

Clerk to the Council **Preston Parish Council** 77 Pheasant Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1BJ

Our Ref: JGG/001/NPR

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2nd April 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Regulation 14 Consultation on the Draft Preston Neighbourhood Plan Land adjacent to the A419, Preston, Cirencester

On behalf of the landowners, James Gegg, Roger Gegg, Robert Gegg and Emily Robertson, Impact Planning Services Ltd (the 'agent'), is instructed to submit representations in respect of the Preston Neighbourhood Plan Consultation (the 'consultation'), supporting proposals at Land adjacent to the A419, Preston, Cirencester (the 'site).

This representation is made to support the development of the site at Preston for the accommodation of a low-density residential development specifically for the needs of active older person's over 55 years of age.

#### The Site

The site is currently in agricultural use and a mature hedge forms the perimeter of the site and delineates the land into two parcels. The site is predominantly flat with an embankment and mature tree belt forming a buffer to the A419. The site area extends to approximately 8.5 hectares. A site location plan is included at Appendix A.

The site is located to the immediate east of the village of Preston 2km to the east of the defined urban boundary of Cirencester. The A419 dual carriageway forms the site boundary to the east, with a small track forming the site boundary to the north, east and south. The village is a small linear settlement with relatively few public services or amenities. It does however have a church, a few small farms and local businesses. A bus stop is located on the Preston Road, with regular hourly services linking to it Cirencester. The village functions as essentially a dormitory settlement.

The site is not the subject of any statutory designation and lies beyond the Cotswold AONB. There are similarly no landscape or ecological designations within 1km of the site boundary. A number of listed buildings are however located within the village of Preston 200m to the west. The land lies within Flood Zone 1.

**Town Planning & Environmental Consultants** 













#### **Demographic Change**

The aging demographic characteristics of the UK's population is leading to increased attention being focused within central and local government upon addressing the needs of the ageing population; longevity, public health and social welfare costs and critically, loneliness. These issues are driving policy-makers to find new and innovative accommodational solutions which will inevitably lead to the need to find sites for ageing members of the population who want to downsize and remain independent, but importantly, close-by their existing social scene. This of particular relevance to the rural areas such as Cotswold District.

Older persons are reluctant to down-size and will not move unless an attractive housing product is available locally. So presently many are under occupying family homes at a high cost, both personally and to society as family homes remain unavailable to families within the local housing market. This is revealed within the latest Census data for Cotswold District, which indicates that the levels of under occupancy of homes in the rural area is over 80% (source: census 2011 table QS412EW – Occupancy rating [bedrooms]). The added public benefit (apart from helping to reduce health and welfare costs), is therefore the release of family homes back onto the market, increasing the range of homes available and enabling better utilisation and movement within the local housing stock.

This also responds to the needs of many who are either approaching or have reached retirement, are unable to access adequate pension funds and require capital from the sale of the family home to finance retirement or assist other family members with sat student debt, deposits for house purchase etc. This concept represents an attempt to provide a form of single storey, energy efficient homes within an attractive low density "country club" setting.

The housing needs of this increasingly large section of the community have been the subject of several All Parliamentary Group reports<sup>1</sup>. This form of housing has, as yet, to enter mainstream thinking within the planning and land-use system, particularly in the allocation of land for housing. Such allocations are conventionally within the control of the volume house builders at the point of confirmed allocation and rarely if ever contemplate the provision of specialist housing within such schemes alongside conventional open market and affordable housing. This is principally as the assumed density would rule out the form of housing being promoted to respond to this particular housing need. The volume national house building companies have as yet to respond to this increasingly essential element of the housing market, however there is clear support coming forward for this type of development within research papers and guidance moving forward.

Importantly national planning policy, as expressed at paragraph 62 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and which is applicable to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, expects such plans to provide for the housing needs of different groups within the community. This includes older people who are defined with the Glossary to the NPPF at Annex 2 as:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Most notably Housing and Care for Older People – HAPP1 4 Rural Housing for an Ageing Population: Preserving Independence (April 2018) and Housing our ageing population: Positive Ideas: HAPP1 3 Making Retirement Living a Positive Choice (June 2016).

'Older people: People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retied through to the very frail elderly; and who's housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.'

#### **Cotswold District Local Plan**

The neighbourhood plan should be prepared in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. The development plan is the Cotswold District Local Plan 2011 to 2031, adopted on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018.

