West Boldon

Open Space Assessment

Ethical Planning (North East) Ltd
October 2020

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Commission Notice
We have been appointed by Mr A Le Blond

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1. Introduction

1.1 Applicant

1.1.1 The applicant is Mr Alan Le Blond.

1.2 Agent

1.2.1 The agent for the planning application is Ethical Partnership.

1.3 Purpose of this statement

1.3.1 This Open Space Needs Assessment has been prepared by Ethical Partnership in support of an outline application for the construction of 36 houses and 9 apartments, landscaping, and engineering works (All matters reserved except access).

1.3.2 As such, this application seeks to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable to South Tyneside Council, as the local planning authority.

1.3.3 The purpose of this statement is to provide an Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA) which identifies the site is 'surplus to requirements' so as to justify the removal of the open space.

1.4 Need for Open Space Needs Assessment

1.4.1 The 'Tyneside Validation List' provides a framework for the validation of planning applications within South Tyneside.

1.4.2 The checklist identifies that '*Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- *An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use*[1]*'*

1.4.3 South Tyneside planning validation requirements states that all development on existing open space will require an open space assessment. Open space is considered to mean '*all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers,*

[1] Validation of Planning Applications in Tyneside (Feb 2019) p37

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canals, lakes and reservoirs, that can offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity[2]'.

[2] Validation of Planning Applications in Tyneside (Feb 2019) p37; NPPF 2019 (paragraph 97)

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2. Site Description and Surroundings

2.1 Surrounding and Boundaries

2.1.1 The proposed site is 17925m2, and is located within the administrative boundary of South Tyneside Council, within West Boldon. The site is also located within the West Boldon Conservation area.



Figure 2.1 –red line boundary plan

2.1.2 The area is currently classed as agricultural. The site is dominated by improved grassland, which is used as permanent pasture, with tall ruderal patched. There are a variety of scattered trees along the river. The land slopes towards the river.

2.1.3 Hedgerows border parts of the site, including a species-poor managed hawthorn hedge with ivy along the northern border of the site.

2.1.4 There is a corrugated iron building on site historically used as a stable, with an associated hard standing access route.

2.2 Boundaries

2.2.1 The site is bound to the north east by North Road. Hedgerows and barbed wire fencing separate the site from the road. To the north west, the River Don forms a natural boundary. To the south and the east the site is bound by trees.

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2.3 Surrounding Area

2.3.1 The surrounding area is dominated by residential developments to the north and east, and an industrial estate to the west. Immediately to the south east is a small stand of trees and further residential properties.

2.3.2 The site is adjacent to a wildlife corridor which runs along the River Don. This is recognized in the Adopted Local Plan.

2.3.3 To the north of the River Don, is a greenfield site which physically separates the site from those residential properties to the north. On the neighbouring greenfield site, there is a Public Right of Way (bridleway), which runs parallel to the River Don.

2.3.4 To the south east (adjacent to Don Gardens) is a brownfield site, which was previously the site of Boldon C of E Primary School. This was demolished in 2017.

2.4 Planning History

2.4.1 There is no planning history pertaining to the site.

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3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In this section the relevant policies which have informed the assessment are set out.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

3.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledges the role of planning in improving health. Paragraphs 96 to 101 of the NPPF identify that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.

3.2.2 Paragraph 97 of the NPPF identifies that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or

c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

3.3 Local Planning Policy Context

3.3.1 Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)[3].

3.3.2 The draft Local Plan (the Pre-Publication Local Plan) was published for consultation during an 8-week period stretching from mid-August 2019 to mid-October 2019. The next iteration of the draft Local Plan will be the Publication Draft Local Plan. The Council presently anticipate this will be published for consultation during the summer 2020 (though they are presently looking to finalise this programme).

[3] Paragraph 48 NPPF 2019

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3.3.3 As such, the local plan is currently at an early stage in preparation, it is likely limited weight will be attributed to the emerging policies.

3.4 Adopted South Tyneside Core Strategy- Policy SC6

The South Tyneside Core Strategy was adopted in 2007. The policies are still being used to guide and determine planning applications by the Council. The planning policies detailed in this local plan will gradually be replaced by the new policies contained within the South Tyneside Local Plan, which is currently being prepared by the Council.

