

Reference: DA/15/01229/ECREM

Site Address: Part Phase 2, Castle Hill, Eastern Quarry

Proposal: Submission of reserved matters pursuant to conditions 2 of planning permission DA/12/01451/EQVAR for the application for erection of 125 dwellings (comprising 60 houses and 65 flats), access, layout, appearance, landscaping and scale including the part discharge of condition 25 and full discharge of condition 28.

Applicant: Circle Housing

Parish / Ward: Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council / Greenhithe

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to the following conditions: -

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of two years from the date of this reserved matters approval.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans:

A-L-(00)-0200 1st; A-L-(00)-0201 G; A-L-(00)-0202 D; A-L-(00)-0203 D; A-L-(00)-0204 D; A-L-(00)-0205 D; A-L-(00)-0206 A; A-L-(00)-0210 A; A-L-(00)-0214 B; A-L-(00)-0215 B; A-L-(00)-0216 B; A-L-(00)-0217 A; A-L-(00)-0218 B; A-L-(00)-0219 A; A-L-(00)-0220 B; A-L-(00)-0221 C; A-L-(00)-0223 A; A-L-(00)-0224 A; A-L-(00)-0225 A; A-L-(00)-0226 A; A-L-(00)-0227 A; A-L-(00)-0231 B; A-L-(00)-0232 B; A-L-(00)-0233 B; A-L-(00)-0234 B; A-L-(00)-0235 B; A-L-(00)-0236 B; A-L-(00)-0240 B; A-L-(00)-0241 B; A-L-(00)-0242 B; A-L-(00)-0245 B; A-L-(00)-0246 C; A-L-(00)-0251 1st; A-L-(20)-0222 C; Planning Statement; Conditions Statement; Addendum Statement – 25.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory form of development.

3. No development above foundation level shall take place until details and samples of materials to be used in the external surfaces of the dwellings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

4. No development above foundation level shall take place until details and samples of the all materials to be used in the external finishes of all road and footpath surfaces has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

5. No development above foundation level shall take place until details of all walls (including retaining walls), fences, gates or other means of enclosure to be erected in or around the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details as approved shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the house it pertains to.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and in the interests of residential amenity policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

6. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the schemes for the Neighbourhood Green and Primary Road Detail as submitted under Planning References: DA/15/01263/ECREM and DA/15/1307/ECREM have been implemented to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, which shall be confirmed in writing.

Reason: To ensure a safe means of access and suitable open space for future residents' policies B1 and B3 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

7. No development shall take place until an Action Plan for Broadband Access, Smart Access or their equivalent, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details with each dwelling having access upon occupation.

Reason: To ensure appropriate telecommunications access for future occupiers of the development.

8. The dwellings facing Fastrack hereby approved shall not be occupied until the landscaping details contained within planning application reference: DA/15/01477/ECREM have been implemented to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, which shall be confirmed in writing.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development policy B3 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

9. The dwellings hereby approved shall not be occupied, until the area shown on the submitted layout as vehicle parking space / garaging has been provided,

surfaced and drained. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking space and garaging.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking or garaging of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

10. The dwellings hereby approved that will face towards the Garden Suburb Boulevard and Fastrack frontages shall be constructed in accordance with the recommended mitigation measures contained within the Noise Assessment approved in respect of condition 28 of the outline planning permission DA/12/01451/EQVAR. The mitigation measures shall be implemented prior to the occupation of each particular dwelling and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard conditions of amenity.

11. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved details of all external lighting for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans with the lighting implemented prior to the occupation of the part of the development to which it relates.

Reason: To safeguard conditions of residential and visual amenity.

12. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved full details of the cycle storage, including details of the capacity of the integral storage for the apartments, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and the cycle storage shall be provided prior to the occupation of the development to which it relates.

Reason: To encourage sustainable means of travel

13. Prior to the first occupation of plots 12 – 17 the road providing a link with the first phase of the Castle Hill development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans. The road shall be made open to traffic prior to the occupation of plots 12 - 17 and no development shall take place which precludes this access.

Reason: To ensure all residential properties are capable of being adequately served by fire-appliances, refuse trucks and other large vehicles.

