

Rear of 41 Fanshawe Street, Bengoe, Hertford, SG14 3AT: Ref: 3/20/0158/FUL

1. The Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan Community Steering Group are responding to the proposal for 2 new dwellings to the rear of 41 Fanshawe Street, Bengoe. This proposed development falls within the boundary of the Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan. The public consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan completed in September 2019 and the Regulation 15 Submission will now be reviewed by East Herts District Council.

Important Views

2. Neighbourhood Plan Policy HBN3: Important Views (previously titled Landscape Views) proposes eight views for protection, one of which is View 5: Beane Marshes towards Molewood from Beane Road bridge. During the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan consultation, residents expressed support for this policy, and for the protection of View 5. Paragraph 4.22 of the Neighbourhood Plan describes View 5 as follows:

'The panorama to the north and northeast takes in the River Beane and its floodplain, a rare example of a naturalised water meadow that has significant amenity and biodiversity value and provides a strong landscape setting for Bengoe's historic settlement on the hill.'

3. The 'settlement on the hill' referred to in this description includes the dwellings in Molewood Road, Wellington Street and Fanshawe Street. The rear of number 41 Fanshawe Street is visible from View 5 but it's unclear from the Design and Access Statement, prepared by James Lambert Architects Ltd., whether the proposed new dwellings would also be visible.
4. Policy HBN3: Important Views states that development should:
 - protect the character, integrity and amenity of the local landscape
 - not be permitted if proposals fail to conserve, protect (and, where appropriate) improve the local landscape

As the architecture of the proposed dwellings would be of a significantly different shape and style to the surrounding buildings, an assessment of the impact of this proposed development on View 5 should be provided. If a harmful impact is identified, development should only be permitted where appropriate mitigation measures can be delivered.

Mitigating the impact of development on local roads

5. Throughout consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, residents expressed considerable concern about the impact of development on congested local roads, particularly in Lower Bengoe (which includes Fanshawe Street). Paragraph 4.57 of the Plan states:

'It's essential that development proposals demonstrate how the impact of more vehicles on congested roads will be mitigated.'
6. Through its sustainable travel policies and Action Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to improve the long-standing issue of traffic congestion in the Plan Area. Although this proposed development is small scale, it

would add to the pressures on local roads and, if approved, would raise concerns that a precedent would be set for further development in the already congested Lower Bengoe area.

Car parking provision

7. Paragraph 6.2.2. of the Design and Access Statement indicates that a total of 6 parking spaces are proposed for the two new 4-bedroom houses and the existing detached house. At the March 2019 Neighbourhood Plan policy exhibition, more concerns were raised about parking pressures on local roads than any other issue. The parking standards in Neighbourhood Plan Policy HBH2: Design and Layout are set at two off-road parking spaces per dwelling, plus visitor parking. No provision for visitor parking is proposed in this planning application and this would place additional and unacceptable parking pressures on Fanshawe Street.

Cycle Parking

8. We note that paragraph 6.5.1. of the Design and Access Statement says that '*cycles can be securely locked outside each house*'. There's no indication of how much cycle storage space will be provided, or whether it will be covered. Criterion 1 c) in Neighbourhood Plan Policy HBH3: Landscape Design states that landscaping schemes should incorporate:

'sufficient, secure, covered cycle parking to encourage active travel.'

As these proposals are for 2 x 4-bedroom homes, in an area with congested local roads, we recommend that they should comply with this policy criterion.

Sustainable Design

9. Neighbourhood Plan Policy HBH2: Design and Layout endorses innovative, sustainable design principles, to the best national standards. We note that this planning application incorporates welcome measures such as grey water recycling, sedum roofs, solar thermal water heating panels, integrated reed beds for foul water drainage and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery. The proposals indicate that the primary heat source would be condensing gas boilers and that electric boilers and air source heat pumps could be substituted in the future. We recommend that new developments in the Plan Area incorporate the latter as a first rather than a substitute option.

Community Steering Group
Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan