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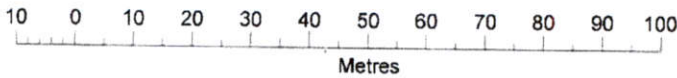
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2. Existing surface car park
3. Elderly housing on deck
4. Link to Verulam House
5. Vertical access
6. Existing planting





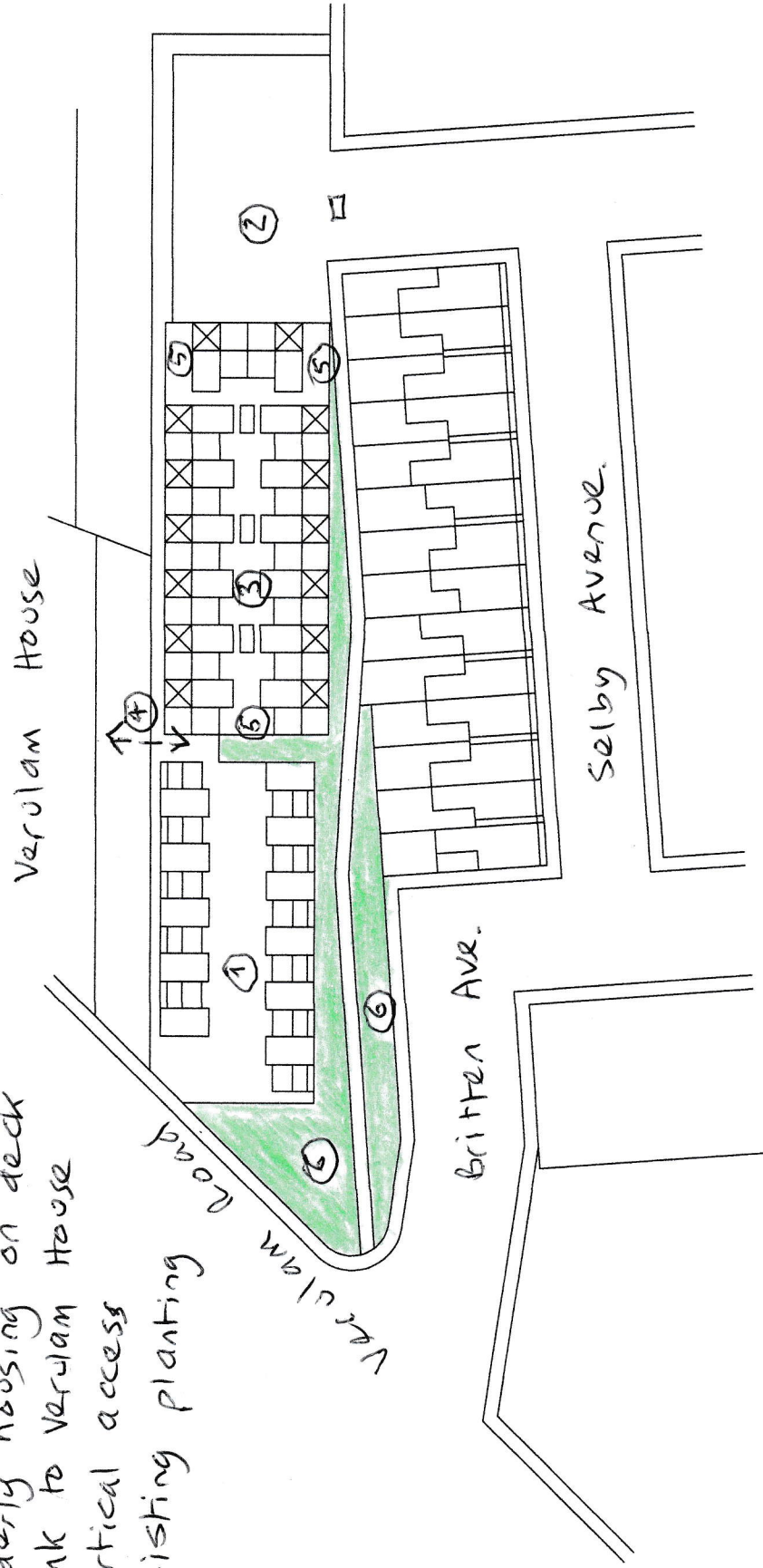
Zone A Area Map 1

The restrictions marked on the road are hereby revoked but only in as far as they are affected by the restrictions imposed by this order



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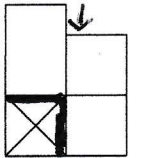
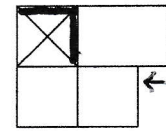
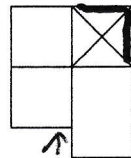
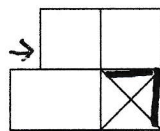
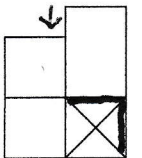
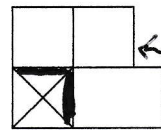
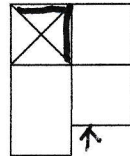
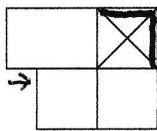
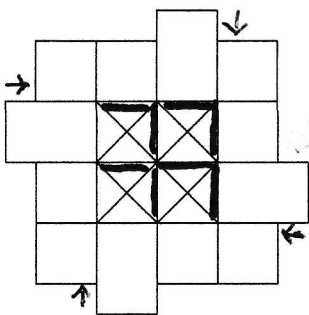
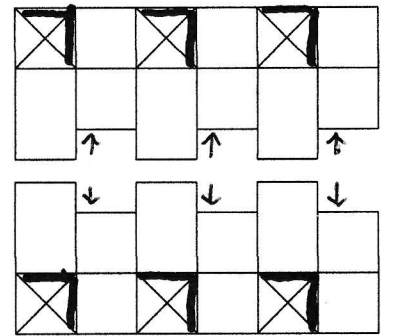
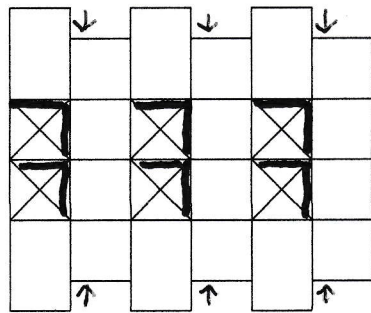
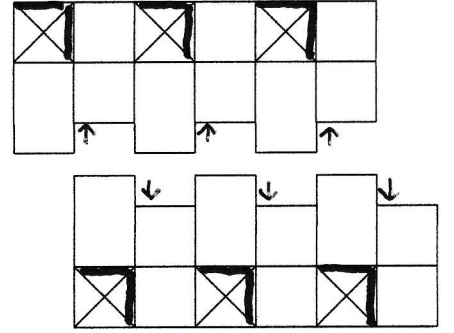
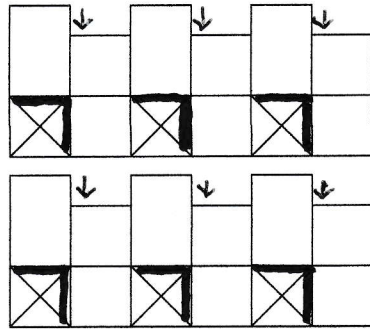
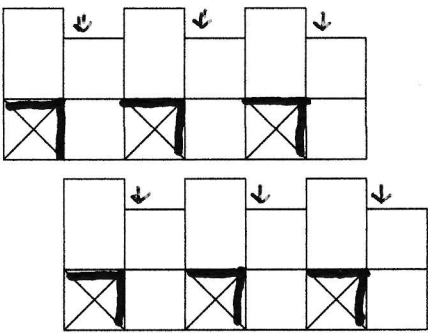
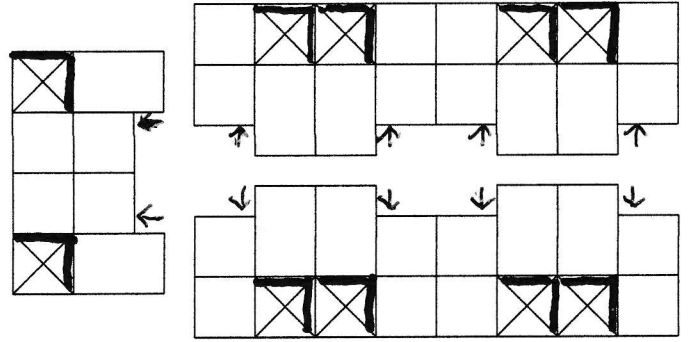
- 1. Proposed Mews houses
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GOMBARDS SITE PROPOSAL

