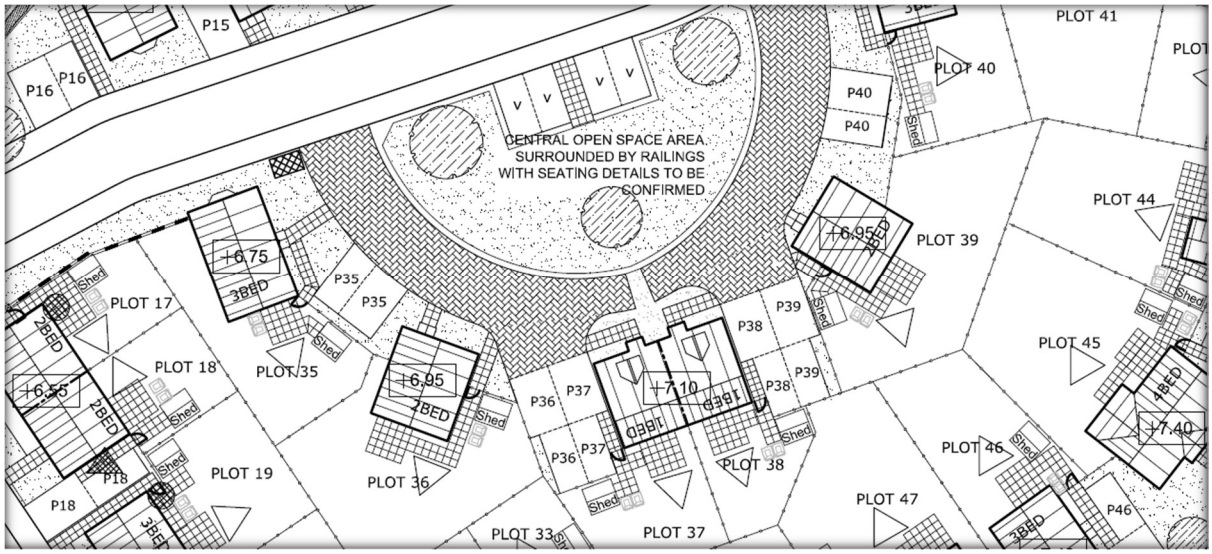
PlanSurv
Chartered Surveyors, Planning and Property Consultants

Design, Access, Planning and Cultural Significance Statement

Client: **The Havebury Housing Partnership**
Site: **Land south of Brick Lane, Mepal, Ely, CB6 2AH**
Date: **May 2020**



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1 Introduction

1.1 PlanSurv Ltd has been instructed by The Havebury Housing Partnership (the applicant) to prepare a Design, Access, Planning and Cultural Significance Statement to accompany an application for the following:

Erection of 55 dwellings, new access, estate roads, driveways, parking areas, open space, external lighting, substation and associated infrastructure on land south of Brick Lane, Mepal.

1.2 The proposal is intended to deliver 55 affordable dwellings with a mixture of tenures on the edge of the village of Mepal, addressing both the local and district wide need for affordable housing.

The Applicant – The Havebury Housing Partnership

1.3 The Havebury Housing Partnership is a not-for-profit affordable housing and social housing association which manages over 6,400 homes across the East of England.

1.4 The Havebury Housing Partnership works closely with local authorities, agencies and other housing associations to meet local social housing needs. The applicant is proposing to deliver a development of 100% affordable houses on the site with an approximate 45:55 tenure split between shared ownership and rented, with the intension of retaining and managing the properties, open space and shared surfaces. The continued involvement of Havebury in the site will ensure its long-term maintenance and a commitment to building a safe and welcoming community that integrates well with the village.

2 Context

Physical

2.1 The site, comprising 2.63ha, is located to the south of the village of Mepal, with Brick Lane forming the northern boundary, Sutton Road forming the eastern and southern boundaries while the A142 forms the western boundary. The site currently comprises an agricultural field south of Brick Lane. On the same side of Brick Lane there is an attenuation pond and a single residential bungalow which do not form part of the proposed development but have informed the layout and design of the proposal.

2.2 An existing belt of trees provides screening between the site, the A142 and Sutton Road, it is proposed to retained these trees where possible. Brick Lane comprises predominantly two-storey residential properties on its northern side with only the single dwelling, in the form of a bungalow, to the south at the junction of Brick Lane and Sutton Road.