SITE CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

The application site relates to three parcels of land (for the purposes of this report referred to as plots A, B and C) totalling 1.74 hectares in area located at Eastern Quarry. It represents the affordable housing portion of the second phase of residential development alongside a concurrent scheme submitted by Charles Church (REF: DA/15/01218/ECREM) for 170 private market units at the same site. The combined site lies to the west of the Ward Homes scheme (DBC Ref: 13/00720/EQCHRM), currently delivering 150 homes at Castle Hill off Southfleet Road, south of Swanscombe. A principal access road proposed for Eastern Quarry is located directly to the north of the application site and beyond this a landscaped strip which forms the northern boundary of the overall development with Swanscombe. To the south and west is the rest of the un-developed Eastern Quarry site, itself is bounded to the south by the Northfleet West Sub Station site (Redrow site) and the A2.

This application is for the submission by Circle Housing of matters reserved from the original outline approval for Eastern Quarry (DA/03/1134 and subsequent revision DA/12/01451/EQVAR), in this instance being the appearance; landscaping; scale and layout of 125 residential units. Access to the development would be gained via the principal access road to the north, namely 'Main Street North' which serves the Ward site and is accessed off Southfleet Road to the east. Another primary route forms the western boundary (Garden Suburb Boulevard) whilst to the south would be 'Fastrack', a dedicated public transport corridor (bus, cycle and pedestrians only). The eastern boundary sits against a 'Green Zone', a landscaped buffer separating phases 1 and 2.

The units are a mix of housing and flats found within the three parcels, two of which are located at the southern end of the combined site facing the approved public transport corridor 'Fastrack', either side of part of the Charles Church site, and the third lying at the eastern edge between the Neighbourhood Green and the 'Green Zone' which separates this second phase from the first. The smallest portion (plot A) covers 0.32 hectares (south eastern edge). It proposes 48 apartments located within two four/five storey blocks fronting onto Fastrack with parking to the rear. Plot B is situated to the south western edge is 1 hectare in size and faces onto two key routes, Fastrack to the south and the main North South link (known as Garden Suburb Boulevard) to the west. This portion has 17 flats within a four storey block and 39 houses, being three storeys where they face 'Fastrack' and 2 storeys elsewhere. Plot C consists of a rectangular shaped portion of land towards the eastern edge of the site, set amidst neighbouring private housing and consists of 21 x 2-storey houses.

The phase incorporates a Neighbourhood Green, landscaping and a road layout which are subject to planning applications submitted by Camland on behalf of Land Securities. These applications are live and will be determined subsequent to the Planning Committee meeting.

Alongside this proposal is a comparable reserved matters submission by Charles Church (DA/15/01218/ECREM) to deliver 170 private market units across the rest of this phase of Castle Hill. The Charles Church proposal will be considered at the

same time as this application, so that a rounded assessment of this development can be made.

The submission also includes details pertaining to a Noise Assessment which is required to be reviewed and discharged at the same time as this submission (Condition 28 of DA/12/1451/EQVAR).

The application seeks approval for the detail of the Reserved Matters outstanding from the outline consent (condition 2); i.e.: layout; scale; appearance and landscaping in respect of the erection of 170 private houses. Condition 25 of the outline consent requires the submission of details to be submitted alongside any Reserved Matters submission. In this case the applicant is seeking to discharge parts a, part b, c, e, f and j, these being: -

- a) Updated area plan at scale 1:500 and layout plan at 1:1000
- b) Landscaping
- c) Materials
- e) Boundary Treatment
- j) Cycle Parking

The road layout, off-plot landscaping and Neighbourhood Green shown on the submitted documents sit outside this submission and subject to on-going separate live planning applications. The EDC is satisfied with the details contained within each of these and they accord with the layout under consideration. These will be approved in accordance with an approval of this and the adjoining Charles Church proposal should the Planning Committee agree with the Officer recommendation.

RELEVANT HISTORY

Outline planning permission was granted in November 2007 (Dartford Ref: DA/03/1134) for the erection of up to 6,250 dwellings and up to 231,000 sq.m. of built floorspace for business uses; education, community and social facilities; hotels; theatre; retail; leisure and associated works. The planning permission is the subject of a section 106 legal agreement. The original consent was varied in March 2013 to reflect a revised disposition of land uses across the site via a section 73 planning permission (DA/12/0141/EQVAR).

The outline planning permission reserved all matters for future development but fixed certain elements. A Land Use Disposition Plan was approved as part of the permission and this shows spatially how the development should come forward, together with a number of Strategies (covering Landscaping, Design, Phasing, Public Art, Community Participation and Transport) which form a framework for the development as it comes forward. The outline consent proposed that the development was going to take on the form of three connected villages, the first to come forward being 'Castle Hill' at the eastern end of the site. This proposal sits within Castle Hill.