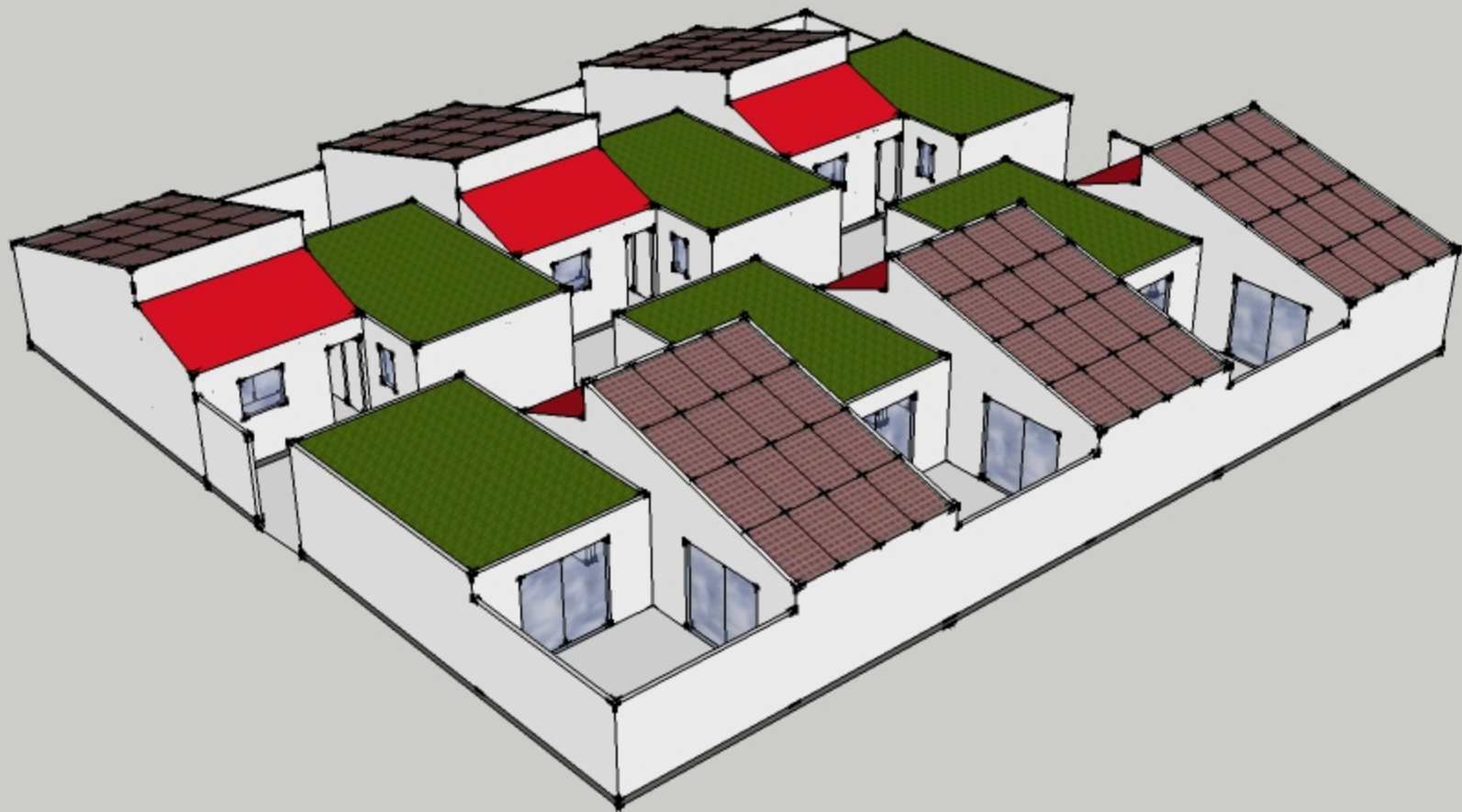
1:1000 approx.

ELDERLY HOUSING LINKING OPTIONS 1:500

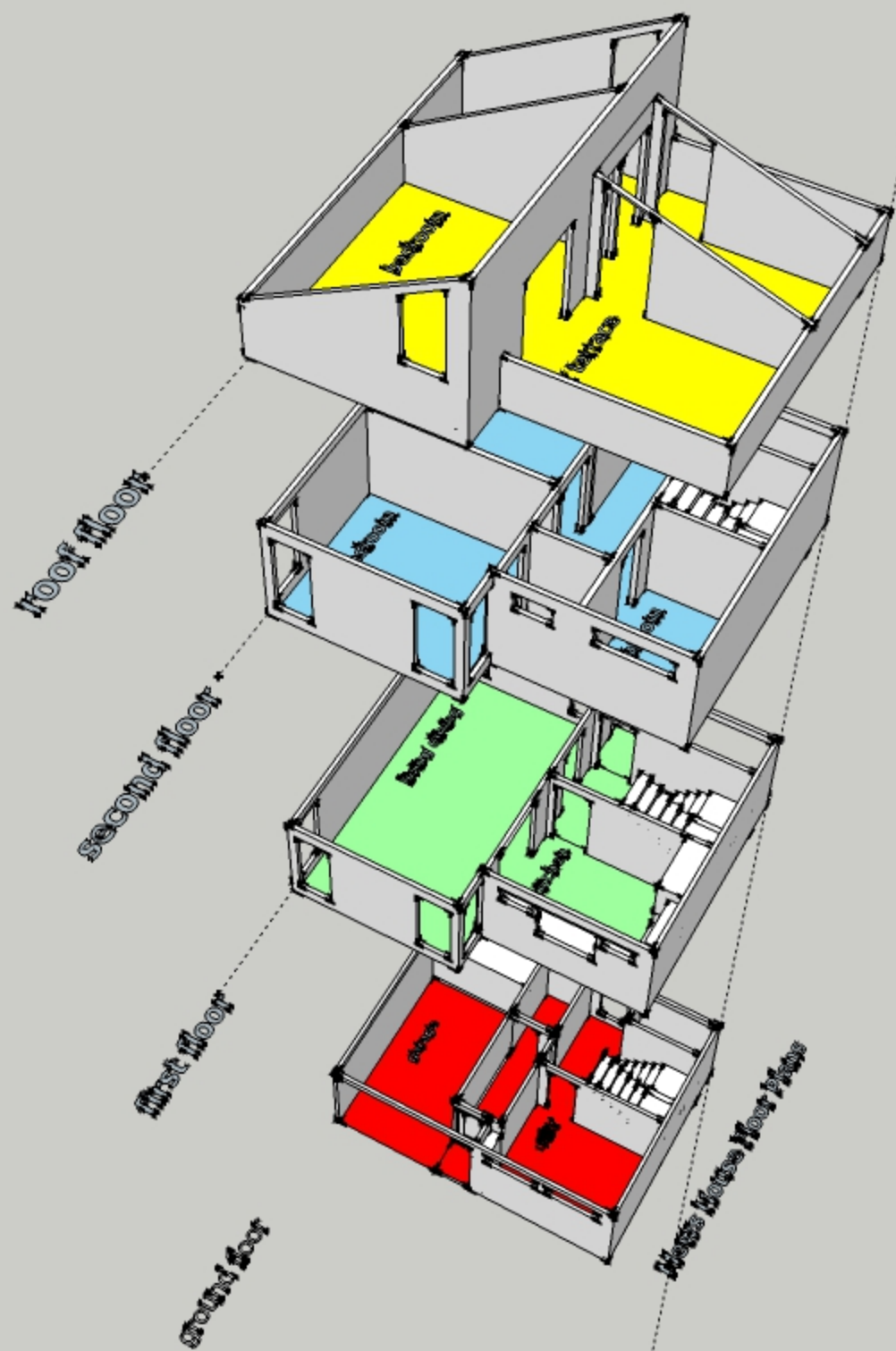




Elderly unit







25 January to 5pm 8 March 2021
'Call for Sites 2021' Site Identification Form

St Albans City and District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038. The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals, landowners and developers to suggest sites within the District for development over the next 15-20 years. The site suggestions received by us will be used to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2020-2038.