3.4.1 Policy SC6 (Providing for Recreational Open Space, Sport and Leisure) outlines that South Tyneside Council will

'promote the provision of high quality recreational open space, playing fields and outdoor sporting and play facilities by:

a) implementing and supporting schemes that will protect and improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and outdoor sports, leisure and children's play facilities throughout the Borough, in accordance with our adopted standards and other relevant legislation;

b) remedying deficiencies in open space provision and quality, including through the reuse of previously-developed 'brownfield' sites, particularly within the Tyne riverside regeneration corridor, the inner-urban areas of South Shields, and Cleadon village as shown on the Key Diagram;

c) supporting schemes that extend the Borough's strategic Linked Open Space System into the wider countryside, assist the implementation of the Great North Forest's recreational framework, or broaden the range of opportunities for recreational pursuits within the Great North Forest and the River Tyne and coastal corridors.

3.5 Emerging Local Plan- Policy NE4

3.5.1 Policy NE4 of the emerging local plan identifies that '*development of designated sites will only be considered acceptable where the applicant can demonstrate that*:

a) It is surplus to requirement and the loss of the site would not lead to a deficit of provision of open space in the Borough and /or local area in terms of quantity and accessibility as set out in the most recent open space study or result in a shortfall in playing pitch provision as set out in the most up to date playing pitch strategy;

b) The site has not been identified as being of high quality and /or high value in the most recent open space study;

c) The loss of the provision will be replaced by better quality playing pitch or open space provision; or will contribute towards quality and accessibility improvements to existing playing pitch or green infrastructure assets within the local area.

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3.5.2 *New major housing developments will be required to provide onsite open space facilities which contribute to the green infrastructure in accordance with Developer Contributions SPD 5 or any successor document. Where provision cannot be provided on-site, we will seek the equivalent off-site financial contributions where:*

d) The size of the development could not provide good quality and useful size provision; or

e) The size of the site is unable to provide the type of infrastructure required; or

f) Contributions would be better served supporting existing provision or delivering identified green infrastructure projects in the local area

3.6 South Tyneside Open Space Assessment (OSA) Report (September 2015)

3.6.1 A report produced by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for South Tyneside (ST) in 2015 identifies the extent of the open space provision in the area, including the condition, distribution and overall quality.

3.6.2 The OSA is a Supplementary Planning Document and as such is capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the local development plan.

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4. Open Space Assessment

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section identifies the existing provision of open space within the catchment of the proposed development. The section identifies that the site is 'surplus to requirements' thus complying with NPPF paragraph 97 and local policy.

4.2 Designation

4.2.1 The site of the proposed development is not identified within the emerging or adopted local plan as 'open space'. However, the site is identified in the OSA for South Tyneside as a 'Semi/Natural greenspace'.

4.2.2 The site is identified as 'Land between A185 and River Don' which has a quality score of 34.2% and a value score of 30%.

4.2.3 The site is identified as 4.2% above the quality threshold and 10% above the value threshold. As such, the site is considered high quality and high value.

4.3 Adjacent open space

4.3.1 The site is located in close proximity to three sites identified as semi/natural greenspace sites.

4.3.2 To the south of the site there is an amenity greenspace of a significant size which is of both high quality and value.

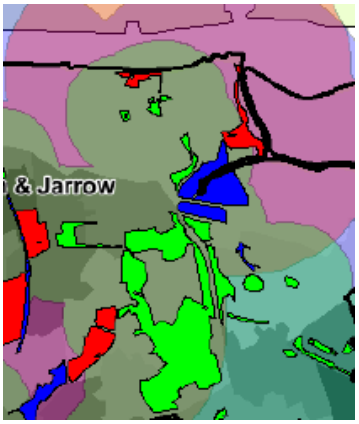

Figure 4.1 –Sites designated as open space within South Tyneside

4.4 Assessment

4.4.1 Whilst the site is identified as high quality and high value, the site is privately owned and therefore not publicly accessible.

4.4.2 Furthermore, the site of the proposed development is located adjacent to two sites also identified as 'Semi/natural greenspace'. King George Playing fields is located to the south of the site.