The permission sets a structured approach to the consideration of planning matters as phases come forward over time. The first stage of this required the submission and approval of a Site Wide Master Plan (SWMP), the first of which was granted

consent in 2008. A revised version to reflect the s73 approval was approved in March 2013 (DA/12/101452/EQCON). This document identifies the broad location and approximate disposition of land uses across the site.

Sat below the SWMP, the consent requires the submission and approval of an Area Master Plan (AMP) and an Area Design Code for each phase as development proceeds. Each AMP shall generally accord with the SWMP and provide greater detail on matters such as land use, building heights, density and indication of private/affordable sub areas. The Design Code follows on from the relevant AMP and should provide the necessary detail to inform final design, being such matters as: architectural style and treatment, surface finishes, materials pallets; building forms; soft landscaping.

An Area Master Plan for Castle Hill (the first of the three 'villages' in Eastern Quarry) was approved in March 2008 (DA/07/01326/EQCHC). Following amendments to land use at the eastern end of the site, this has been varied by two further AMPs. An AMP for Castle Hill East was approved in 2013 (DA/13/00422/EQCHC) and the AMP for Castle Hill Central approved in 2014 (DA/14/00584/EQCHC). The latter covers the area encompassed by this proposal. For the most part, the area is designed to be low to medium density residential development of up to 3 storeys, with the density and scale rising up to 6 storeys along the Fastrack frontage.

The Area Design Code for this site was originally approved in 2013 ahead of the Ward development (DA/13/00440/EQCHC). This extensive document sets out the detail to which the final submissions should generally accord. A revision has been submitted to incorporate detail relating to the Fastrack frontage which was previously excluded (DA/15/1103/ECCDNA). Included in this recent submission is a new section on the shared pedestrian/cycleway surface to the north of the Fastrack bus route and a suggestion of a slight reduction in height across the Castle Hill site, notably revising the maximum height along Fastrack to 5 storeys. This new Design Code reflects the application under consideration and is anticipated to be approved ahead of Planning Committee.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The application has been advertised on site and in the press and by individual neighbour notification letters to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties. Highways England, KCC Highways, Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council, Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents Association, Dartford Borough Council Environmental Health, KCC Archaeology, Gravesham Borough Council, Kent Police, Southern Water and the Environment Agency have also been consulted.

KCC Highways: No objections. In case the road front plots 12-17 are not completed it is recommended that a temporary turning ahead be constructed to afford full access for refuse and emergency vehicles. Whilst Dartford Parking Standards state that tandem parking may be used, nevertheless increased on-street parking is likely to be a consequence. In respect of cycle parking for the apartments, I would recommend that more information should be provided in order to demonstrate that the indicated cycle racks could be used satisfactorily within the room indicated.

Gravesham Borough Council has raised no objections.

One response letter of objection has been received from a neighbouring resident in Phase 1 raising an objection if this development was to be accessed primarily from his road and the consequent noise and general disruption arising.

Officer comment: The routes to this development have been established by the existing consents, this development would be primarily accessed by the Main Street North and Fastrack, one internal link road links this site and the Ward site but this is not anticipated to give rise to significant levels of traffic and noise.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy & Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Policy Guidance

Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy (2011)

CS1 Spatial Pattern of Development
CS4 Ebbsfleet to Stone Priority Area
CS5 Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site
CS10 Housing Provision
CS11 Housing Delivery
CS14 Green Space
CS15 Managing Transport Demand
CS17 Design of homes
CS18 Housing Mix
CS19 Affordable Housing
CS23 Minimising Carbon Emissions
CS25 Water Management
CS26 Delivery and Implementation

Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011)

T23 Parking
T27 Pedestrians and the Environment
B1 New Development

Other Guidance

Parking Standards SPD

PLANNING APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The outline planning permission requires, via the accompanying s106 legal agreement, the provision of 25% affordable on-site and 5% off-site affordable

housing contributions as part of the approved 6,250 dwellings. These affordable units are to be delivered in keeping with paragraph 3.1 which seeks the provision of 156 affordable housing units by the first occupation of 930 market units at the latest. Paragraph 3.2, Schedule 3 seeks to ensure that there is a proportional spread of affordable housing across the site, starting at 25% of market units, when 10% of the affordable units will have to be delivered (at 50% market, 30% affordable; at 75% market, 60% affordable).

