

**Development Control (Hetton, Houghton & Washington)  
Sub-Committee**

**19 December 2012**

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## **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON APPLICATIONS**

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### **REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is circulated a few days before the meeting and includes additional information on the following applications. This information may allow a revised recommendation to be made.

#### **LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS**

Applications for the following sites are included in this report.

Houghton, Hetton  
& Washington

S1	Elba Park, Former Lambton Cokeworks, Lambton Lane (VAR)
S2	Elba Park, Former Lambton Cokeworks, Lambton Lane (FUL)

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Number:	S1
Application Number:	12/02339/VAR
Proposal:	Variation of condition 6 of 09/02328/REM to change fenestration, materials and elevations of house types (Plots 203-225 and 228-306). Amended Description 04/10/12.
Location:	Elba Park, former Lambton Coke Works, Lambton Lane, Houghton le Spring

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Further to the Agenda report further consideration has been given to recently submitted amendments. For the purposes of this Supplement report the main issues to consider in the assessment of this application are:

1. Principle of the use
2. Design considerations
3. Highway considerations
4. Other considerations

1. Principle of the use

As explained in this item's main Agenda report planning permission for the reclamation of the former Cokeworks site was granted by Development Control Sub Committee in October 1998 (ref. 98/01135/LAP). This was then followed by an outline planning application in 2006 for 350 dwellings (ref. 06/00843/OUT) that was approved by Development Control Sub Committee in May of that year.

Phase 1 of this 350 dwelling development, comprising of 96 dwellings, was granted consent in September 2009 (ref. 09/02185/REM), whilst Phase 2, which this application site forms part of, and which accounts for the remaining 254 dwellings, was granted consent in December 2009 (ref. 09/02328/REM). It is therefore clear that given this recent planning history residential development is now firmly established on this site.

Furthermore, the reclamation of the site and its subsequent redevelopment was created in order to bring significant regeneration benefits to the coalfield community. For this reason, it was included in the National Coalfields Programme in 2002 by English Partnerships, now the Homes & Communities Agency. In order to help pay for the reclamation of the site it was recognised that some form of built development would be required on the site. An economic appraisal in 2002 concluded that a scheme with approximately 12ha of housing (overall Elba Park is 11.8ha) was considered to be the best value for money under then Government's criteria.

In conclusion, as this proposed variation application is only seeking to alter the fenestration arrangement of the previously approved house types and as there are considered to be no significant changes to the planning policy context which would undermine the established residential use associated with the site, the principle of residential development remains acceptable.

## 2. Design considerations

In assessing the design merits of the scheme Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policy B2 requires the scale, massing and layout of new developments to respect and enhance the best qualities of the area.

From a design perspective, and in light of receiving no objection from the Homes & Communities Agency, the principle of changing the fenestrations of the house types to a more traditional style within this particular phase of Elba Park is considered to be on balance acceptable. Nevertheless, in order for the proposal to be fully acceptable, it is considered essential that a more coherent transition is achieved between the contemporary phase, which accounts for two thirds of Elba Park, and the proposed traditional phase of development. In light of this the applicant was requested to re-consider their approach to the proposed fenestration alterations.

In response amended plans were submitted which now introduce artstone banding and contrasting brick infills around and within ground floor and first floor window openings to three of the proposed house types. This approach mirrors the cladding and wood panelling detail on the contemporary house types. The applicant also re-iterated the fact that the traditional elevations will also benefit from rendered elements in order to complement those contemporary house types which also incorporate render within their fenestration.

In light of the proposed amendments it is considered that the applicant has achieved a more appropriate transition between the contemporary and traditional house types. Furthermore, and as reported in this item's Agenda report, the Homes & Communities Agency have also consented to the proposed variation

In conclusion, as all other matters remain as previously approved i.e. scale, massing and layout, and in light of the amendments submitted by the applicant, it is considered that the proposed variation is acceptable in respect to design considerations and is therefore in accordance with policy B2 of the UDP.

## 3. Highway considerations

UDP policy T14 requires new development to be readily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, whilst proposals should not cause traffic congestion or highway safety problems and make appropriate safe provision for access and egress.

As discussed in the design consideration section of this report the layout of the development remains as approved by 09/02328/REM. In highway engineering terms the 09/02328/REM application was approved as it was considered that vehicular access to the site, via the link to the Central Route to the west via Phase 1 and the connection via the proposed Blind Lane link, would provide satisfactory and safe access. Furthermore, cycle way provision, parking and visibility splays were all considered to be acceptable.

In response to this planning application's consultation engineering colleagues in Street Scene (Network Management) have offered no observations or recommendations. It is therefore considered that the variation of house types is considered to be acceptable from a highway engineering perspective.

#### 4. Other considerations

Further to condition 6, which this application seeks to vary, planning application 09/02328/REM was also subject to 8 other conditions. The first condition restricted permitted development rights for the dwelling houses and for consistency and in recognition that this variation application only forms part of Phase 2; it is considered that this condition should remain on the variation approval, if Members are minded to approve. The second condition of 09/02328/REM also restricted permitted development rights to alter the cladding and render system of the approved dwelling houses, and in view of render being proposed on a number of plots affected by this variation application, it is considered appropriate to re-impose this condition.

Regarding conditions 3 (“Green Route” footpath link), 5 (Management of Surface Water) and 7 (Eastern Gateway Feature) these have all been formally discharged following the approval of 09/02328/REM via the submission of the required information by the applicant. Accordingly, if Members are minded to approve, it is considered that these pre-commencement conditions should be re-worded so they require the development to be built in accordance with the agreed details.