2.3 It should be noted that while the application site currently adjoins the settlement boundary of Mepal it was contained, as an emerging allocation, within the Mepal chapter of the emerging Local Plan (2017) prior to its withdrawal, during the Examination in Public stage, by full council on 21 February 2019.

Socio-Economic

2.4 The proposed development is intended to deliver 55 affordable dwellings to the district providing much needed housing. The proposal will consist of approximately 45% shared ownership and 55% affordable rented properties to ensure the creation of a socially diverse community, which will assimilate into the wider Mepal community.

2.5 The addition of a further 55 dwellings and their associated disposable income to the village will both help support local services and facilities, while providing local people an opportunity to secure a dwelling in the village.

2.6 Correspondence with Kim Langley, of East Cambridgeshire District Council, confirmed that the housing need for East Cambridgeshire and Mepal specifically as at June 2019 was as follows:

- East Cambridgeshire: 530 applicants in total on the housing register:
  - preference for Mepal: 83 applicants;
  - local connection to Mepal: 11 applicants.

2.7 While it is acknowledged that the above figures do not take into account, supply, demand and up and coming developments, there are limited numbers of new dwellings being built in Mepal at the current time and very few new affordable dwellings. The proposal has the potential to address the local need of the 11 applicants on the housing register who have a specific connection to Mepal as well as helping to address the wider district need of which 83 applicants have expressed a desire to live in Mepal.

2.8 The proposal, therefore, has the potential to address an identified need for affordable housing in Mepal and the district as a whole, which should weigh heavily in its favour.

Planning History

2.9 The application site has not been the subject of any recent planning applications, however, the site was promoted through the call for sites and all subsequent rounds of the previous Local Plan Review. The emerging Local Plan, which has now been withdrawn following Examination in Public by the Secretary of State appointed inspector, included the site as an emerging allocation MEP.H1 with an indicative capacity of 50 dwellings. While the withdrawal of the previously emerging Local Plan means that the site's previously emerging allocation for residential development carries no weight, it does serve to demonstrate the sustainable nature of the location. The site is located in close proximity to the following facilities, which serve to demonstrate the sustainability of the location:

- Mepal and Witcham Primary School – 650m (7 minute walk);
- Mepal Village Hall – 480m (6 minute walk);

- St Mary's church – 650m (7 minute walk);
- bus stop at the junction with Brick Lane and Sutton Road (linking to March, Ely and Chatteris) – 140m (2 minute walk);
- recreation ground – 480m (6 minute walk);
- Three Pickerels public house – 1,200m (15 minute walk);
- post office and store – 480m (6 minute walk).

2.10 Further detail regarding the proximity to services and facilities is included in the Transport Statement that accompanies this submission

Planning Policy

2.11 Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions on planning applications be made in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.12 The plan-led system contains a hierarchy of national down to local policies. The following section explores how the application accords with relevant national and local policies and other material considerations. The Planning Policy documents to be considered within this section include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019; and
- East Cambridgeshire District Council – Adopted Local Plan (2015)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019

2.13 The NPPF represents a material consideration for the purposes of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the most relevant paragraphs are considered in more detail below:

Paragraph 7

2.14 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states; *'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*.

2.15 The proposed development seeks to make the efficient use of land on the edge of the village of Mepal with the intension of delivering 55 affordable dwellings across the shared ownership and rented tenures, comprising a range of dwelling sizes and types including a number of bungalows. The mix of tenures, styles and bungalows on the site ensures that the proposed development helps meet the immediate need for affordable housing in the village (11 dwellings) and the district (530 dwellings) as a whole,

enabling some residents to eventually own their own home while ensuring that 55% of the dwellings remain available for affordable rent in the long term. The proposal, therefore, meets the needs of the current generation, while ensuring affordable housing is available to future generations and should be supported.

Paragraph 8

2.16 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that; *'Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)'*:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity, and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'

2.17 The proposal seeks to deliver 55 affordable dwellings in a sustainable location on the edge of Mepal with a mix of dwelling sizes and affordable housing tenures, contributing to a strong, vibrant and healthy community. The proposal seeks to make efficient use of land with a proposed density of 20 dwellings per hectare compared to the 19 dwellings per hectare proposed as the indicative capacity within the previously emerging Local Plan (2017). The proposal will bring 55 new households to the village along with their disposable income helping to support the existing services and facilities, while the proximity of the site to public transport and cycle routes provides the potential for sustainable work trips.