The quantum of housing currently envisaged for Castle Hill is approximately 1500 units, somewhat below the numbers anticipated within earlier consented documents (a maximum of 2850 units was envisaged by the Castle Hill AMP – excludes Ward site). This revision in the quantum for the site took shape following a review in 2013 of the best marketable mix and developable area which showed that approximately 1500 units would derive the best land value and serve to generate the required developer interest following a prolonged period of inactivity at the site. Hence in order to satisfy the legal agreement 375 (25%) will be affordable at Castle Hill. In order to satisfy the above delivery targets, this proposal at 563 market units, 112 affordable units are required). This affordable housing provision will be monitored during the course of the development.

The Castle Hill Central Area Masterplan and subsequent Castle Hill North Area Design Guide form part of the comprehensive strategy formulated by Dartford Council to establish a design vision for the site that could be maintained throughout the extensive build out period and guide construction as each part of the site is constructed. This proposal is required to fit within the established vision and reflect the detail of the aforementioned approved plans and documents.

The principle of residential development has been established by the aforementioned outline planning permission and approved Site Wide Master Plan (and subsequent revisions) plus the relevant AMP and Design Code. The submission by Circle Housing reflects the area excluded from the Affordable sub-area within the Castle Hill AMP. Policy CS5 of Dartford's Core Strategy states that applications for reserved matters will need to demonstrate that the proposals will not undermine the principles to be achieved across the site as set out in the outline consent.

Compliance with the Area Master Plan and Design Code

The current application site is located within an area which is primarily earmarked within the Masterplan and Design Code for low to medium density residential development being between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare (dph) across this site with the Fastrack portion at a higher density in excess of 75 dwellings per hectare. This proposal brings forward in the region of 72 dwellings per hectare, an average according with the expected density parameters. Likewise, the building heights reflect ranges set, being below the 3 storey maximum within the core of the development site and lower than the 5-6 storeys maximum anticipated along the southern edge facing Fastrack.

The street hierarchy established by the AMP and Design Code is reflected in this submission. The Code specified the street typologies in detail, namely specific

highways parameters for all roads, cycleways, footpaths and parking areas, this layout and the materials proposed are in accordance with those parameters.

There are 4 architectural themes in the Design Code for this part of Castle Hill, each one setting out the design principles for architectural composition expected for each area. These architectural themes aren't fixed and aren't intended to enforce a repetition of styles of the past but rather to act as a framework for design. The Code expects architects to, "*interpret traditional forms and details in a way that is sympathetic to the locale and that reflects the contemporary methods and materials available today.*" Policy B1 of the saved Local Plan requires a high standard of design in all development proposals and respect and integrate with their surroundings.

Plots A and B have their primary focus on the Fastrack frontage and as such fall under the character area defined as 'Fastrack Edge'. Fastrack is designed to be the signature route through the Eastern Quarry site, directly connecting Ebbsfleet Station to Bluewater via a 'Green Movement Corridor', characterised by its spacious width and a dedicated bus route and cycleway/footpath, alongside extensive tree planting and verges. In some ways, the built form along Fastrack is the most important part of this phase of development being the most public face of the new neighbourhood and it is hoped design at this location will represent a benchmark for future development to reflect. The Design Code seeks to ensure that the design of the buildings and space around fastrack to read as a single composition with presence and depth. A contemporary architectural approach preferred with an emphasis on strong building lines and repeating elements with individual buildings having a balanced and vertical proportions with vertical openings following definite rhythm. The material palette should encompass lighter colours to reflect the side wide chalk context, with white render, pale brick and light coloured timber boarding preferred.

Plot A is proposed to accommodate two blocks (split in part to secure level access across the site) providing 48 flats of affordable rented and shared ownership housing. The scale of the buildings at 4, rising to 5 storeys, is in accordance with the approved documents with the increased height at the south eastern edge reflecting the site's prominent position at the entrance to the second phase of Castle Hill. The scale of the block is reduced down to three storeys, with the buff brick predominating as it turns to face the Green Zone reflecting the more suburban housing form to the north. The two blocks will provide the urban form required on Fastrack, with the architecture achieving strong vertical rhythm through the repetitive use of materials, balconies and window openings.