You are invited to put forward any new sites that you would like the Council to consider in its Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). These should be capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more). The Council will take account of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) submissions previously received since 2009 and therefore there is no need to resubmit these unless circumstances have changed. Sites from previous SHLAAs will form part of the Council's assessment. Proposed land uses can include:

- Housing
- Gypsy & Traveller Housing
- Mixed Use
- Employment
- Renewable and low carbon energy and heat
- Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting
- Green Belt Compensatory Land
- Land for Tree Planting
- Other

To enable sites to be mapped digitally, please provide GIS shapefiles of your site, where possible.

The consultation period runs for six weeks between Monday 25 January to 5pm on Monday 8 March 2021.

Unfortunately, we cannot treat any of the information you provide as confidential.

It is important to note that not all sites received through the 'Call for Sites' will be appropriate for consideration as part of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). As a general rule:

We encourage you to submit sites that are likely to become available for development or redevelopment between now and 2038.

Please do not submit sites that:

- Are already included as a housing allocation in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (November 1994) – i.e. sites that are listed in 'saved' Policies 4 and 5.

- Have already been submitted to the Council for consideration via previous 'Call for Sites' and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) processes (unless information is updated/changed).
- Already have planning permission for development, unless a new and different proposal is likely in the future; or
- Are situated outside St Albans City and District's administrative area.

If you wish to update information about a site previously submitted please complete the form below.

Please return the **form and site location plan** to the Spatial Planning and Design Team. We strongly encourage digital submissions via our online portal.

By online consultation portal:

<http://stalbans-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

By e-mail to: planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk

By post to: St Albans Council Offices, St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE

Due to COVID-19; offices being shut and officers working from home; submissions by post are discouraged.

Your Details	
Name	Saint-Gobain Property Department
Company/Organisation	SGBD Property Holdings Limited
Address	[REDACTED]
Postcode	[REDACTED]
Telephone	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Your interest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Social Landlord <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Developer <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Site Details					
Requirements:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers 5 or more dwellings or; • Provides economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more) 					
Site address/location (Please provide a map showing the site boundary)	Copy of land registry plan attached				
Site area (in hectares)	0.44 Hectares				
Coordinates	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Easting</td> <td>51.75083</td> <td>Northing</td> <td>-0.30748</td> </tr> </table>	Easting	51.75083	Northing	-0.30748
Easting	51.75083	Northing	-0.30748		
Site Location Plan Attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
GIS mapping shapefile attached (in .shp file format)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				
Landownership (please include contact details if known)	Freehold interest belongs to SGBD Property Holdings Limited				
Current land use	N/A (was used by Jewson as a builders merchant until recently)				
Condition of current use (e.g. vacant, derelict)	Unoccupied land and buildings				
Suggested land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy & Travellers <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Use (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable and low carbon energy and heat <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting <input type="checkbox"/> Green Belt Compensatory Land <input type="checkbox"/> Land for Tree Planting <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)				
Reasons for suggested development / land use	Believed to have been allocated as future residential site in 1994 local plan. Site is no longer being used as a builders merchant.				

Likely timescale for delivery of suggested development / land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 15+ Years
---	--

Site Constraints	Contamination/pollution issues (previous hazardous land uses)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Environmental issues (e.g. Tree Presentation Orders; SSSIs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Flood Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Topography affecting site (land levels, slopes, ground conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Utility Services (access to mains electricity, gas, water, drainage etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Legal issues (For example, restrictive covenants or ownership titles affecting the site)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Access. Is the site accessible from a public highway without the need to cross land in a different ownership to the site?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If no please provide details of how the site could be accessed. Without this information the site will not be considered to be deliverable).

	Other constraints affecting the site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> No
Planning Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Refused <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Application Withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Lapsed <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Advice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Not Sought <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Other comments	Please include details of the above choice below (for example planning reference numbers and site history) None.	

H.M. LAND REGISTRY

TITLE NUMBER

HD266851

ORDNANCE SURVEY
PLAN REFERENCE

COUNTY SHEET
HERTFORDSHIRE

NATIONAL GRID
TL 1607

SECTION
X

Scale: 1/1250

ST. ALBANS DISTRICT

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TL1607 SE
TL1707 SW



25 January to 5pm 8 March 2021
'Call for Sites 2021' Site Identification Form

St Albans City and District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038. The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals, landowners and developers to suggest sites within the District for development over the next 15-20 years. The site suggestions received by us will be used to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2020-2038.

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- Gypsy & Traveller Housing
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- Employment
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- Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting
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Please do not submit sites that:

- Are already included as a housing allocation in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (November 1994) – i.e. sites that are listed in 'saved' Policies 4 and 5.

- Have already been submitted to the Council for consideration via previous 'Call for Sites' and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) processes (unless information is updated/changed).
- Already have planning permission for development, unless a new and different proposal is likely in the future; or
- Are situated outside St Albans City and District's administrative area.

If you wish to update information about a site previously submitted please complete the form below.

Please return the **form and site location plan** to the Spatial Planning and Design Team. We strongly encourage digital submissions via our online portal.

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By e-mail to: planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk

By post to: St Albans Council Offices, St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE

Due to COVID-19; offices being shut and officers working from home; submissions by post are discouraged.

Your Details	
Name	Mr Simon Andrews
Company/Organisation	DLA Town Planning Ltd
Address	5 The Gavel Centre Porters Wood St Albans
Postcode	AL3 6PQ
Telephone	██████████
Email	██
Your interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Owner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Social Landlord <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Developer <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Site Details					
Requirements:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers 5 or more dwellings or; • Provides economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more) 					
Site address/location (Please provide a map showing the site boundary)	Albert Bygrave Retail Park, North Orbital Road, St Albans AL2 1DL				
Site area (in hectares)	1.7ha				
Coordinates	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Easting</td> <td></td> <td>Northing</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Easting		Northing	
Easting		Northing			
Site Location Plan Attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes already sent in with planning statement <input type="checkbox"/> No				
GIS mapping shapefile attached (in .shp file format)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				
Landownership (please include contact details if known)	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 1.2em;"></div>				
Current land use	Commercial				
Condition of current use (e.g. vacant, derelict)	Commercial use is active at front of site				
Suggested land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy & Travellers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed Use (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable and low carbon energy and heat <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting <input type="checkbox"/> Green Belt Compensatory Land <input type="checkbox"/> Land for Tree Planting <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) Residential use for rear of site, Commercial use to be retained at front of site				
Reasons for suggested development / land use	Appropriate for residential use due to residential use adjacent				

Likely timescale for delivery of suggested development / land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 15+ Years
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Site Constraints	Contamination/pollution issues (previous hazardous land uses)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Environmental issues (e.g. Tree Preservation Orders; SSSIs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Flood Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Topography affecting site (land levels, slopes, ground conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Utility Services (access to mains electricity, gas, water, drainage etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Legal issues (For example, restrictive covenants or ownership titles affecting the site)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Access. Is the site accessible from a public highway without the need to cross land in a different ownership to the site?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If no please provide details of how the site could be accessed. Without this information the site will not be considered to be deliverable).

	Other constraints affecting the site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, please specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Planning Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Granted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Refused <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Application Withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Lapsed <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Advice <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Not Sought <input type="checkbox"/> Other <hr/> Please include details of the above choice below (for example planning reference numbers and site history) Please see accompanying planning report DLA Ref 97/098 Feb 2021.	
Other comments	Please see accompanying planning report DLA Ref 97/098 Feb 2021.	