2.18 The proposal has been designed in a way that ensures the properties are tenure blind and that they conform to the national internal space standards, while providing at least 50sqm of private amenity space in the form of gardens in accordance with the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide (2012). Public open space is provided throughout the site in three main locations; adjacent to Sutton Road, adjacent to

the A142 and centrally in the form of a pocket park; all of which benefit from natural surveillance. The design of the layout and buildings as well as the mix of dwellings and tenures will help to ensure a mixed community and an attractive and safe place to live.

2.19 The public open space as well as the buildings offer the potential for bio-diversity enhancements over and above the intensive agricultural use of the site. A detailed ecology survey and landscape planting plan accompanies the submissions and illustrates the planting and maintenance to facilitate the bio-diversity enhancement of the site, including but not limited to the provision of holes in the close boarded fences to allow hedgehog transit across the site along with the installation of bat and bird boxes on the buildings.

2.20 The proposal complies with the economic, social and environmental elements of sustainable development as set out in Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and should be supported.

Paragraph 10

2.21 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states; *'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph11)'*. The proposal, as demonstrated above, represents sustainable development and, therefore, there is a presumption in its favour, subject to other development plan policies.

Paragraph 11

2.22 Paragraphs 11 and criterion c) state that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Sustainable development should be approved unless the adverse impacts would *'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'* taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12

2.23 Paragraph 12 confirms that the development plan remains the starting point for decision making and that permission should not usually be granted where there is conflict with an up-to-date development plan, including any neighbourhood plans. It should be noted, however, that Paragraph 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does recognise that local planning authorities can depart from an up-to-date development plan if material considerations indicate that the plan should not be followed.

Paragraph 38

2.24 Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that; *'Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They*

should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'. The proposed development is located within a sustainable location on the edge of the village of Mepal and formed a previously emerging allocation in the Local Plan Review. The proposal meets the objective of sustainable development outlined in Paragraph 8 and reiterated in Paragraph 38 and should be supported.

Paragraph 39

2.25 Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages early engagement with stakeholders as part of the application process. In accordance with Paragraph 39 the application has undertaken the following consultations prior to the submission of the application, the comments from which are included in a separate Statement of Community Involvement that accompanies the application:

- East Cambridgeshire District Council – pre-application enquiry – 19 February 2019;
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Highways) – pre-application enquiry – 5 March 2019;
- Mepal Parish Council – attendance at parish meeting – 8 July 2019;
- public exhibition:
    - invitations sent – 6 September 2019 (consultation area agreed with East Cambridgeshire District Council);
    - exhibition held – 23 September 2019;
    - comments received – 4 October 2019.

2.26 The exhibition boards were delivered to the Mepal Parish Council so that they would be available at the next Parish Council meeting on 14 October 2019. Further consultation will be undertaken by East Cambridgeshire District Council following the submission of the application; for further information on the comments received and the response the reader is directed to the Statement of Community Involvement that forms part of this application.

Paragraphs 54, 55 and 56

2.27 In accordance with paragraphs 54, 55 and 56 and in accordance with the tests contained within Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 the application is accompanied by a draft set of Heads of Terms associated with a planning obligation to ensure the

provision of affordable housing as well as open space and any necessary highway improvements. All other matters can be dealt with by suitably worded conditions.

Paragraph 59

2.28 Paragraph 59 states that to support the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. Sufficient material considerations exist that further justify this application, which include but are not limited to the following:

- previously emerging allocation;
- withdrawal of the emerging plan during the Examination in Public;
- change of parish boundaries;
- delivery of housing in a sustainable location;
- delivery of affordable housing;
- historic undersupply of housing (market and affordable); and
- deliverability of the site.

Paragraph 124

2.29 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that; *"The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process."*. The proposal intends to deliver 55 affordable dwellings of high quality design and layout. The proposed dwellings have been specifically designed for the site, as the applicant does not use standard house types, to ensure that the proposal responds to the opportunities and constraints offered by the site, while creating a unique sense of place that is recognisably Mepal.

Paragraph 189

2.30 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires that the heritage assets within the vicinity of a development to be identified and the potential impact of the development on these assets to be assessed. A section on heritage is provided under section three of this document.