The two predominant facing materials within these flat blocks and the one in plot B are a buff brick and granite coloured cement panels ordered into sections along the block frontages. The use of cement panels is not reflected in the Code, where white render is the preferred alternative to brick. However there are concerns about the longevity of render when used extensively in designs due to potential discolouring and staining leading to a reduction in visual quality and requiring repainting over the longer term. In addition budgets set for maintenance cannot be guaranteed to cover the cleaning/repainting of the rendered finish, particularly where there is a range of different owners across sites with different maintenance regimes. Fibre cement cladding retains its appearance for longer periods and it is felt that

ultimately its use offers a better opportunity to maintain the character and appearance of the development for the long term, hence a deviation from the Code is accepted.

Plot B is the largest of the three parcels at 1 hectare and covers three architectural themes: Fastrack; Garden Suburb Boulevard and Garden Suburb Core. As well as that, this plot sits at a transitional point between the residential core of the development and the Village Centre to the south of Fastrack. Levels fall from north to south with the units fronting Fastrack a storey lower than the housing to the north. A total of 56 units are provided in this zone, consisting of 17 apartments in 1 block and 39 houses. The proposal consists of two storey housing to the north with three storey housing and a four storey block of flats facing south. The scale of development within this plot complies with the AMP and the Design Code. Along Fastrack the flatted block lies east of the 12 semi-detached 3 storey townhouses (2 storey at the rear) and together they create the strong building line and rhythm envisaged for this space. The flats mimic in form and material of the 2 blocks in plot A and the townhouses are proposed to be constructed of brick with full height projecting bays to produce the required vertical emphasis.

At the rear of Fastrack are two large car parks supplying those residents on that route with the parking they need. Whilst in combination the scale is greater than hoped, their scale is needed to accommodate the numbers needed car parks in a location where secure off-street parking is not accessible off the Fastrack frontage. The applicant has proposed to soften impact through planting and composing a boundary treatment (small walls and timber fencing) which lends the space a more welcoming appearance.

Seven 2-storey houses are situated at the southern end of the Garden Suburb Boulevard, a street predominantly in the adjoining Charles Church development. The architectural theme here is a contemporary interpretation of early C20th 'metroland', predominantly inter-war suburban neighbourhoods which created "*a pleasingly calm and ordered street scene*" and the built form is suggested by the Code to generally consist of detached and semi-detached dwellings organised within tree lined streets. This design meets that requirement using bays and gable frontages in recognition of original Garden Suburb architecture. Facing material has been restricted to red brick and render, with roofs being finished with the required terracotta tiling except for some grey tiled roofs found on corner plots, a variation from the Code considered acceptable. Moreover, the appearance is in keeping with the Charles Church housing to the north and hence a consistent approach along this Boulevard is achieved.

The rest of the houses sit within the Garden Suburb core, similar in form to the Boulevard but with a more organic layout. The housing encompasses the detailing required and overall the design proposes the symmetry in form, scale and roofscape expected.

Plot C provides 21 two storey units and for the most part sits within the Garden Suburb Core and where the houses are generally in accordance with the approved documents expectations. Four units fall within a strip referred to as the 'Arts and Crafts edge' facing towards the Green Zone. The soft red bricks and orange/brown

roof tiles proposed will serve to reflect the Charles Church housing to the north and is comparable to the Ward Homes housing to the east.

Summary

The proposed scheme has succeeded in creating a scheme which responds to the variety of architectural themes established for this location and the house types and flats are devised to be in general accordance with the design vision for Castle Hill and with the principles of the original outline permission as required by Core Strategy policy CS5 and saved Policy B1.

Indicative materials have been given, which accord with the Design Code but specific details are still to be submitted for approval so that consistency throughout this scheme and the neighbouring proposals can be secured. These material details are recommended to be approved via planning condition.

Landscaping

The applicant has sought to integrate landscaping into a wider vision for development at this site. Along the Fastrack elevation Land Securities have submitted plans for a pedestrian and cycle route to the front of the Circle Housing scheme, an important component of the overall vision for Castle Hill (Ref: DA/15/01477/ECREM). Within this zone the space is proposed to have a linear park impression with space for seating and informal play alongside the cycleway/footpath and landscaping. The flats and housing sits behind this zone behind railings and planting, with the ground floor flats in plot B sitting higher (to accommodate level change) behind a wall and railing enclosing front balconies. The approach is considered in keeping with the Design Code, although the quality of boundary treatment whether it be materials or planting is vital and a condition is recommended to control full details. This will also serve to ensure consistency across the Castle Hill development. Within the core of the site the housing is set back behind shrubs and or grass to give the setting required and a number of trees have been proposed to break up parking spaces and help green the development.