Land fronting North Orbital Road

St Albans

St Albans Call for Sites response 2021

Planning Report on behalf of the Owners of the Albert Bygrave Retail Park

DLA Ref: 97/098
February 2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report is submitted in response to the Call for Sites on behalf of the owners of the Albert Bygrave Retail Park. The site is being promoted for a mixed residential development with some commercial element retained.

1.2 There is an evident and urgent need for additional housing sites within St Albans district. A greater emphasis on small and medium-sized sites is needed to ensure a balanced portfolio and provide a more robust and resilient housing land supply. The Council's new Green Belt Review will therefore need to assess the specific Green Belt impact arising from potential development sites, rather than the previous broad-brush assessment.

1.3 St Albans is the largest town in the district and is clearly a sustainable location for growth. The Report Site is located in close proximity to a good range of local services and facilities within 2km. These include a primary & secondary school; London Colney high street retail & New House Park; Employment Zones EMP16 & EMP17; and multiple community facilities such as Shenley Playing Fields.

1.4 The site is set in a swathe of Green Belt land contained by the railway line to the west, London Road to the north and the North

Orbital Road to the south. However, the site is previously developed land and future development would have little impact on the function of the Green Belt.

1.5 The site is in single ownership and could be brought forward for development quickly. There are no 'ransom strips' present and the development is not dependent upon overcoming any constraints, including the need to deliver significant infrastructure. This is particularly important given the urgency of the housing need and the time needed for strategic sites to deliver on the ground.

1.6 The site should be allocated for mixed development for housing and commercial use and removed from the Green Belt in the next iteration of the Local Plan.

2.0 SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1.0 Location

The site is located approximately 3.2km to the south-east of St Albans and some 0.24km to the north-west of London Colney. The site fronts onto the northern side of the A414, North Orbital Road, a dual carriageway, some 230m to the west of the London Colney roundabout junction with A1081.

2.2.0 Context

The site is broadly rectangular site with an area of some 1.7ha and is essentially flat. It has an open frontage onto the North Orbital Road, with mature tree and hedge screening to the remainder of the site perimeter.

2.3.0 Land uses

The site is a vibrant retail park with a number of different occupiers. Buildings cover 4790m² of the site or 25%. (This does not include Herts Garden Buildings). To the North Orbital Site frontage, to the rear of the surface customer car park, is the single storey Albert House building which is made up of (from west to east) :-

C2 Award Leisure Ltd.; C1a Pets Corner Ltd.; C1b Costa Coffee; C1c Wenzels Bakers; C6b Loaf.Com

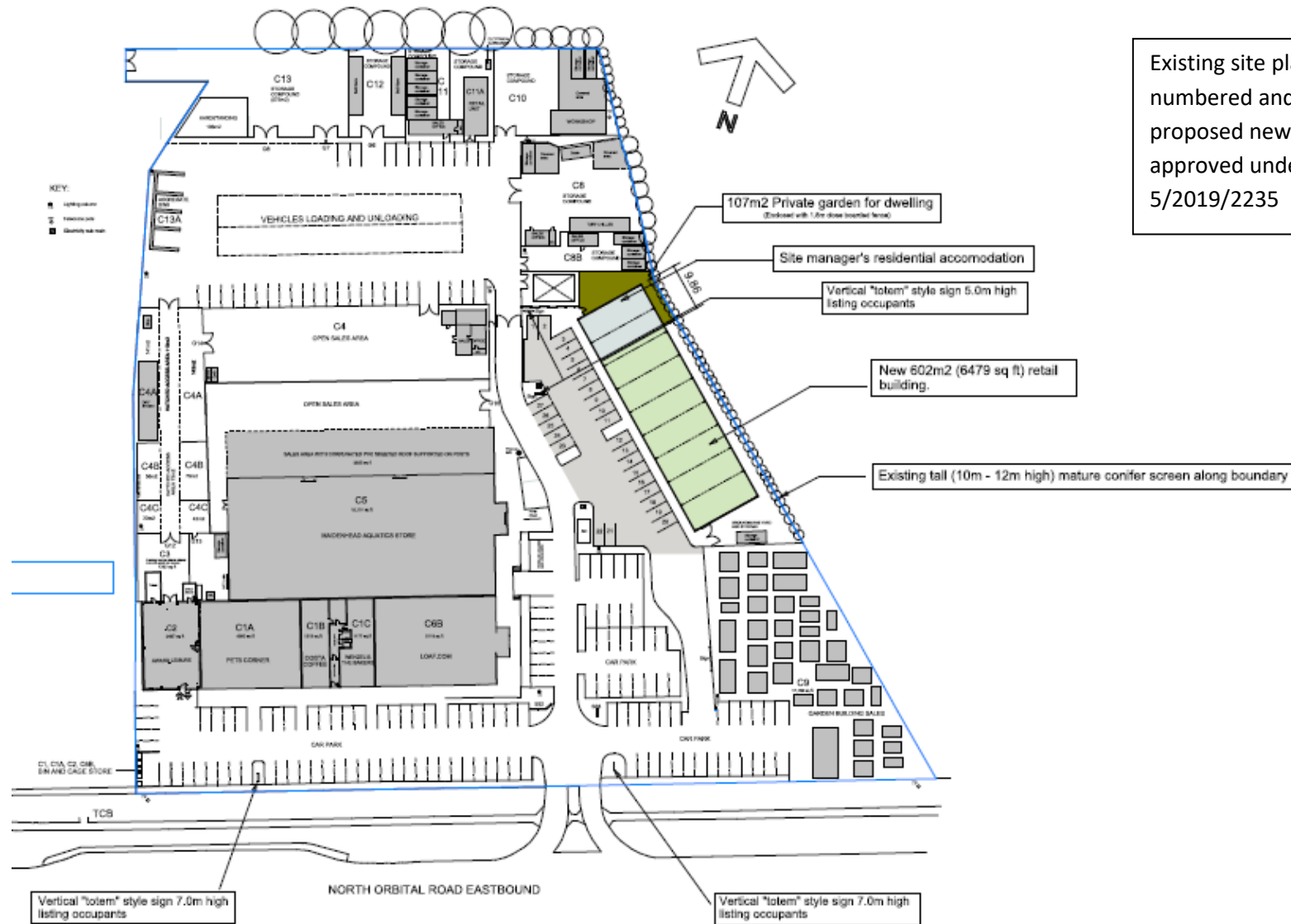
2.3.1 To the rear of this building is:-

C5 Maidenhead Aquatics
C4 St Albans Stone Ltd.,
C8b JRJ Landscape
C8 George Davis Turf Ltd.,
C10 Central Tool Hire Ltd.,
C11 Central Tool Hire Ltd.,
C11a Central Tool Hire Ltd.,
C12 George Davis Turf Ltd.,

2.3.2 Unit C13 is currently under development and units C7 and C15 are due for demolition as planning permission has been granted for a replacement building (see section 4).
Unit C9 is occupied by Herts Garden Buildings.

2.3.3 Within the site, to the east, is Holm Oak: a substantial residential bungalow, (R1) which is accessed through the site from the North Orbital Road and has consent to be developed for further Class E retail units

2.3.4 The site has a main access to North Orbital Road and a rear secondary access to Birklands Lane .



Existing site plan with units numbered and showing proposed new building approved under 5/2019/2235

2.4.0 Surrounding Uses

The site is set in a swathe of Green Belt land contained by the railway line to the west, London Road to the west and the North Orbital Road to the south and which comprises the following elements:

Birklands Lane

This abuts the northern and western application wider site boundaries. It comprises a well treed track linking London Road/Birklands Park to the north-east with the North Orbital Road to the south-west and is a public right of way (Footpath 53), providing a link to London Colney to the south and Tyttenhanger - via FP56 - to the north-east. The northern section includes a frontage of detached houses, which back onto the wider site. The applicant has the right to use the Lane for pedestrian and vehicular access to the Park.

London Road / Birklands Park

Backing onto the eastern boundary of the report site, this comprises a suburban frontage of large double-fronted detached houses, set in generous plots. The frontage, in common with the report site, is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Suffolk Close, London Colney

Located to the South-East of the Report Site, this comprises a cul-de-sac of tightly packed detached houses, with short, open front gardens.

