

Site : Land at Penny Pots, Ongar Road, Stondon Massey, Essex CM15 0EA

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this submission is to seek to have the site included for residential development when the revised Plan (the Proposed Submission Document) is prepared, scheduled for release by Brentwood Borough Council for public consultation in early 2014.

2.0 Site Description

The site comprises a parcel of land beyond the telephone exchange accessed from a cul-de-sac road from Ongar Road, known locally as Exchange Way.

It forms part of the land holding of Penny Pots, Ongar Road.

The site comprises shrub / meadow / grassland.

The site area is approximately 0.25 hectares.

A plan is attached showing the site edged red.

3.0 Site Assessment

The existing pattern of development in the locality of the site comprises a mostly built up frontage in Ongar Road with Penny Pots barn being the last dwelling along this section of the road.

With the existing dwellings along Exchange Way, and the recently constructed dwelling fronting Ongar Road to the north of Penny Pots, whilst also noting the Telephone Exchange building, the site forms a natural termination and completion of the built development in this area.

The site is easily accessed from the pedestrian and vehicular driveway, Exchange Way.

I understand that proposed redevelopment for housing on the Telephone Exchange has been the subject of discussion for a number of years and that it is a real possibility, subject to British Telecom having no need for the site.

Any housing development would not have any impact on the amenities of the existing adjacent dwellings.

4.0 Proposals

It is proposed to build up to 7 dwellings on the site, as per the indicative number on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, although this would be re-assessed at the appropriate time.

5.0 Brentwood Borough Council's Assessment of the Site

Previous assessment of site locations for housing Borough wide was undertaken by Atkins Ltd.

The final report of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment was published in October 2011.

This site was assessed by Atkins, as site reference GO59.

The site has not been put forward as a preferred options site.

Indeed, no provision for new housing within Stondon Massey Parish has been included at all.

However, Atkins stated that the site, in terms of housing provision, is suitable, available and achievable.

Under its Suitability Criteria, it stated:-

"Development of this site would form a logical boundary to Stondon Massey, adjacent to the current settlement boundary. Stondon Massey is a village with limited services, new development in this location could enhance the viability of these services."

Under its Achievability criteria, it stated:-

"Yes. This site is within an attractive residential area. Connection costs to infrastructure and services is likely to be relatively low due to its proximity to existing residential development. Due to the size of the site it is likely to be brought forward by a small developer."

6.0 Analysis and comment on Brentwood Borough Council's Preferred Options for Consultation Document July 2013

- The Council have determined that up to 5600 new homes is the housing need for the next 15 years. However, the draft local plan proposed only 3500 new homes. Inclusion of this site will help to meet this shortfall.
- In the Brentwood Local Plan newsletter Issue 3 September 2013, the Council acknowledge that Government, through its Planning Inspectors, do not consider development in the Green belt a reason not to meet local housing need.

- Chapter 2, page 9, alternative Option 4: Dispersed Growth takes the view that it would be difficult to deliver sustainable growth due to a number of factors. These are cited as :
 - lack of sewage treatment capacity to the north of the Borough
 - limited public transport to serve development
 - poor access to services

None of these criteria are applicable to this small site or should prove a barrier to its development.

Stondon Massey has a number of services in the village, including shops, public houses etc. It is served by a bus route.

- In Policy DM12, the Council state that the NPPF should not be relied upon to formulate local Plan Policy.

This is an interesting approach by the Council, in that they note what the Government wishes but deliberately choose a different approach.

7.0 Other Relevant Matters

As stated no provision for any new dwellings, of any size, are proposed for Stondon Massey. Every village or settlement , of any size, needs an amount of new housing to accommodate the natural growth of the village, to provide for its residents.

How does the Draft Local Plan meet Stondon Massey's future housing need? No doubt the Parish will make their own comments and representations.

This site, and other sites like it, could be favoured by respondents, as less overall harm might be caused to the Green Belt, as it is a smaller site.

It is not accepted that the reasons for rejecting Alternative Option 4 – Dispersed Growth, are valid.

Whilst the Council state as part of their reasons for rejection that providing housing to all settlements would lead to a loss of Green Belt and detract from the quality and rural character of the Borough, this argument cannot be applied to this site, for the reasons stated.

Also the Council's consultants seem to have a different opinion on the suitability of this site.

They say that development of this site could enhance the viability of services in the village.

The Council however state that this type of development would be the least sustainable and the hardest to deliver. Quite possibly on some sites but not this one.

8.0 Conclusions

For the reasoning as outlined above, I believe it has been demonstrated that the site could be included as part of the Council's future housing provision for the forthcoming Plan period because it is suitable for inclusion as :-

it is adjacent to an existing 'built up' area of Stondon Massey,
it would form a natural boundary to the development of the existing settlement,
it was considered in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as being "suitable" and "achievable"
it would provided much needed housing provision for Stondon Massey

It's inclusion would not, with this particular site, change the character of the Green Belt or cause any damage to it.

Signed.....P A Scott 1st October 2013
MSc MRICS ABEng IHBC