Finally conditions 4 (in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment) and 8 (Noise Attenuation) require the development to be built in accordance with the 09/02328/REM approved details and as such it is considered appropriate to impose these conditions on the variation approval, should Members be minded to approve. It is also considered appropriate to include an additional condition pertaining to the commencement of development within three years of the date of this approval, if Members are so minded.

#### Conclusion

In light of the fact that this application is seeking to only vary the approved elevations and as the siting and layout of the development will remain as approved it is considered that the submitted amendments ensure an acceptable transition with the contemporary phases of Elba Park and as such the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions detailed in the ‘Other Considerations’ section of this report.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve subject to conditions

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Number:	S2
Application Number:	12/02340/FUL
Proposal:	Alterations to the housing layout to involve: Substitution of housetypes affecting 6 plots (194, 200, 201, 202, 226 & 227), minor relocation of 2 plots (203 & 204) and construction of an electricity substation. Amended Description 04/10/12.
Location:	Elba Park, former Lambton Coke Works, Lambton Lane, Houghton le Spring

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Further to the Agenda report further consideration has been given to recently submitted amendments by the applicant. For the purposes of this Supplement report the main issues to consider in the assessment of this application are:

1. Principle of the use
  2. Design and Residential Amenity considerations
  3. Highway considerations
  4. Other considerations
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1. Principle of the use

Similar to the previous item on this Supplement (ref. 12/02339/VAR) the plots which are subject to this planning application are located within Phase 2 of the Elba Park development. The proposal is not seeking to increase the overall number of dwellings on this development but simply to relocate and reposition previously approved plots within Phase 2. Consequently, in terms of the principle of the development and as discussed in further detail in the first item on this supplement, as residential development is firmly established at Elba Park and given that there are considered to be no significant changes to the planning policy context which would undermine the established residential use, the principle of residential development remains acceptable.

2. Design and Residential Amenity considerations

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy B2 also requires proposals to provide for an acceptable amount of privacy amenity, whilst also protecting visual and residential amenity.

In terms of understanding the design considerations associated with this proposal it is important to note that the scheme involves relocating two detached properties (Plots 227 & 228) from the northern section of Phase 2, across the road that runs through the middle of Elba Park, to the southern section of the site. As a consequence the two pairs of semi-detached properties (Plots 194 & 195 and 201 & 202) which the detached units are displacing are being relocated in their respective places in the northern section of Phase 2.

In order to assimilate with the traditional design, as discussed in detail in the first item, the two pairs of semi detached properties will incorporate a traditional fenestration arrangement, while the two detached properties will retain their contemporary design. Furthermore, even though the layout of the development is being altered it is considered to be very minor in nature and at no material consequence in respect of the development overall.

Regarding the location of the substation to the rear of Plot 179 it is noted that this will reduce the garden area associated with this property, however it is not considered to be to such a degree as to constrain its curtilage. Furthermore, the substation will be located immediately adjacent to two detached garages for Plots 177 & 178 and as such will not materially impact the development in terms of street scene or residential amenity considerations.

The spacing implications of repositioning the six plots affected by this proposal are not considered to be materially significant to that which was approved by 09/02328/REM. The siting of the dwelling houses are essentially similar to that previously approved and are in general accordance with the 14m and 21m spacing standard required by the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

In conclusion, the proposed repositioning and relocation of the six plots within Phase 2 and the erection of the electricity substation is considered to be acceptable in respect to design and residential amenity considerations, in accordance with policy B2 of the UDP.

### 3. Highway considerations

UDP policy T14 requires new development to be readily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists, whilst proposals should not cause traffic congestion or highway safety problems and make appropriate safe provision for access and egress.

Initially the application involved altering in total eleven plots within Phase 2. However, as a consequence and following the consultation response from engineering colleagues in Street Scene (Network Management) attention was drawn to the applicant that the first iteration of the proposal would see the loss of a Visitor Parking (VP) space to the south of Plot 228. It was also noted that the proposal would increase the number of properties to the end of this cul-de-sac from two to four and as such result in approximately 13 properties being served by only 1 VP. This was considered to increase the likelihood of vehicles parking within the turning head.

Furthermore, the proposal was also repositioning Plot 183's allocated parking space so that it was further removed from the main dwelling and as such there were concerns that this parking space would be less likely to be used. It was therefore considered that the proposal was undesirable from a highway safety and residential amenity perspective

In response the applicant has submitted amended plans which have reduced the number of plots being altered by the proposal. It is considered that this approach provides for a layout which is similar in character to that which was approved via 09/02328/REM. Namely, the number of affected plots is now reduced from eleven to only six and as such enables the retention of the two VP to the south of Plot 228, whilst the parking space associated with Plot 183 is being retained in its already

approved position. Consequently the amended plans are now considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policy T14.

#### 4. Other considerations

Similar to the Other considerations section from item 1 and as the plots affected by this development are all located within Phase 2, it is considered that in the interests of consistency and to ensure a coherent set of permissions, should Members be minded to approve, the conditions placed upon the approval of 09/02328/REM should also be carried through to this approval, and where necessary re-written i.e. in respect to the discharged conditions (3, 5 and 7) from the 09/02328/REM approval. It is also considered appropriate to include an additional condition pertaining to the commencement of development within three years of the date of this approval, if Members are so minded.

#### Conclusion

The proposal is considered to be acceptable from a design and residential amenity perspective whilst the amendments submitted ensure that the highway engineering implications are essentially the same as approved via 09/02328/REM and as such the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions detailed in the 'Other Considerations' section of this report.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve subject to conditions