East Cambridgeshire District Council – Adopted Local Plan (2015)

Policy GROWTH 1: Levels of housing, employment and retail growth

2.31 Policy GROWTH 1 seeks to deliver 11,500 dwelling in East Cambridgeshire between 2011 and 2031; the proposed development of 55 dwellings will help the council meet its delivery targets, while ensuring, by legal agreement, that they are available on an affordable basis. The proposal, therefore, is in accordance with Policy GROWTH 1 and should be supported.

Policy GROWTH 2: Locational strategy

2.32 Policy GROWTH 2 seeks to focus growth to the market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport with more limited development in the villages. Mepal is described in the adopted Local Plan as *"… a small rural village on the East Cambridgeshire/Fenland border, six miles west of Ely"*. The village, situated off the A142, is less than 10m above sea level. The Old Bedford River and the New Bedford River (also known as the Hundred Foot Drain) run very close on the north-west side of the village. Mepal has a number of Listed Buildings including the 13th century church, notable as the only church in the Isle of Ely without either tower or spire. Facilities in the village include a shop and post office, church, chapel, public hall, public house, sports field, primary school, Mepal Community Pavilion and Mepal Outdoor Centre on the edge of the village. The village has a regular bus service which runs to Ely and Cambridge.

2.33 The village of Mepal is clearly a sustainable location, where development should be supported, given the level of services within the village and the public transport links to Ely and Cambridge. The proposed development represents a natural extension to the village surrounded as it is on all sides by the public highway in the form of Brick Lane, Sutton Road and the A142. The scale of the development represents the indicative capacity identified in the previously emerging Local Plan, subsequently withdrawn and is at a density suitable to its edge of settlement location, making efficient use of land, while maintaining a green, rural approach to the village.

Policy GROWTH 3: Infrastructure requirements

2.34 Policy GROWTH 3 requires the appropriate physical, social and green infrastructure to be in place to serve the needs of new development. The proposal will be subject to a Section 106 agreement and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to ensure that the proposal addresses its impact on the existing highway network, and village services and amenities; draft heads of terms accompany the application. In addition, on-site roads will be to adoptable standards and offered to the County Council for adoption. The public open space totals 3,578sqm and therefore exceeds the 3,462.30sqm required by the council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2013). The open space and play equipment will be retained and managed by the Havebury Housing Partnership. As the scale

of development exceeds the 20 dwelling threshold contained within Policy GROWTH 3 a local equipped area of play (LEAP) will be provided as part of the public open space.

Policy GROWTH 4: Delivery of growth

2.35 Policy GROWTH 4 seeks to allocate land for 6,500 dwellings on the edge of towns and villages. While the proposal did not form part of the allocations in the 2015 Local Plan it is adjacent to the settlement boundary of Mepal and formed an emerging allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan and was deemed to be a sustainable location for growth. It should be noted that while the emerging Local Plan was withdrawn the sustainability of the site for residential development identified therein remains current, as demonstrated above, and as such development in this location should be supported. The fact that the application is being made by a developer with a track record of delivering, maintaining and administering affordable housing sites should give the council comfort that the site will be delivered in a timely fashion in accordance with Policy GROWTH 4.

Policy GROWTH 5: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

2.36 Policy GROWTH 5 emphasises the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012), which has been superseded by Paragraph 11 of the NPPF 2019 where applications that accord with the Development Plan will be granted without delay. While the proposal is located outside of the adopted settlement boundary of Mepal, the principle and quantum of development in this location was accepted in the emerging Local Plan review, prior to its withdrawal, and should continue to prevail given the sustainable and deliverable nature of the site, which will meet some of the general demand for housing and specifically the need for affordable housing in the district.

Policy HOU 1: Housing mix

2.37 Policy HOU 1 of the Local Plan requires a range of house types and sizes to be provided that meet the housing needs within the local area. The intension is that the proposal will deliver 100% affordable housing of the following mix:

House Type	**Number**
1-bed House	6
2-bed House	17
2-bed Bungalow	5
3-bed House	16
3-bed Bungalow	5
4-bed House	5
5-bed House	1
Total	**55**

Policy HOU 2: Housing density

2.38 Policy HOU 2 seeks to ensure a density of development, which is appropriate to the site and its setting. The proposal represents a density of 20 dwellings per hectare, which is appropriate for the site's edge of village location, balancing the need to make efficient use of land and the needs of local character, bio-diversity, residential amenity, public open space, and connectivity.