Housing Standards

In March 2015 the Government introduced National Space Standards as part of a revised approach to provide technical standards to drive the provision of quality housing throughout the country. Where a local planning authority wishes to require and internal space standard they should only do so by reference in their Local Plan to the Nationally Described Space Standard. Dartford's Core Strategy policy CS17 required housing to provide internal spaces that are fit for purpose and have adequate internal storage space. Policy CS18 required developments to provide the maximum amount of practical proportion of homes built to Lifetime Homes standards. The Council's emerging Development Policies Plan will, in January 2016 commence its final round of consultation ahead of an Examination in Public by a Planning Inspector. As per previous versions this document states that dwellings should meet the nationally described space standards unless clearly shown to be unviable due to site specific circumstances (Policy DP8).

Unit Size (b=bed, p=person)	National Space Standard (sqm)	Proposed Internal Floorspace (sqm)	% floorspace versus National Standard	Number of dwellings proposed
1 bed flat	50	47	94	12
2b 3p flat	61	61	100	29
2b 4p flat	70	70	100	24
2b 3p	70	69	99	21
2b 4p	79	78	99	4
3b 4p (3 storey)	90	82	91	15
		90	100	8
3b 5p (3 storey)	99	96	97	6
4b 6p (3 storey)	112	112	100	6

As can be seen from the above table most of the dwellings meet the standard with those falling short only representing a small number and only by a small amount. Whilst disappointing the shortfall is accepted in the specific circumstances of this case, albeit the EDC will look towards these standards as they take on greater planning weight in future submissions, subject to viability or other site specific constraints.

The outline planning consent requires that 25% of all units at Eastern Quarry should be built to Lifetime Homes standards. The Core Strategy requires the applicant to provide the maximum practical proportion. At the same time that the Government introduced the space standards it introduced optional accessible housing and wheelchair standards and the Lifetime Homes standards were effectively ceased and subsumed into Building Regulations. All dwellings need to meet the Category 1 building regulations requirement. Category 2 (essentially former Lifetime Homes standards) is accessible and adaptable for a wide range of occupiers. Dartford's emerging policy DP8 states that new housing, *"that do not include any Category M4 (2) units for accessible and adaptable dwellings – or Category M4 (3) units for wheelchair adaptable dwellings – within each housing tenure should provide a robust justification, otherwise permission will not normally be granted."* All but 10 of the properties within this submission comply with the Category 2 standard, (87.5%). Two properties have been amended in response to EDC's request to provide more active side elevations which changed ground floor layout so that the ground floor WC is no longer capable of being converted to a shower/wet room. In addition 8 of the houses fronting Fastrack do not meet the standard. These split level units provide an insufficient lower ground floor area to provide a WC which is capable of being converted to a shower/wet room without further changes to land levels which would make these units unviable. Circle housing have substantially exceeded their requirements in this regard, however the lack of any lifetime units within the private part of this phase means that Land Securities will need to address any shortfall in future phases to meet the 25% target.

Saved Policy B1 of the Local Plan states that development should not materially detract from the amenity of adjoining properties and not give rise to the loss of daylight or sunlight to residential properties. The approved design code states that

there should be a minimum back to back distance of 21 metres between residential buildings and this proposal manages to achieve that requirement for the most part. Both Dartford's Core Strategy and the Development Policies Document require private amenity space or gardens of usable size and good quality. They don't specify minimum sizes but rather that they are readily accessible to residents, of a regular shape and have access to sunlight. The proposed development is successful in this regard. The scheme also serves to safeguard the amenity of future residents in terms of privacy and outlook.

Housing Mix

The outline permission secures 30% affordable housing provision of the total number of dwellings at Eastern Quarry with 25% to be provided on site. The consent stipulates that an indication of the affordable housing locations should be enshrined within the relevant Area Masterplans and in that sense this permission reflects that. The optimum tenure mix is for 20% of the overall units to be shared ownership and the other 5% affordable rented a figure reflected in the AMP, however, there is a greater number of affordable rent units as a proportion (42%) across this site. More shared ownership units will be located south of Fastrack to provide the final mix required.