Aylett Nurseries Garden Centre

Located to the west of the Report Site, this retail garden centre and nursery comprises a wide shallow roofed building with a substantial car park and access from the A414.

Napsbury Lane

Running parallel to the North Orbital Road frontage, to the west of Aylett's Garden Centre and the Report Site, this comprises a residential road located in the Green Belt. The frontage is characterised by large detached house and bungalows set in large well treed plots.

2.4 Access

The principal access is from the North Orbital Road, located towards the centre of the site frontage, with a rear access to Birklands Lane.

Figure 1 Aerial photograph © Google Maps



2.5 Development Plan Notation

The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt with no other notation on the St Albans District Local Plan Review Proposals Map.

2.6 Local services

The Site is in close proximity to local facilities, as set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of Local Services (approximate measurements)

Facility	Local Provision	Proximity to site (m)
Education	London Colney Primary School	1,000m
	Samuel Ryder Academy, St Albans (4 to 19 year olds)	1,500m
Retail	High Street, London Colney	1,200m
	New House Park	1,200m
Health	The Village Surgery, High Street, London Colney	800m
	Dentist, High Street, London Colney	1,200m
Employment	Designated Employment Sites EMP16 (Wellington Road, London Colney) & EMP17 (Alexander Road London Colney)	1,000m
Leisure	Birkland Park Shenley Lane Playing Fields / Sports Pitches	550m 800m

2.7 Accessibility

The site is well served by public transport services as set out below.

2.7.1 Rail Services

St Albans City Railway is located some 3.2km to the north-west of the site and is served by the majority of bus services listed in Table 2.7.2. The station is operated by Govia on the Thameslink Service. Southbound the service connects with, amongst others, St Pancras International, Gatwick Airport, Wimbledon and Brighton. To the north are connections to Luton Airport, Luton and Bedford. Regular services operate to these destinations throughout the day, seven days a week.

2.7.2 Local Bus Services

The site is around 0.5km from the bus stops on St Albans Road (A1081) and London Colney High Street (accessed via the footbridge over North Orbital Road). The provision of a new access from London Road would allow easier access still to the St Albans Road stops. These stops provide access to the following services set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Local Bus Services

Service	Operator	Frequency	Route
84	Metroline	3 services per hour Monday to Saturday. Hourly service on Sundays	St Albans – London Colney – South Mimms – New Barnet
602	Uno	2 services per hour Monday to Saturday. Hourly service on Sundays	Hourly service on Sundays Hatfield – St Albans – London Colney – Radlett – Bushey - Watford
636 (High Street London Colney Only)	Uno	Hourly service Monday-Friday	Hatfield – London Colney – Wheathampstead – Harpenden – Luton
658	Uno	Hourly service Monday-Saturday	Hatfield – St Albans – London Colney - Borehamwood
659	Uno	Hourly service Monday-Sunday	London Colney – St Albans

3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 This Call for Sites opportunity marks the start of a new Local Plan process. With the withdrawal of the draft Local Plan in 2020 following the withdrawal of the Strategic Local Plan in 2017, the need for an up-to-date strategic framework for development is more urgent than ever.

3.2 The objectively assessed housing need for St Albans district is around 900 dwellings per year. This should be the starting point. However, the Council will also be aware of neighbouring authorities that are struggling to meet their own housing requirements. The Council will need to have open and constructive dialogue with these authorities if it is to satisfy the Duty to Cooperate. The potential for St Albans district to assist with meeting housing needs from surrounding areas should not be dismissed at this stage. There is considerable development potential within the district, partly stemming from the fact that Green Belt boundaries have not been properly reviewed for around 35 years. The Council should not see the 900 homes per year target as a ceiling if greater potential emerges through the Green Belt review or other evidence.

Housing need

3.3 The reliance on a Local Plan adopted in 1994 and the housing policies and land allocations therein has had a catastrophic effect on housing delivery within the district. With an annual housing target of around 900 homes per year and annual housing completions since 2001 running at 376 homes per year, a whole generation of young people have been largely unable to access the housing market. Recent performance can be judged by the latest Housing Delivery Test results for St Albans District (published in February 2021), which indicated a HDT measurement of only 63% for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 – the 33rd worst of the 298 local authorities in England.

3.4 While housing completions have, to a degree, been propped up by recent changes to permitted development rights, these have not had an impact on the delivery of affordable housing. The target of 200 affordable homes per year from the 1994 Local Plan has not been met. Since 1994, 1,826 affordable homes have been delivered, against a target of 5,200 – only 34% of the target and a shortfall of 3,374 affordable homes. In 2019/20, only 31 affordable homes were completed – just 7% of total completions.

3.5 The delivery of a new Local Plan with updated housing targets, new housing allocations and new Green Belt releases is of the utmost importance for the district.

The portfolio of housing sites

- 3.6 To meet housing need will require the delivery of a mixed portfolio of housing sites. A range of sizes, types and locations will be needed to enable a wide range of housebuilding organisations to contribute to meeting needs, including arrangements self-build properties.
- 3.7 The previous focus only on strategic sites of 500 dwellings or more must change. As highlighted by the Inspectors examining the now-withdrawn draft Local Plan, and as recognised by the Council's Planning Portfolio holder, small and medium-sized sites within the Green Belt must be seriously considered.

Green Belt considerations

- 3.8 The Council's Green Belt review from 2012 provides a useful starting point but is in no way adequate to support a new Local Plan. The focus on strategic sites must change and the Green Belt review must look at the site-specific impacts of proposed development sites. The broad-brush, coarse-grain approach to assessing parcels of Green Belt land in the 2012 Review must be developed into a more sophisticated and nuanced review of development potential. This will include both strategic and smaller-scale housing and employment sites.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Site

The site is in Class E1 use. Table 4 adjacent shows the relevant planning history for this site.

The site has also had many applications for signage, advertisements, and alterations to buildings.

4.2 5/2013/3383

Planning permission was refused for residential development and dismissed at appeal. Although the Inspector considered the proposal inappropriate development in the Green Belt, he accepted that the site is previously developed land and considered that any amenity concerns of the council could be overcome. No objection was raised to the proposed access onto the North Orbital Road by the County Council or the Inspector.

Table 4: Relevant Planning history for site

LPA Reference	Proposal	Decision
5/1981/0175	Replanning of existing garden centre – landscaping erection of buildings, improved car parking	Approved 15.05.1981
5/1990/0471	Erection of front entrance lobby and glasshouse, alterations to access and car park	Approved 02.05.1990

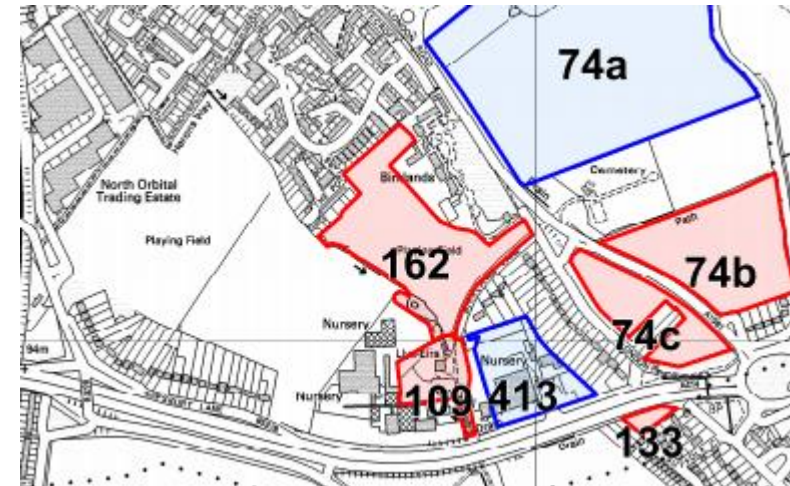
5/1994/0500	Extension to garden centre with rear car park	Approved 25.05.1994
5/2013/3383	O/L application for 33 dwellings	Refused 09.05.2014
5/2016/3817	Holm Oaks - Partial change of use of existing manager's accommodation to Class A1 (furniture showroom) and manager's accommodation	Approved 19.04.2017
5/2018/0230	External Cladding and alterations to elevations	Approved 26.03.2018
5/2019/2235	The Barn and Holm Oaks - Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a replacement Class A1 (retail) building and site manager's dwelling with associated parking	Approved 12.12.2019
5/2020/0829	Non Material amendments to 5/2019/2235	Approved 04.05.2020
5/2020/0830	Discharge of conditions 5/2019/2235	Approved 03.06.2020
5/2020/1477	Advertisement Consent - Four non-illuminated totem signs, two non-illuminated free-standing signs and relocation of rotating sign	Approved 28.10.2020
5/2020/1637	Discharge of conditions 5/2019/2235	Approved 26.08.2020
5/2020/2088	Variation of condition 6 (hours of operation) of 5/2019/2235	Approved 08.12.2020