Policy HOU 3: Affordable housing provision

2.39 The proposal is intended to deliver 100% of the 55 dwellings on site as affordable housing, in excess of the 30% required under Policy HOU 3. The tenure split is proposed to be roughly 45:55 shared ownership and rented, the details of the split are outlined below:

House Type	Tenure		Total
	Shared Ownership	Rented	
1-bed House	2	4	6
2-bed House	5	12	17
2-bed Bungalow	3	2	5
3-bed House	8	8	16
3-bed Bungalow	4	1	5
4-bed House	3	2	5
5-bed House	0	1	1
Total	**25**	**30**	**55**

Policy HOU 4: Affordable housing exception sites

2.41 Policy HOU 4 allows for development outside defined settlement boundaries for affordable housing, where a number of criteria are met. The proposal represents an exception site which seeks to address both the settlement's requirements for affordable housing as well as addressing some of the requirement for the district as a whole, it is useful to consider the proposal against the individual criterion:

- *There is an identified local need* – There is a need for 11 affordable dwellings within the village of Mepal with a further 83 households expressing an interest in living in Mepal, as recorded on the East Cambridgeshire Housing Register, as such the proposal will meet the local needs of Mepal as well as part of the need identified in the wider district.
- *The site is well related to a village* – The site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary of Mepal and formed a previously emerging allocation for housing in the recently withdrawn plan. The site is bounded on all sides by roads and forms a natural extension of the village with Brick Lane forming the northern boundary with residential properties on the opposite side of the road. Future residents will be able to walk into the village to access facilities via the existing public

footpaths. It should be noted that the changes to the parish boundary has brought the site within the Mepal parish boundary from the neighbouring parish of Sutton.

- *No significant harm would be caused to the character or setting of the settlement and the surrounding countryside* – The site forms the southern approach to the village and while its development will alter the appearance of the village the careful design, including the location of the open space towards the Sutton Road and the retention, where possible, for the existing screening vegetation, will ensure that the verdant entrance to Mepal is maintained. While the site is, for the purposes of planning, part of the open countryside it is an isolated field on the edge of the village cut off from the wider agricultural landscape by the A142 and the Sutton Road, therefore, it represents a logical extension of the village and its development represents no harm to the character of the village or that of the surrounding countryside.
- *The scale of the scheme is appropriate to the location and to the level of identified local affordable housing need* – While the proposal will address the identified need within the village for 11 affordable dwellings and is of a similar size to the previously emerging allocation the 55 affordable dwellings is in excess of the Mepal requirement. It should be noted, however, that of the 530 households on the housing register in East Cambridgeshire 83 have expressed a desire to live in Mepal. The proposal, therefore, seeks to address both the local and part of the wider district requirement for affordable dwellings.
- *The scheme incorporates a range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures appropriate to the identified local need* – The mix of dwellings and tenures is summarised above and is a product of discussions with Kim Langley, housing enabling officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council.
- *The affordable housing provided is made available to people in local housing need at an affordable cost for the life of the property* – The proposal is accompanied by draft Heads of Terms, which will form the basis of the planning obligation under Section 106 of the Act to secure the affordable nature of the properties, set out stair casing arrangements for the shared ownership units as well as the basis for the affordable rents.

2.42 The proposal complies with the principles of Policy HOU 4 contained in the associated bullet points and will help to deliver much needed affordable housing to the district.

Policy ENV 1: Landscape and settlement character

2.43 The proposed development has been designed so as to be sympathetic to and respects the capacity and character of the built and natural landscape. The proposed dwellings are between one and two storeys high with bungalows proposed around the existing single storey dwelling on Brick Lane, either

side of the new access and at the end of Brick Lane so as to respect the existing development, while creating a sensitive street scene to the southern side of Brick Lane. The existing boundary vegetation is to be retained, where possible, and enhanced as necessary as part of the proposal; although, the existing hedge along Brick Lane will be removed to facilitate a new access, further planting is proposed to the rear of the visibility splays. A detailed landscape plan, tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment (AIA), complete with tree protection measures accompany the submission, which conclude that *"overall there is little significant vegetation on or adjacent to the site with only poor quality vegetation in decline required to be removed"*. The vegetation that is to be retained is unlikely to suffer any material impact to the health or overall value given its location away from the construction areas.