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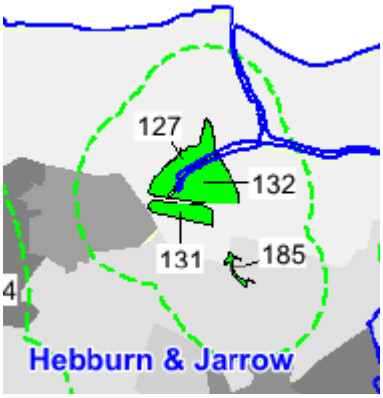

Figure 4.2 –Extract from OSA showing adjacent semi/natural sites within a 5 minute radius.

4.4.3 As there a number of sites located in the surrounding area, there is considered to be open space which is 'surplus to requirements' as per the NPPF paragraph 97.

4.4.4 Notwithstanding the existing provision of open space, it is not proposed the site will be fully developed. A section of the site adjacent to the river has been identified for retention as open space.

4.4.5 It is considered that whilst development of the site will reduce the open space provision in the area, biodiversity and landscape enhancements to the 'buffer zone' between the development and the river will increase the overall quality of the open space. Furthermore, the development of the site may enable the site to be open to public access.

4.5 On-site contributions

4.5.1 The National Playing Fields Association Standards sets minimum standards for outdoor playing space. The most recent NPFA document "Every Child Deserves a Place to Play" sets out the minimum standards for outdoor playing space and introduced new categories for play provision:

- Local Area for Play (LAP)
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

4.5.2 The Open Space Standards Paper (2015) outlines guidance on calculating onsite contributions based on the number of persons generated from the net increase in dwellings.

4.5.3 Based on the guidance of the Open Space Standards Paper and the proposed number of dwellings it has been identified 0.07 hectare of the 1.79-hectare site is required to fulfil the standards identified within the paper. The indicative site layout includes a 'buffer zone' between the proposed houses and the River Don. At present, this area of the site is

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not maintained but has the potential to provide a publicly accessible area of open space as part of the scheme.

4.5.4 The detailed design of this area will be the subject of subsequent discussions with South Tyneside Council, in advance of subsequent reserved matters applications.

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5. Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this open space assessment and provides a reasoned conclusion that the '*surplus to requirements'* thus complying with NPPF paragraph 97 and local policy.

5.2 Summary of Assessment

5.2.1 Whilst the site is identified to be of high quality and value, there is considered to be a surplus of semi/natural greenspace sites within the immediate area of the site. There are also several sites identified for open space in the wider area, including amenity grassland and parks and gardens.

5.3 Mitigation

5.3.1 The scheme proposes to retain a section of the site. This 'buffer' between the river and the proposed development will seek to include biodiversity and landscape enhancements, as identified on the indicative plan.

5.3.2 Furthermore, at present the site is not accessible to the public. The proposed development will facilitate maintenance of the remaining open space and provide public access.

5.3.3 It is anticipated that tree planting, woodland and copses within this open space will create a green barrier between the urban form of the development and the neighbouring Public Open Space.

5.3.4 It is considered the proposed landscape and biodiversity enhancements will improve the quality of the retained open space. It is proposed that the scheme will facilitate the opening up of this space to public access. As such, although the development proposes the loss of open space, the proposed enhancement of remaining open space is considered to mitigate the negative impact of the scheme.

5.4 Reserved Matters

5.4.1 Notwithstanding the above, this application seeks to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable to South Tyneside Council, as the local planning authority. All matters for the application are reserved except access.

5.4.2 It is anticipated details for the reserved matters applications will be discussed and agreed in advance with relevant South Tyneside officers.

5.4.3 It is considered arrangements relating to the remaining open space will be discussed and agreed in advance of the submission of the subsequent applications.

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5.5 Additional Information

5.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification, or further details concerning the proposed development is required during the determination period the applicant is prepared to provide this on request.

5.5.2 This statement makes reference to the willingness of the applicant to engage in a dialogue with the local planning authority to agree a timely planning permission.

5.6 Conditional Permission

5.6.1 The local planning authority is requested, wherever possible, to minimise the imposition of pre-commencement conditions to allow for the discharge of conditions in a phased manner. To that end, we would welcome early discussion in this regard.

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