5.0 PREVIOUS SHLAA ASSESSMENT

5.1.0 This site has been submitted through previous Call for Sites invitations and was assessed by the Council in the 2016 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The site was referred to as site 413 as shown on the extract from the SHLAA update 2016 plan (figure 5). At that stage the site was rejected as the Council considered: *'The site makes a crucial contribution to Green Belt purposes. The site is surrounding Albert Bygraves Centre. Residential development would intensify development and cause adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area detrimental to its rural character.'*

5.1.1 It is not accepted that this site has a rural character in view of its commercial use. Sensitively designed housing would improve the visual amenity of the area and result in benefits to local residents. The retention of commercial uses to the front of the site would protect housing to the rear of the site from road noise.

Figure 5 SHLAA Update 2016 – St Albans and Surrounds Background



■ SHLAA Update 2016
■ SHLAA 2009

6.0 **SITE CONSTRAINTS**

6.1 The Council's Call for Sites 2021 pro forma seeks information on any constraints affecting potential sites. While the constraints applying to this site are discussed throughout this report, the information is summarised here in the same format as requested on the pro forma, for ease of reference.

6.2 **Contamination/Pollution**

No suspected issues of contamination or pollution that would preclude development.

6.3 **Environmental issues**

No significant environmental constraints other than possible noise issues due to the close proximity of the North Orbital Road. The proposed mixed use could provide a buffer for the residential use. The site is previously developed land and development on this site would have little impact on the function of the Green Belt.

6.4 **Flood risk**

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is at very low risk of flooding.

6.5 **Topography**

The site is essentially level such that large amounts of spoil would not need to be removed.

6.6 **Utility services**

Utilities are already available to the site such that a connection could easily be made.

6.7 **Legal issues**

The site is in single ownership and could be brought forward for development quickly. There are no 'ransom strips' present.

6.8 **Access**

The proposed site layout shows use of the existing access to North Orbital Road.

6.9 **Other constraints**

The site is not located close to any Heritage / Archaeology designations.

7.0 OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL

7.1 An indicative development layout has been produced showing how the site could be developed with residential use for 24 dwellings within an area of 0.5ha towards the rear of the site with the existing commercial use retained along the road frontage along with the new development approved under 5/2019/2235. This is shown in Figure 6.

7.2 However, as an alternative form of development, the site could be utilised for employment development for which there is also a need within the district.

7.3 Form of residential development

The proposed residential development would be two storey in form to be appropriate to the adjacent residential development in Birklands Lane and London Road. This would comprise 15 houses and 9 flats including affordable housing. These will be in a range of types and tenures, subject to discussion with the local authority's housing team. Access to the site via the North Orbital Road is already in place.

7.4 Benefits of development

The site is well served by public transport services. It is approximately 0.5km from the Bus Stops on St Albans Road and London Colney High Street (accessed via the footbridge over North Orbital). St Albans City Railway is located 3.2km to the north-west of the site.

7.5 The Report Site is located in close proximity to a good range of local services and facilities within 2km. These include a primary & secondary school; London Colney high street retail & New House Park; Employment Zones EMP16 & EMP17; and multiple community facilities such as Shenley Playing Fields.

7.6 The site is set in a swathe of Green Belt land contained by the railway line to the west, London Road to the north and the North Orbital Road to the south. However, the site is previously developed land and future development would have little impact on the function of the Green Belt.

7.7 The site is in single ownership and could be brought forward for development quickly. There are no 'ransom strips' present and the development is not dependent upon overcoming any constraints, including the need to deliver significant infrastructure.

Figure 6: Indicative Layout for residential development



Accommodation Schedule:

Key	Type	Quantity
-----	------	----------

Private		
2	2 Bed House	2
3	3 Bed House	13
Total:		15

Affordable		
1s	1 Bed Flat	3
2s	2 Bed Flat	6
Total:		9

Grand Total		24
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8.0 GREEN BELT IMPACT

8.1 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes. These five purposes have been set out below with an assessment on the site's contributions to each purpose.

8.2 **Purpose 1 – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**

Whilst the site would extend the built-up area of St Albans, it is not considered that this would be 'unrestricted sprawl'. The incorporation of the entire Report Site into the St Albans Settlement boundary would essentially reflect the extent of the southern spread of built development and would be defined by the North Orbital Road to the south. The new eastern boundary the Green Belt would be London Road and would include the housing along the eastern boundary of the site with essentially open land with mature trees opposite.

8.3 **Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**

The nearest town to the south of St Albans would be Watford or Borehamwood (London Colney being a village). Linear residential development already extends along the western side of London Road as far as the North Orbital Road and the site is already previously developed land. On this basis, development of this site

would not cause coalescence between towns. As it is already developed, the site is considered to make no contribution to this purpose.

8.4 **Purpose 3 – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

The entire site constitutes previously developed land either with buildings, car parking or hardstandings. It is also bounded by residential development to the north and east and by roads to the south and west. In essence, it does not have a sense of separation from the settlement of St Albans and is commercial in character such that there is a very limited contribution to this purpose.

8.5 **Purpose 4 – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**

The land does not form part of the setting of St Albans or contribute to its special character. This should be limited or no contribution.

8.6 **Purpose 5 – to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land**

It is a common assumption that all Green Belt land within the District makes a significant contribution to this purpose.

8.7 Summary of harm to Green Belt

Paragraph 133 of the NPPF stipulates that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. Thus, whilst openness is an essential characteristic, in assessing its importance this cannot be divorced from the overriding aim of preventing urban sprawl. This notion is supported by paragraph 139 of the Framework, with regard to Green Belt boundaries. This states that when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should, inter alia, “not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open”. As such, it is considered that the harm would be very limited for the following reasons:

- The site is previously developed commercial land with buildings, car parking and hardstandings and makes very little contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
- There is a clear southern boundary formed by the North Orbital Road.

8.7.1 In light of the above, there is limited value in retaining any part of the Report Site as designated Green Belt.

8.8 New position of Green Belt boundary

Alternative Green Belt boundaries have been illustrated in Figures 7 and 8 below.

Option 1

Figure 7 shows the boundary running along London Road to the east, along the North Orbital Road to the south and following the eastern edge of Aylett Nurseries to the east. From there it would head north following the line of preserved and mature trees to join the existing Green Belt boundary at the residential settlement including the Poplars. The Birklands Meadow Playing Fields would be subject to protection from development under other legislation.

Option 2

Figure 8 shows the boundary running along London Road to the east, along the North Orbital Road to the south and following the railway line to the western edge to join the North Orbital Commercial Park. This would include North Orbital Fields and Birklands Meadow (shown as UCV.5 and UCV.6 on the Proposals Map). These playing fields would be subject to protection from development under other legislation.

Figure 7 Green Belt Boundary Option 1



Figure 8 Green Belt Boundary Option 2



9.0 DELIVERABILITY

9.1 There are no constraints that would prevent the immediate development of the site.

9.2 **Landownership**

The owners of the Albert Bygrave Retail Park own the entire site and thus the site is in single ownership.

9.3 **Timescale for delivery**

The site is in single ownership and could be brought forward for development quickly. There are no 'ransom strips' present and the development is not dependent upon overcoming any constraints, including the need to deliver significant infrastructure. This is particularly important given the urgency of the housing need and the time needed for strategic sites to deliver on the ground.