Policy ENV 2: Design

2.44 The development has been designed in such a manner as to utilise materials and forms that exist within the village so as to complement the neighbouring development, while seeking to raise the quality of the design in the immediate vicinity. The proposed dwellings have been designed specifically for the site and are accompanied by a proposed materials schedule which will provide visual interest as part of the development and help to assimilate the proposals into the wider built form of Mepal.

Policy ENV 4: Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction

2.45 The development will seek to reduce carbon emissions through maximising the energy efficiency of the development through a fabric first approach and also incorporating low flow taps, dual flush toilets and other measures to ensure greater water efficiency, in accordance with Policy ENV 4. A sustainability statement accompanies this application and concludes; *"Through the utilisation of energy efficiency measures, the houses and bungalows in the Proposed Development will reduce overall carbon emissions against Building Regulations Part L 2013 by 2.72%".*

Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and geology

2.46 Policy ENV 7 requires development to protect the biodiversity and geological value of land and buildings and minimise harm to or loss of environmental features, such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, wetland and ponds. The proposal retains the existing boundary planting between the site and the A142 and Sutton Road, however, in order to facilitate a new access, the existing hedge along Brick Lane will have to be removed and replacement planting provided behind the visibility splays. A tree survey and ecology survey accompany the application, which demonstrate that the hedge is of low arboricultural and ecological value. The landscape planting plan coupled with the proposed mitigation measures outlined in the ecology report, including the retention of the existing boundary hedgerows and plantation woodland, where possible, landscaping the peripheral areas using native species and the incorporation of bat and bird boxes on the new buildings – particularly those facing the retained woodland in the

southwest sector of the site, will help ensure that the bio-diversity of the site is maintained and enhanced, over and above its use as intensive agriculture, in accordance with Policy ENV 7.

Policy ENV 8: Flood risk

2.47 The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 as identified on the Environment Agency's flood maps for planning and as such is at low risk of flooding. A detailed site specific flood risk and SuDS assessment accompanies this submission and concludes that the proposed drainage system provides adequate treatment to the surface water runoff from the site and that it has sufficient capacity to accommodate the *"… water for the 1 in 100 year storm with 40% climate change …"*.

2.48 The foul flows will be directed into the existing foul pumping station located approximately 40m north of the site and while Anglian Water has been contacted their response is awaited at the time of writing.

Policy ENV 9: Pollution

2.49 Paragraph 6.10.2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan (2015) states that; *"... air quality in the district is generally good and there are no designated National Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)"*. Policy ENV 9 requires all development to; *"… minimise, and where possible, reduce all emissions and other forms of pollution, including light and noise pollution, and ensure no deterioration in air and water quality"*.

2.50 Given the proximity of the A142 and the level of traffic using the road an assessment of air quality on site accompanies the application and concludes that with the appropriate mitigation measures, including a construction environment management plan, which could be secured by a suitably worded condition, the residual impacts of the construction phase on air quality will be negligible. With respect to the operational phase of the development the air quality assessment concludes that the development will not have a significant effect on air quality. With regards future residents the assessment concludes that future residents are unlikely to be exposed to NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ above acceptable levels and as a result the proposal accord with Policy ENV 9 and should be supported.

2.51 External lighting will be kept to the minimum required for safety and the adoption of the roads and extra care will be taken to ensure that the proposals do not result in excessive light spill in to the landscape buffer in accordance with the recommendations of the ecology report, which also accompanies this submission.

Policy ENV 14: Sites of archaeological interest

2.52 In accordance with Policy ENV 14 an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been agreed with the County Council and the intrusive works in the form of trial trenching has been undertaken. The post excavation evaluation report accompanies the application and concludes that; *"…*

while any land on Fen Islands has the potential to contain archaeological remains due to dry land being scarce (Bray 1997, 5) … it appears that the land to the south of Mepal village was primarily used for agriculture". In light of the above conclusions no additional archaeological investigations are proposed and the impact on below ground archaeology will be low.

Policy COM 7: Transport impact

2.53 A detailed transport statement accompanies the application in accordance with Policy COM 7. The report concludes that while the proposal is likely to result in 504 traffic movements per day it meets with the aims and objectives of Local and National Transport Planning Policy and would not have a significant impact on the local transport network as no single road link receives more than 500 additional trips per day with the exception of Brick Lane.

