generous spacing between dwellings. Instead, there are a selection of varying standard house types with very little variation in building line. Whilst it could be argued that the varying designs will provide

interest, it takes more than this to produce a coherent and well considered design. Streets are more than just the road or a means of getting to your front door, they should be a place in their own right.

- 6.12. Public realm can be defined as any space which is publicly accessible, including streets, as well as formal public open space. In urban design terms, much of the quality of the public realm is down to sense of place created or what might be termed character.
- 6.13. The supporting Design Statement sets out the intention to provide a set of 'character areas' within the development – Arrival, Rural Edge & Village Green. In principle, this is not an unreasonable idea and if undertaken successfully would help to provide identifiable places and visual orientation. However, whilst on plan a modest differentiation between these areas is identifiable when pointed out, I do not believe it would be obvious from street level other than, perhaps, by reference to how large the dwellings are.
- 6.14. The area defined as 'Arrival' has little sense of arrival. Firstly, the development would be accessed via an overly engineered bell mouth junction from Satchell Lane. This, of itself, would have a dramatic impact upon the character of the lane, given the need to address ground level differences between the appeal site and the lane, and the amount of existing earth banking and planting which would need to be removed to provide adequate sightlines. It would be in stark contrast to the current rural feel of this part of the lane, and in my view would be to its detriment.
- 6.15. Once entering the site, one would be funnelled down a narrow and very straight road with a pavement only on one side, and dwellings pushed up close to the carriageway edge, with very small (or in some case no) front gardens. There would be little to no scope for greenery or street tree planting, with those shown being very close to dwellings and within private gardens, meaning they would be small and could easily be removed in the future. Considering the site is on the edge of the village and adjacent to open countryside, this would create an

extremely hard and harsh environment, quite contrary to the semi-rural feel that would likely be expected of a development in this edge of village location.

6.16. Whilst not quite as harsh, even the 'Rural Edge' and 'Village Green' character areas continue the same carriageway width and straight layout, together with the monotonous and unrelieved building lines.

6.17. It would usually be expected for the 'Rural Edge' character area to be a relaxed and soft transitional space between the built environment and the countryside beyond. Instead, here it consists of the main spine road, which is pushed up against the existing site boundary with minimal room for additional landscaping or tree planting, fronted by a series of large two storey detached houses, which are again forced up against the back edge of the pavement. This would result in a very harsh, urban, feel to the street which, being on the higher part of the site and in close proximity to the public right of way running parallel to the site boundary, would sit uncomfortably with the open character of the publicly accessible land to the west. The indicative layout of the previous appeal scheme dealt with this in a far better manner and would have resulted in a much more attractive setting for those dwellings on the edge of the development.

6.18. The final 'Village Green' character area is considered to be something of a token gesture. A true village green is an inclusive and flexible space in which various activities can take place; a place where the community can meet and spend time together. Instead, the 'Village Green' proposed is little more than a modest area of grass with some tree planting. The illustrative landscape plan talks about this being an "attractive destination... to include native tree planting, wildflower meadows, mown paths and seating". This is a lot to fit into such a modest space, particularly if parts of the SuDs scheme need to also be accommodated. In reality, this would be nothing more than a bit of green for the larger and more expensive houses to look upon, rather than the inclusive "destination" as suggested, and will not be large enough to be of any practical use for play or other physical activities.

6.19. The layout also includes significant areas of SLOAP ('Space Left Over After Planning') which serve no real purpose. Much of this space is around the periphery of the site where ancillary features such as the SuDs infrastructure has been squeezed. This has been pushed up against the eastern site boundary against established boundary planting. Not only does this prejudice the longevity of the existing boundary planting, it would also result in deep basins with limited ability to be used for biodiversity and landscape enhancement. Such deep basins often end up being fenced off for safety reasons and generally look unattractive.

6.20. Despite the suggestion of differing character areas within the development, this is not evident from any of the drawings submitted. Nor is it evident that any real consideration of the quality of the public realm which would be created has been undertaken, or of the impact of that proposed upon the existing public realm, i.e. Satchell Lane and the neighbouring former airfield. The development would result in a harsh and uncharacteristic urban edge, out of context with the existing soft and gradual transitional character of the current built-up area boundary, and to the detriment of the visual amenity of the locality.

Connectivity and Permeability

6.21. Concerns relating to the appeal site's connectivity to the wider local area are discussed in Mr Grantham's Proof of Evidence. As such, I will concentrate on the proposal's more immediate connections to its surroundings, together with routes and permeability through and around the site.

6.22. The ability of the site to connect to Satchell Lane is restricted due to the level differences between the lane and the site, which sits at a higher level atop a steep bank. This stretch of the lane, being still of a rural character, does not have any footways and the ability to provide them is limited due to the bank. If footways were to be constructed, it would very likely result in much if not all of the existing trees and landscaping having to be removed, dramatically altering the character of the lane and requiring significant engineering works to address levels into the site.