9.4 **Supporting technical work**

The site is previously developed land with all the services and utilities already on site. There would be minimal preparatory work required other than removal of some existing buildings and structures to the rear of the site.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 There is an evident and urgent need for additional housing sites within St Albans district. A greater emphasis on small and medium-sized sites is needed to ensure a balanced portfolio and provide a more robust and resilient housing land supply. The Council's new Green Belt Review will therefore need to assess the specific Green Belt impact arising from potential development sites, rather than the previous broad-brush assessment.
- 10.2 St Albans is the largest town in the district and is clearly a sustainable location for growth. The Report Site is located in close proximity to a good range of local services and facilities within 2km. These include a primary & secondary school; London Colney high street retail & New House Park; Employment Zones EMP16 & EMP17; and multiple community facilities such as Shenley Playing Fields.
- 10.3 The site is set in a swathe of Green Belt land contained by the railway line to the west, London Road to the north and the North Orbital Road to the south. However, the site is previously developed land and future development would have little impact on the function of the Green Belt.
- 10.4 The site is in single ownership and could be brought forward for development quickly. There are no 'ransom strips' present and the development is not dependent upon overcoming any constraints, including the need to deliver significant infrastructure. This is particularly important given the urgency of the housing need and the time needed for strategic sites to deliver on the ground.
- 10.5 The site should be allocated for mixed development including housing and removed from the Green Belt in the next iteration of the Local Plan.

25 January to 5pm 8 March 2021
'Call for Sites 2021' Site Identification Form

St Albans City and District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan 2020-2038. The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals, landowners and developers to suggest sites within the District for development over the next 15-20 years. The site suggestions received by us will be used to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2020-2038.

You are invited to put forward any new sites that you would like the Council to consider in its Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). These should be capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings, or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more). The Council will take account of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) submissions previously received since 2009 and therefore there is no need to resubmit these unless circumstances have changed. Sites from previous SHLAAs will form part of the Council's assessment. Proposed land uses can include:

- Housing
- Gypsy & Traveller Housing
- Mixed Use
- Employment
- Renewable and low carbon energy and heat
- Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting
- Green Belt Compensatory Land
- Land for Tree Planting
- Other

To enable sites to be mapped digitally, please provide GIS shapefiles of your site, where possible.

The consultation period runs for six weeks between Monday 25 January to 5pm on Monday 8 March 2021.

Unfortunately, we cannot treat any of the information you provide as confidential.

It is important to note that not all sites received through the 'Call for Sites' will be appropriate for consideration as part of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). As a general rule:

We encourage you to submit sites that are likely to become available for development or redevelopment between now and 2038.

Please do not submit sites that:

- Are already included as a housing allocation in the St Albans District Local Plan Review (November 1994) – i.e. sites that are listed in 'saved' Policies 4 and 5.

- Have already been submitted to the Council for consideration via previous 'Call for Sites' and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) processes (unless information is updated/changed).
- Already have planning permission for development, unless a new and different proposal is likely in the future; or
- Are situated outside St Albans City and District's administrative area.

If you wish to update information about a site previously submitted please complete the form below.

Please return the **form and site location plan** to the Spatial Planning and Design Team. We strongly encourage digital submissions via our online portal.

By online consultation portal:

<http://stalbans-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

By e-mail to: planning.policy@stalbans.gov.uk

By post to: St Albans Council Offices, St Peters Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3JE

Due to COVID-19; offices being shut and officers working from home; submissions by post are discouraged.

Your Details	
Name	Jamie Pert
Company/Organisation	Planning Potential
Address	Magdalen House, Tooley Street, London
Postcode	SE1 2TU
Telephone	██████████
Email	██
Your interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Owner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Registered Social Landlord <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resident <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developer (representation submitted on behalf of Fairview New Homes Ltd) <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Site Details			
Requirements:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers 5 or more dwellings or; • Provides economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares or more (or 500 square metres of floor space or more) 			
Site address/location (Please provide a map showing the site boundary)	Land to the East of Napsbury Lane, St Albans.		
Site area (in hectares)	Approximately 10 ha		
Coordinates	Easting	516582	Northing 205095
Site Location Plan Attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes. Site Location plan included in accompanying representation document (image 1). <input type="checkbox"/> No		
GIS mapping shapefile attached (in .shp file format)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Landownership (please include contact details if known)	[REDACTED]		
Current land use	Land is in private ownership with limited land use, save for limited access via existing footpaths (see attached representation document for more detail)		
Condition of current use (e.g. vacant, derelict)	Semi-maintained, underutilised greenfield land (see attached representation document for more detail)		
Suggested land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy & Travellers <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Use (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable and low carbon energy and heat <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity Improvement / Offsetting <input type="checkbox"/> Green Belt Compensatory Land <input type="checkbox"/> Land for Tree Planting <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		
Reasons for suggested development / land use	Land is available, suitable, and developable in the short term (see attached representation document for more detail)		

Likely timescale for delivery of suggested development / land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-5 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 15+ Years
---	--

Site Constraints	Contamination/pollution issues (previous hazardous land uses)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Environmental issues (e.g. Tree Preservation Orders; SSSIs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Flood Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Topography affecting site (land levels, slopes, ground conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Utility Services (access to mains electricity, gas, water, drainage etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Legal issues (For example, restrictive covenants or ownership titles affecting the site)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Access. Is the site accessible from a public highway without the need to cross land in a different ownership to the site?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If no please provide details of how the site could be accessed. Without this information the site will not be considered to be deliverable).

	Other constraints affecting the site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, please specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (see attached representation document for more detail)
Planning Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Refused <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Application Withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Lapsed <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Advice <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Permission Not Sought <input type="checkbox"/> Other Please include details of the above choice below (for example planning reference numbers and site history)	
Other comments	This site's promotion is supported by the accompanying cover letter, representation document and concept masterplan.	

Spatial Planning Team
St Albans City and District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
St Albans
AL1 3JE
By email: planning.policy@stalbens.gov.uk

08 March 2021

Our Ref: 20/5537

Dear Sir/ Madam

New Local Plan 2020-2038, Call for Sites 2021: Land to the east of Napsbury Lane, St Albans

On behalf of our client, Fairview New Homes Ltd, we are pleased to submit the accompanying documents alongside the HELAA form in support of the above site's consideration as a developable site for residential uses and to be allocated as such:

- Call for Sites representation prepared by Planning Potential
- Napsbury Field Sketch Scheme (FNH381) prepared by Fairview New Homes Ltd

Land to the east of Napsbury Lane is well contained, does not require the creation of 'new' boundaries, does not set the precedent for urban sprawl and does not undermine the wider Green Belt parcels role in protecting the countryside from encroachment. The result is a site which can deliver housing development in addition to other benefits, which on balance, allows it to be taken forward as an allocation in the next plan. Its allocation will also help to reduce the pressure to 'release' less sustainable and more rural sites for development to meet the development needs identified over the next plan period.

Development would bring new housing and affordable homes to the area, as well as the delivery of a later living facility, alongside improvements to the quality and accessibility of the existing natural open space, as part of a fully policy compliant scheme.

As a follow up to this formal submission, we would be delighted to meet with the Local Plan team to discuss the site in further detail and explore opportunities to ensure the site is taken forward. In the background, Fairview and Planning Potential will continue to assess the technical aspects of the site, including highways & access and ecology & biodiversity considerations. We also welcome the Council's views on the suitability and scope of the now proposed assisted living facility.

Yours sincerely,



Directors
Helen Cuthbert | Stuart Slatter | Claire Temple | Alastair Close
Dan Templeton
Associate Directors
Katie Turvey | Heather Vickers | Alan Williams

Consultant
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Associates
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Niall Hanrahan | Phil Marsden | Charlotte Perry | Charlotte Hunter

Jamie Pert

Senior Planner

Planning Potential

Harrogate

Enc.