Policy COM 8: Parking provision

2.54 Car and cycle parking spaces are provided in accordance with Policy COM 8 with two car parking spaces per dwelling along with one visitor space per four dwellings. A minimum of two cycle parking spaces can be accommodated in the secure garden sheds of the properties.

Sutton Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

2.55 While a recent change to the parish boundaries has resulted in the site being included in Mepal Parish the site is included in the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in 2019. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan the site is unallocated and forms part of the open countryside for the purposes of determining the application, however, there are other materials considerations that would justify a departure from the development plan in this instances, regardless of the tests set out in Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, including but not limited to:

- delivery of 55 affordable dwellings;
- undersupply of affordable dwellings across the district;
- previously emerging allocation for approximately 50 dwellings;
- recent parish boundary change;
- proximity to existing settlement; and
- proximity to existing facilities.

2.56 In light of the above and in accordance with Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework the proposed development should be supported as an exception site and in light of the other material considerations that should be given significant weight when determining this application.

3 Cultural Significance

3.1 There are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site, however, the proposed development will enhance and improve the entrance to the village whilst providing development opposite that north of Brick Lane that reflects the established residential grain at this end of the village.

3.2 The potential for below ground archaeology has been investigated and nothing of significance has been found to suggest that the site has been used for anything other than agriculture into antiquity. In light of the above the proposed development will have a **neutral impact** on the designated and non-designated heritage assets in the district and their settings.

4 Proposal

4.1 The proposal is to erect of 55 dwellings, new access, estate roads, driveways, parking areas, open space, external lighting, substation and associated infrastructure on land south of Brick Lane, Mepal. It is the applicant's intention to provide all units for affordable housing across a mix of tenures.

5 Design

5.1 The design of the proposed dwellings respond positively to the site, taking into account the site specific constraints as well as the character, form and materials used in the existing settlement. Consequently, the dwellings are of a traditional one and two storey form with open front and enclosed rear gardens, utilising a range of building materials but predominantly brick, tile and render as is commonly found in the vicinity.

5.2 The design has created a number of character areas as follows:

- Brick Lane frontage and entrance – presents a strong frontage development to the south of Brick Lane opposite those residential properties to the north. The street scene contains two storey dwellings at its centre and single storey dwellings at either end with a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings that reflect the existing character of development to the north.
- Area around the existing bungalow – predominantly single storey dwellings of two and three bedrooms to respect the scale and residential amenity of the existing residents. The character area provides a gentle transition to the built form as you travel along the Sutton Road, which has already been established, passing the open space and then single storey dwellings as the road comes down to meet the same level as the site.
- Properties fronting the open space along Sutton Road – the larger family homes front the open space creating natural surveillance of the area, while presenting an animated street scene to the

Sutton Road, creating a vegetated approach to the village with residential development beyond, as requested during the pre-application discussions with East Cambridgeshire District Council.

- Properties fronting the A142 – the properties facing the A142 have been set back with the existing vegetation retained, further vegetation proposed, parking areas and the estate road between the properties and the A142. Properties in this location have been designed to have non-habitable rooms closest to the A142 or dual aspect rooms at first floor to provide residents with the opportunity to open a window on the less noisy side should the need arise overnight, while maintaining internal noise standards. A detailed noise assessment accompanies the application and should be referred to for more detail.
- Central crescent – provides a focal point of visual interest both in terms of the built form as well as a pocket park that will aid legibility and provide a useful reference and or meeting point for residents of the development.

Appearance

5.3 The appearance of the dwellings reflect the local character, vernacular style and materials pallet to ensure that the site sits comfortably as an extension to the existing village.

Materials Pallet

Surface	Materials	Type
Walls	Brick	Wienerberger Aldbury Multi
		Wienerberger Renaissance Multi
		Buffburn Buff Multi
		Wienerberger Hatherage Blend
	Render	K rend Linen
		K rend Mink
	Cladding	James Hardie Plank Grey (windows to compliment)
		James Hardie Plank Grey (windows to compliment)
Roof	Tiles	Redland Duoplain Tile Rustic Red
		Redland Fenland Pantile Farmhouse Red
		Sandtoft Dark Grey Shire Pantile

		Sandtoft Britlock Slate Graphite
Doors	Doors	White UPVC
		Cream UPVC
		Grey UPVC
Windows	Windows	White UPVC
		Cream UPVC
		Grey UPVC

Use

5.4 The proposed development will be used for residential use and those uses ancillary to the enjoyment of dwelling houses.

