

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 24th JULY 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf

NPPF Press release

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/governments-new-planning-rulebook-to-deliver-more-quality-well-designed-homes>

DESIGN IN CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/residential_tcm3-2099.pdf

PLACEMAKING

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/placemaking_tcm3-2095.pdf

Gravenhurst Village Overview

I have, with the set-up of the Gravenhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, had my eyes opened to the intricacies that you all so kindly deal with on our behalf. What is important to CBC – as per your excellent planning guidance, is actually what is important to villagers too. I see that the challenge is ensuring that this is delivered by developers working with Planning Officers.

The publication of the newly revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out to strengthen our voices together, which is most welcome, particularly building the right number of homes in the right places ... and that “quantity at all costs” now has the common sense underpinning of quality of both homes and life lived by new and existing residents to take into account.

Gravenhurst, despite not being on a gas main, is now under pressure to increase its size by 38% if Orchard Close, Barton Road and The Pyghtle are all granted planning permissions.

Whereas this does not increase the ostensible village footprint, it does place incredible pressure on the existing homes and villagers, roads and infrastructure. There is a specific policy guidance recommendation regarding multiple sites in ‘*Placemaking*’ which would be helpful, given the total houses proposed here is in excess of 75, (p 6 1.02.08) and the *Policy Matrix* (p 6 fig 1.4), identifies:

- Respect the amenity of surrounding properties and their occupiers. (*all Residential applications*)

Given that ‘Infill and Backland Development’ (Design in Central Bedfordshire p 37 5.13.02) might justify this build proposed for Barton Road, in that overlooking other’s property may happen and eliminate all their personal private space, I am aware that all the sites currently under consideration could technically be judged to comprise this type of infill development and therefore have more flexibility regarding overlooking and privacy. So this precedent is of grave concern.

This may not be the justification for granting the permission given that this same issue was unacceptable behind the High Street properties, but it would be interesting to know what is the reasoning for approval now.

In every single planning and design document produced by Central Bedfordshire Council, respect and consideration of the extant neighbouring properties is stated including where the site has permission for high density infill.

Regarding Assessing Capacity, given the initial outline (correctly!) suggested the site would not take 24 two storey houses across it, could a solution be for (not overlooked!) bungalows to the rear of Barton Road, given their unfortunate loss from Orchard Close, and this be a village-driven solution here? Or simply reduce the number, have solid walls facing neighbouring gardens as frequently suggest in CBC design scenarios.

Our initial survey for the Gravenhurst Neighbourhood Plan shows clearly – 85% of people want appropriate and sensible development here. This has always been a friendly village and nobody wants houses that cannot be enjoyed by both owners and neighbours. With 95.2% identifying that inappropriate development is the greatest pressure here, it is difficult to justify why anyone should sacrifice all their privacy, with sight-lines into their home and not even ‘patio space’ (DCB p 12 5.06.06) in their once private garden.

There is an element of being overwhelmed with documentation that could infer that every decision made by the developer is well considered – and well it may be from a maximum profit point of view, but not at all from actually what living here post development will be like for both new and current residents.

There is no gas supply here, most villagers have oil heating. Road traffic and safety issues have a heavy impact on The Pyghtle and Orchard Close sites, less so but some at Barton Road, All additional traffic including gas deliveries is of concern here and does not illustrate well any research or consultations done by the applicant. It is seen as drop in, profit and run, and not fair to the new house purchasers.

When needed most in the coldest weather, air source pumps can need defrosting and function poorly. Ground source is a constant – more costly to install, but delivers 1.4 – 2 times more, renewable energy. Solar is dismissed as intrusive yet already is accepted here, solar gain not mentioned. It looks like tick-box 10%-ing not real living in real homes by real people.

By looking at the developments proposed holistically, and with care for sustainable homes as well as village life, good decisions can be made, totally supported by CBC planning guidance and the revised national framework to work together.

Although the applications are separate, the village is one place, surrounded by fields that have also been offered for development, where small developments will not have this infill and backland impact. It is bewildering when there is no cooperation between the 3 areas, except to boost each

others demands on the presumption of permissions not actually yet given. The submission to the Planning Inspectorate by the Orchard Close developer presented his case to increase to 52 dwellings quoting the 24 houses at Barton Road as permitted*.

FYI

The historic orchard site was purchased by the estate agent selling the original house on the property many years ago, who then proceeded to buy adjoining homes to open up access to the land and now, the current owners, inheritors of the site, have cut down the trees even when marked to reserve.

Thank you for your time and considerations,
elizabeth lush
Gravenhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

*** Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

Appeal by 2MC HOMES – CB/17/01360/OUT

Appeal Reference APP/P0240/W/18/3193533

Site at Oakridge, 13 Orchard Close, Upper Gravenhurst, Bedford, MK45 4JF