- 6.23. These difficulties mean that pedestrian access to the lane will need to be shared or incorporated into the main vehicular site entrance, which even though positioned to the eastern end of the Satchell Lane frontage, will still have very limited scope to link to any existing pedestrian footway in a manner which does not require crossing the lane at a particularly dangerous point.
- 6.24. Other options for pedestrian linkages would be to the public right of way which runs alongside the western site boundary on the former airfield. This footpath ultimately works its way southwards into Hamble village, via the recreation ground and residential streets. Whilst fine for recreational purposes, such as walking the dog, this footpath is not considered to be suitable all year around, being unpaved, unlit, and not suitable for pushchairs or mobility chairs.
- 6.25. The appeal proposal suggests a single link to this right of way, located towards the northern end of the western boundary where there is a natural gap in the boundary hedge (albeit this is not very obvious on the site plan and appears to have a new tree planted in the middle). Whilst a connection to the right of way is welcome, the lack of any further connections, especially at the southern end of the site adjacent to the children's play area, is an obvious missed opportunity. This would appear to indicate a further lack of thought as to how the development would integrate with its surroundings.
- 6.26. The provision of informal recreational routes through and around larger developments is something which is encouraged, particularly for those who are less mobile and may not be able to walk a great distance. Ideally, these would be incorporated within, and link, areas of open space throughout the development, enhanced by landscaping and tree planting. Within the appeal site proposals, however, most pedestrian routes are shared with or run alongside vehicular routes. Whilst it would be possible to walk around the majority of the edge of the development, there are very few points where vehicular traffic or car parking would not intrude. If a southern link to the immediately adjacent public right of way had been included, there would be no need to share vehicular routes, at least along the western edge of the development.

6.27. In terms of permeability, whilst acknowledging this is not a very large development, the ability to cut through at least the main central block would aid residents in accessing external linkages and the central area of open space. If treated in an appropriate manner, such a link could assist in improving legibility within the site and perhaps the public realm. However, such a feature has not been included.

Landscaping

6.28. As discussed above, the mix of dwelling sizes and layout has left insufficient space to provide street trees or any worthwhile landscaping to soften the impact of the development. Neither does it allow an adequate buffer to protect and enhance the existing site boundaries, something which will be required to lessen the impact of the site being developed and assist its integration into the current wider landscape.

6.29. This is particularly important along the very sensitive western edge of the site where it abuts open countryside. As discussed above, the close proximity of the main spine road and built development fronting the western boundary, will give a very harsh urban feel, in stark contrast to the open countryside beyond, and would not provide the gradual transitional space which would be expected.

6.30. Even without the overtly urban character proposed, the need and ability to provide reinforcement and enhancement of the existing boundary planting is vitally important in providing an appropriate transition between the two differing characters. In this instance, the western boundary consists of a relatively modest hedge, with minimal trees. To soften the development visually, considerable tree planting will be required, which would ultimately be able to grow to a height and density which would screen much of the development when viewed from the airfield. Landscaping and trees of this scale require sufficient space to establish however, something which the appeal layout does not provide.

- 6.31. Consideration of the impact of these trees, once mature, upon the adjacent built development also needs to be given at this stage, so as to ensure that the amenity of occupiers is not adversely impacted and damage to infrastructure does not occur. Such consideration does not appear to have been given, as is demonstrated by insufficient space being provided along the western boundary.
- 6.32. Options for enhancing the existing landscaping around the other two site edges is also extremely limited due to the proposed site layout. This is especially so along the south-eastern edge where rear garden boundaries directly abut existing gardens of properties along Satchell Lane, and where the SuDs infrastructure has been squeezed into the remaining space between existing boundary planting and a roadway.
- 6.33. Within the site, other than the central public open space and to some extent the play area in the southern corner, there are again very limited options to soften the development through the provision of any sizable areas of landscape or street tree planting. Whilst trees are shown on the layout drawing along the edges of the two main central streets, these are all included within the private curtilages of individual plots, some extremely close to building footprints.
- 6.34. As such, these do not count as true street trees for the purposes of the Council's adopted 'Trees and Development' Supplementary Planning Document. This document sets out the Council's expectations when dealing with trees as part of development proposals. It includes detailed guidance on dealing with existing trees as well as, in sections 32 to 36 (Appendix GO-4), expectations for incorporating new tree planting into development proposals. In the case of the Appeal scheme, the requirements set out in paragraph 36.4, relating to Neighbourhood Streets, would be expected as a minimum. The site layout clearly does not meet these requirements and could not do so without significant amendments.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Appeal Scheme is considered to be a poor response to the site context and the character of the surrounding area, and would result in a development lacking in interest, imagination or any sense of place. Development has been pushed hard up against the site boundaries, in an insensitive and unsympathetic manner, with insufficient room left over to provide worthwhile green infrastructure, tree planting, sustainable drainage, ecological enhancement or useable public open space.
- 7.2 Streetscapes have been poorly composed, lacking interest or any form of hierarchy, and the 'character areas' proposed are not clearly defined or understandable.
- 7.3 Streets have not been designed with all potential users in mind, and are dominated by the need for vehicle movement and servicing of the site.
- 7.4 The architectural design of the dwellings is confused and of a generally poor quality, with no rationale for why certain designs have been proposed.
- 7.5 For the reasons outlined within this Proof of Evidence, the appeal should be dismissed.