New Local Plan 2020-2038, Call for Sites 2021: Land to the east of Napsbury Lane, St Albans



Introduction

The parcel of land identified to the east of Napsbury Lane, St Albans occupies a highly accessible & sustainable location for housing led development which is deliverable in the short term (0-5 years). Positively, the site has been promoted through previous rounds of consultation as part of the earlier [now withdrawn] Local Plan preparations and at the time (2018 SHLAA exercise), the site was recognised as having defensible boundaries in a sustainable location and in a highly urbanised landscape. The site was recommended by Officers to be shortlisted for allocation. This bolsters our view that the site was and remains a deliverable and developable opportunity which St Albans City and District Council should view favourably when progressing with the new plan, the very purpose of this call for sites exercise.

Alongside a residential development capacity of circa 150 dwellings, the site proposals include a later living facility for those who cannot or prefer not to live entirely independently (or similar) alongside the delivery and enhancing of opportunities for public enjoyment and biodiversity improvements.

The site constraints are noted, namely its designation as part of the wider Green Belt. We address this within this representation and demonstrate that the site can be brought forward for development without compromising the wider land parcels function as Green Belt land, whilst also being entirely policy compliant.

This advocacy document represents a collaborative venture, drawing upon Fairview's track record and combined local knowledge of the site and surrounding area, with the land being promoted as a developable residential opportunity.

Site Context

The site extends to some 10ha and is located towards the south of St Albans. Bound by the A414 to the south, Aylett Nursery to the east, residential to the north and commercial uses to the west, the site is almost entirely contained. Its development for residential uses is promoted as both compatible with surrounding uses and as representing logical 'in-fill' or 'rounding off'. Because the site is adjacent to development on three sides and the A414 on the other – a two way dual-carriageway separated by a central reservation - there are little to no views through and across the site.

Image 1 – Site Context and Location Plan



Planning Potential Ltd

London
Magdalen House
148 Tooley Street
London SE1 2TU
T: 020 7357 8000

Harrogate
14-15 Regent Parade
Harrogate HG1 5AW
T: 01423 502115

Bristol
13-14 Orchard Street
Bristol BS1 5EH
T: 0117 214 1820

Report Reference:
20/5537

Source: *Google Earth (2021)*

Being in private ownership, the site plays no real role by way of public benefit other than limited access for walking by way of the footpaths and bridlepaths that run broadly around the perimeter of the site, with vehicular access gained from the south off Napsbury Lane (between the linear row of housing and Aylett Nurseries). Opportunities exist to help open the site for ease of public use through development by the upgrading and long-term maintenance of the existing walking connections and the retention of parts of the site for public open space and for nature conservation. The existing public right of ways (PROW) would also benefit from passive surveillance provided through development on this site, the lack of which presently limits usage.

The site is open and featureless save for the row of mature trees which dissect the site roughly in half in a north east -south west direction, a limb of trees which encroach the site from the wooded area along that define the sites western boundary, and the occasional standalone tree. With the exception of the trees which run through the central portion of the site, the majority of trees on site are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Fairview are wholly supportive of the retention of these as integral components of future development, helping create defined areas – this is illustrated in the accompanying concept masterplan.

Wider Location

By virtue that the site is bound by the existing built fabric on three sides and the A414 to the south which acts as a significant and durable physical barrier, the site relates better to the built fabric than it does the wider Green Belt. This is echoed in the evidence base documents which refer to the site being a highly urbanised landscape. Its development represents the rounding-off/ filling-in at the south end of St Albans without encroaching into the wider rural setting and without requiring significant infrastructure upgrades.

St Albans is the largest settlement in the District and is the main focus for future for housing and economic growth. The town is a focus for employment opportunities and leisure activity, and provides a range of retail, community and cultural facilities. The town also benefits from access to good schools and transport links to London and beyond. Travel time between the site and St Albans town centre is approximately 10 minutes by bus, with the bus stops on London Road only a 5-minute walk from the site which run a regular service also the overground station. The site is well connected to public transport and has access to the strategic road network.

Image 2 – Surrounding Amenities



Source: *Fairview Homes (February 2021)*

Local shopping facilities are also within walking distance with New House Park local centre which provides a number of shops and services. Neighbouring Aylett's nursery also includes a coffee house/ café and small farm style shop. London Colney High Street is around 1.5 km from

the site. Development of the site would bring additional people into the area which in turn will further support local retailers and services without overwhelming them.

There are four GP surgeries within 1.5 km of the site, two in St Albans and two in London Colney.

The site has access to natural green space in the surrounding area, including Birklands Park which lies adjacent to the site. However, there is a lack of provision of equipped play areas for younger children in the area, which is something that could be provided through development of the site.

There are a number of schools close by. The Samuel Ryder Academy School is 0.8 km away – around 10 minutes' walk. Cunningham Hill Junior and Infant schools and the Windermere Primary School all lie within 1.6 km – 20 minutes' walk or 10 minutes by bus from London Road. The closest secondary school is Marlborough Science Academy, 3 km away.

St Albans is a key transport hub for the District and provides excellent links to major destinations. St Albans City Railway Station is 2.5 km from the site – 10 minutes by bus from London Road. The station provides links to major transport hubs, including Luton Airport (15 minutes), Bedford (40 minutes), central London (20 minutes) and Gatwick Airport (80 minutes). St Albans Abbey Station is also 2.5 km from the site and provides regular services to Watford.

There is excellent connectivity to the strategic road network in this location. The North Orbital Road (A414) lies to the south of the site, connecting to the M1 motorway to the west, the A1(M) to the east and the M25 motorway to the south. Bus stops along London Road are a short walk away (5 minutes) and provide regular services into the town centre and to Watford and New Barnet (Service Nos. 84, 602 and 658).

The area is connected by a number of footpaths and cycleways, including the public right of way network around the perimeter of this site connecting to Napsbury Lane through to London Road, which could be enhanced through the development of the site.

Housing Need

St Albans City and District Council are under considerable pressure to bring forward more deliverable housing sites following the results of the most recent Housing Delivery Test (HDT) (63%, Jan 21 2,372 homes were needed, 1,493 homes delivered over the three-year period)¹. This confirms the 'presumption' is to be applied, and the Action Plan (Dec 2020) points towards a 2.4 year housing land supply. Between 1994/95 and 2019/20, the average number of dwellings per annum was 393² so the HDT figure is slightly skewed owing to stronger housing delivery in the last 2 years.

The Council needs to identify a sufficient pool of sites that can come forward quickly, and it is our opinion that there should be a focus on not only previously development land but also, land that is well-contained and bordered by the existing built fabric. This is because there is an accepted need that land beyond existing settlement boundaries (greenbelt release) will be needed to satisfy the Districts' housing needs. By adopting this approach, there is less pressure to release less favourable, more isolated greenfield parcels of land beyond the settlement edge which require significant infrastructure works and have a greater impact on the character & setting of the wider area that the home counties, including St Albans, are known so well, and admired for.

The most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) carried out relevant to the District was the South West Herts SHMA, September 2020. This document identifies St Albans as having a local housing need (LHN) of 893 dwellings per annum for the 2020 – 2035 period (using the NPPF (2019) Standard Method). Even when using the [old] standard method drawing on 2014-based household projections and the annual need would be 638. Both are significantly higher than recent and historic delivery. Regardless of the method moving forward, what is obvious is that St Albans need to make proactive steps to meet their need and address the historic shortfall. The deliberate and considered release of the most suitable land for development will assist this process, and this includes land north of Napsbury Lane.

The SHMA also links population growth for different age brackets and it finds that across SW Herts as a whole, there is a significant ageing of the population with the increase in the population aged over 65 around 44.2% compared to all age groups of 20.3% between 2020-2036. Specific to St Albans, the population of over 65 is expected to rise from 25,609 (2020) to 35,276 (2036). This is an increase of nearly 40%³. St Albans also has the highest percentage of older persons in under-occupied homes (88%). There is, therefore, a compelling argument for more appropriate accommodation provision for the later living population. If high quality accommodation for this demographic can be provided within the community, this provides the ideal platform for the more mature population to transition from their existing homes, to better suited

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2020-measurement>

² Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (December 2020), table 1

³ SW Herts SHMA (September 2020), table 82