Policy CS18 of Dartford's Core Strategy suggests a preferred mix of houses to flats over the plan period of 70:30 (of the 70% figure for houses 65% are 2-3 bedroom houses and the other 5% 4+beds). This development proposes almost 50% flats which is more than the policy requirement but reflects the location of much of the site along Fastrack where apartments are appropriate. Otherwise the mix is broadly consistent with policy and the shared ownership units will assist in people getting onto the property ladder.

Crime Prevention

In accordance with s.17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, due regard has been had to the need to secure design that helps avoid crime. It is considered that the layout and design of the scheme follows these principles in creating a safe and secure environment.

Fibre Optic Connection

Condition 30 of the outline consent requires that all homes be provided with broadband access prior to occupation and that an 'Action Plan' detailing that be submitted alongside a Reserved Matters submission. Whilst the applicant has stated that there will be broadband connection (BT to be the provider) there is no 'Action Plan' submission providing the programme and confirmation required. Accordingly a condition is recommended to be attached securing the submission and approval of such an Action Plan.

Noise

Condition 28 of the outline consent states that a detailed noise assessment be submitted alongside a reserved matters proposal where development abuts a

principal highway and detail any mitigation measures required to safeguard residential amenity. However, in order to secure a comprehensive approach in this regard (rather than piecemeal site by site submissions), the overall landowner Land Securities, have been requested to submit a Noise Assessment covering all principal routes and devise mitigation measures where required. This application is with the EDC (Ref: 15/01898) and out to consultation. It suggests that the noise impacts are not significant and that trickle vents and thermal double glazed windows would mitigate against potential noise levels. A condition is therefore recommended to secure the mitigation included in the noise assessment to afford future residents good levels of amenity.

Parking & Highways

Parking is provided through a mix of on-plot parking and off plot visitor spaces and some unallocated spaces. All flats have a single parking space and every house has at least one space on plot and most have two. The visitor parking is dispersed through the site so that there is availability for all groups of dwellings. Some on-street parking is also suitable for vans. In terms of numbers the quantum is in broad accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, Parking Standards and the Castle Hill Parking Management Plan approved in 2008. The latter stated that a provision of up to 2 spaces per dwelling in Castle Hill, this phase of the development coming as it does ahead of much of the public transport infrastructure. Whilst the parking numbers meet the requirement of the Parking Management Plan they show a slight shortfall in numbers compared to Dartford's updated standards when it comes to van spaces where 10% are required. The applicant has provided 5 van spaces in total. This represents a shortfall of 7 against Dartford's SPD. This shortfall is unfortunate but given the constraints imposed on this development through the inability to park on plot off two main frontages, parking space was constrained and it was agreed that some spaces be lost to accommodate the needs of future residents.

A cycle store is shown at the ground floor level of each of the three flat blocks apparently meeting the requirement for 1:1 cycle parking, however, there is no further detail to demonstrate that the bikes could be stacked to provide the requires numbers. In terms of the houses, sheds will provide the necessary storage although no elevations have been submitted. It is recommended that a planning condition be attached securing the detail needed to achieve full compliance with the standards.

All the roads would be built to adoptable standards including the private roads. A planning condition is recommended putting the onus on the applicant to maintain the parking courtyards.

The applicant's refuse strategy has been reviewed and accepted by KCC Highways, although further detail on the form of bin stores is required. The link road between this phase and the housing to the east will need to be in place prior to occupation to enable refuse and emergency vehicles to access plots 12-17. A condition is recommended to secure this prior to full occupation.

Other matters

The outline planning consent restricts some of the Permitted Development rights normally open to residents. Notably, permission is required for any works to roofs, new windows and no demolition of boundary walls, fences or other means of enclosure can take place. These restrictions will serve to retain the character of the area for the future.

Human Rights

The application has been considered in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998 and it is considered that the analysis of the issues in this case, as set out in this report and recommendation below, is compatible with the Act.

Public Sector Duty

In determining this application, regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set down in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in particular with regard to the need to –

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed development of 125 residential units complies with the framework of the Eastern Quarry outline planning permission and the approved Area Master Plan for Castle Hill and also follows the design rules set out in the Area Design Code. In the context of the existing planning policy framework, the proposal represents an acceptable development which will provide a high quality living environment for future occupiers and provides a positive and important step in the evolution of development at Eastern Quarry. This application is considered acceptable with regards the aforementioned development plan policies and is accordingly recommended for approval.