Layout

5.5 The external layout of the proposed dwellings is illustrated on the proposed site layout plan, drawing reference: 355_P_01 (Rev N). The development is accessed from Brick Lane with the access framed by two detached bungalows with a building of architectural emphasis designed as a one off in the development creating the visual backstop and legible cue for navigating the site. The right-hand arm of the access road turns through ninety degrees and passes a strong street scene of detached and semi-detached dwellings with a pocket park and crescent forming the southern street scene. The road then turns left through ninety degrees with residential properties on the left with parking and landscape planting forming the boundary with the existing vegetation along the A142. The road turns through ninety degrees again before terminating in a residential mews-style development arranged around a central parking area.

5.6 The left-hand arm of the access road is characterised by the single storey development on the left before encountering the large area of open space fronted by detached family homes providing natural surveillance of the space as well as a street scene to the Sutton Road.

5.7 The use of character areas, focal buildings, varying building heights and open spaces aid the legibility of the space, provide visual interest and animation to the development creating a real sense of place, which should be supported.

Amount

5.8 The proposal will result in the provision of 55 dwellings the schedule of which is provided below:

Plot Schedule				
House type code	**House type**	**Size**	**Plot numbers**	**Quantity**
1BHT/01	1-bed house – semi-detached	58m^2	29, 30, 31, 32, 37, 38	6
2BHT/01	2-bed house – semi-detached	79m^2	3, 4, 12, 13, 14, 15	6
2BHT/02	2-bed house – detached	79m^2	36, 39, 43	3
2BHT/03	2-bed house – semi-detached	79m^2	27,28	2
2BHT/05	2-bed house – semi-detached and terrace	70m^2	17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26	6
3BHT/01	3-bed house – semi-detached	93m^2	5, 6, 10, 11, 33, 34	6
3BHT/02	3-bed house – detached	94.9m^2	41	1
3BHT/03	3-bed house – detached	94.2m^2	9, 16, 35, 40, 46	5
3BHT/05	3-bed house – semi-detached	88.5m^2	19, 20, 21, 22	4
4BHT/01	4-bed house – detached	113.1m^2	45, 48	2
4BHT/02	4-bed house – detached	112.9m^2	42, 47	2
4BHT/03	4-bed house – detached	109.3m^2	44	1
5BHT/01	5-bed house – detached	128.9m^2	49	1
2BBT/01	2-bed bungalow – semi-detached	61.7m^2	7, 8, 50, 51	4
2BBT/02	2-bed bungalow - detached	70m^2	2	1
3BBT/01	3-bed bungalow - detached	74m^2	1, 52, 53, 54, 55	5
Total				**55**

Scale

5.9 The proposed dwellings are residential in scale being between one and two storeys in height and taking their cues from the nearby dwellings to ensure that the proposal is appropriate to its immediate setting and the wider village of Mepal.

Landscape

5.10 The existing vegetation will be retained where possible, although it will be necessary to remove a section of hedgerow in order to facilitate a new access via Brick Lane. Additional planting will create an attractive development that is screened from the A142. A detailed landscape planting plan accompanies this application and demonstrates the proposed treatments of the communal areas as well as their installation and maintenance.

6 Access

6.1 Vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access will be via a new access on to Brick Lane and a detailed transport statement accompanies this application, which concludes that the proposed development is in accordance with the aims and objectives of Local and National Transport Planning Policy and would not have a significant impact on the local transport network.

6.2 During the course of the public consultation process a number of alternative access points were suggested along Sutton Road, however, following further investigations with the County Council regarding speed limits, required visibility splays, the change in levels and the bend of the road the Brick Lane access has proved to be the most appropriate solution.

6.3 The dwellings have been designed in such a manner that they have at grade access and have the ability to be adapted to meet the changing needs of residents throughout their lifetime.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The development represents a sensitively designed proposal that respects the edge of rural village location, while making efficient use of the land.

7.2 The proposal delivers much needed affordable housing to Mepal and the wider district where there is a recognised under supply both in terms of housing generally but affordable housing in particular.

7.3 The proposal is in accordance with adopted local and national planning policy. Furthermore, the benefits of the proposal, including material considerations, outweigh any possible conflicts and as such the development should be supported without delay.