

Date: 22 Jan 2020

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Dear Sir or Madam,

**Representation for the Stroud District Draft Plan (November 2019)
Land at Wickridge Farm, Stroud**

This representation has been put forward to illustrate why Land at Wickridge Farm, Stroud should be included as a proposed housing allocation in the upcoming publication plan (Reg. 19 consultation), expected in Autumn 2020.

The site has not previously been submitted to the SHLAA or SALA and therefore no comments have been given on the potential suitability of the site.

Our client owns a large track of land in the surrounding area however we have decided to submit the smaller area shown on the accompanying location plan as it would help to round of the existing development to the south. The parcel of land submitted measures circa 2 hectares (4.9 acres). At standard densities the site can accommodate 60 dwellings, however the site has some physical constraints which would reduce this number. The main physical constraint the site faces is its gradient. The site is also located within the Cotswold AONB and therefore the design and layout of the site would need to be sympathetic towards this. The site is completely located within flood zone 1 and therefore has a low probability of flooding.

Stroud District Local Plan Policies Map shows that the site is located directly adjacent to the Settlement Development Limit for circa 280m of its southern boundary.

The Polices Map also shows the site is only circa 1150m from the Principle Town Centre Boundary. There are also several bus stops circa 220m from the site that provide access to Stroud town centre in 4 minutes. This in turn provides access to the wider public transport network such as further buses to surrounding larger settlements such as Gloucester and Cheltenham and the train station which has a direct service to London Paddington. It is therefore considered that the site is located



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in a sustainable location which would allow residents of any potential development to access local facilities easily.

The adopted Stroud District Local Plan (2015) states the Stroud is a Tier 1 Settlement and therefore it should be a “primary focus for growth and development to safeguard and enhance their strategic roles as employment and service centres”. The site has been retained as a Tier 1 settlement in the Local Plan Review.

[REDACTED] has only 265 dwellings allocated over four sites in the emerging plan. Given it is the [REDACTED] in the district and one of the principle settlements this is not considered to be another Tier 1 settlement, has a total of 895 dwellings proposed in draft allocations and Stonehouse has a total of 700 dwellings in addition to 15ha of employment space.

It is acknowledged that the topography and landscape constraints surrounding Stroud make it more difficult to develop very high numbers of dwellings however, 265 dwellings is a very low number given Stroud’s size and importance in the district.

All the allocated sites currently in Stroud are brownfield. This will mean that remediation costs for the sites will be much higher than if they were greenfield. This will therefore likely mean that the sites will potentially not be viable to provide the required percentage of affordable housing. As the subject site is greenfield with minimal constraints it would be able to provide a high percentage of affordable housing to contribute towards the need for the area. Stroud currently has one of the highest percentages of social rented homes in the district, at 18.6%, and therefore providing sufficient affordable housing on new sites is essential.

Stroud is one of the most affordable areas in the district with average housing prices of £245,034 compared to the average housing price for Gloucestershire of £298,441. It is therefore important to provide new development in this area to provide people who wish to live in the district an affordable choice.

Much of the housing which has been allocated within the emerging plan is at Sharpness, with circa 2770 dwellings proposed by 2031 and an additional 5000 dwelling proposed by 2050. This is likely to be unviable due to the current lack of infrastructure and facilities in this area. Allocating so many houses in one area will produce slow delivery and build out rates in comparison to allocations which are more spread out over various sites. There is also more of a risk, if the allocation were to fall out of the plan, the Council would be left with a large deficit of reserve housing sites to find.

The following desktop appraisal for Land at Wickridge Farm, Stroud sets out any potential constraints to the site:

Heritage

The nearest heritage asset is Wickridge Farm House (1238209) and Cottage to North of Wickridge Farm House (1238296) which are both Grade II listed and located circa 200 metres to the North East from the nearest point of the site's boundary outlined in the accompanying location plan. It is considered that a buffer in place between the asset and the site as there is a line of trees and an [REDACTED] separating the two and as a result the site is a satisfactory distance away not to

Landscape

The site is located within the Cotswold AONB and therefore a sensitive design would need to be implemented at the site in order to not adversely affect the setting. The site is currently surrounded on two of three sides by vegetation, this would be retained and enhanced to mitigate any potential landscape impacts. The site is slightly sloping and therefore any layout would have to take this into account and make provisions to accommodate this issue.

Ecology

The majority of the site is grassland with limited ecological value. There are trees and hedgerows along two of the three boundaries of the site. Although a small area of hedgerow may need to be removed to provide a second access the remainder will be retained and the areas of trees along the borders enhanced to provide maximum ecological improvements.

Access

Access can be gained to the site by making a small opening in the existing hedgerow. There is the option to either have access to the site from the north, off Folly Lane, or to the south, via an unnamed road.

There are currently no Public Rights of Way crossing the site. Stroud Footpath 83 runs along the unnamed road to the south of the site.

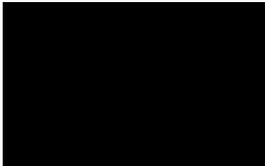
Drainage

Environment Agency Flood Risk mapping for land-use planning, indicates that the site is located in a Flood Risk Zone 1. This indicates that the overall site has a low probability of flooding (less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding) and can be developed.

Summary

In considering the above, there would appear to be no overriding physical constraints or potential impacts preventing sensitively located development for a medium scale housing scheme. Bruton Knowles would like to express that the site is under single ownership and that it is immediately available and deliverable over the next 5 years.

Yours sincerely,



Planner