The Local Plan notes the challenge of the changing demographic in the borough. Paragraph 3.0.5 notes:

The relatively large and growing elderly population, coupled with a reduction in the numbers of young people, have implications for the structure of communities, and places demands on health and public services. In particular, more adaptable accommodation is likely to be required, together with the requisite service provision.

The village of Preston does not lie within a Principal Settlement, as defined by Policies DS1 and DS2. The local plan however, includes some policy mechanisms to allow some types of housing beyond the Principal Settlements.

Policy H4: Specialist Accommodation for Older People, notes the anticipated dramatic growth in the older population in Cotswold District with higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people. The policy notes the requirement for 665 sheltered and extra care housing and 580 nursing and residential bed spaces in the plan period and in addition to the OAN. Specialist accommodation for older people is supported and includes appropriate models of accommodation for the elderly and those with particular needs subject to the following noted criteria:

'a. meets a proven need for that type of accommodation;

- b. is designed to meet the particular requirements of residents with social, physical, mental and/or health care needs;
- c. is easily accessible to public transport, shops, local services, community facilities and social networks for residents, carers and their visitors; and
- d. where accommodation is provided on a freehold or leasehold basis, it should provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy H2. This includes proposals for self-contained units of accommodation within a residential institution (use class C2). In the case of sheltered accommodation and extra care accommodation a mix of tenures will be encouraged. Where a development site has been divided into parts, or is being delivered in phases, the site will be considered as a whole for the purpose of determining the appropriate affordable housing requirement.'

What is sought therefore through the vehicle of the Neighbourhood Plan, is an opportunity to promote the site's potential to meet an established and recognised need for active older person's

accommodation, to serve the rural hinterland of Cirencester within the broader rural context of the Cotswold District in the immediate to medium term.

### **Draft Preston Neighbourhood Plan**

The draft neighbourhood plan identifies the current demographic and aspirations of the village, but it does not translate this into proactive policy making. Whilst paragraph 30 notes that the community is dominated by the older population, with an average age of 54.8, the plan does not consider the requirements of this age group for the plan period until 2031. The plan does not consider how the plan area may provide for these residents as they age further, or how to plan for new development to attract newer members of the community, perhaps with families or first-time buyers.

Whilst the plan notes the desire to retain the identity of the village and rural context of the surrounding fields and landscape, the plan does not identify opportunities for small scale development to support the existing community, within the constraints and opportunities identified, or the types of development which may be suited to support the community.

The draft plan is accompanied by a supporting landscape and character analysis. These should be tools used to develop a strategy moving forward and not a defence mechanism to promote a restriction on any further development. For example, Policy 1 Preston Countryside and Landscape, does not identify opportunities within the landscape analysis. The policy only identifies constraints and areas of protection / preservation.

In addition, the plan notes the restrictions of the existing village hall and lack of room for expansion. There is some note of support for proposals which improve or offer new provision of facilities in the village, and no detail regarding what kind of facilities would be of benefit to the community.

As noted above, the Cotswold District Local Plan does contain some policy mechanisms to allow some types of housing and other beyond the Principal Settlements. The emerging plan does not however, include any allocations or mechanisms to meet identified needs within the village or any longer-term potential development considerations for the population of the village and the wider Cotswold District. This is vital to support the sustainability of the village throughout the plan period until 2031.

In all of this it is important to distinguish the very different aspirations of urban dwellers and those within the rural areas when it comes to retirement housing. The research referred to above by an All Party Parliamentary Group — clearly establishes that while urban dwellers may be prepared to down-size to an apartment within a town or city, those in rural areas are less likely to and remain trapped in family housing which becomes increasingly costly and unsuitable as the residents age. This concept attempts to provide a form of housing which will provide a rural context and appeal to those in such a quandary.

#### **Proposed Development**

We consider that this site at Preston is ideally located to promote housing for 'active older person's accommodation within an attractive parkland setting. As described above those seeking to down-size between 55-80 years old at the same time express a desire to remain within their own social networks, within reach of their GP, and wish to reduce domestic running costs. However, these same people will not move out of their family home unless the accommodation is sufficiently attractive and can be occupied at a lower running cost.

We are promoting the development of low-density single storey housing, within small groupings of units. This low-density housing is impossible (as a consequence of land value expectation by land owners) around the immediate fringe of most cities, towns and larger villages where conventional volume house builders are operating and future conventional housing allocations are likely to be directed. This type of housing would support the immediate needs for the current demographic of Preston, within a landscaped and attractive setting. The proposals would also provide additional community facilities which would contribute to the sustainability of the village.

The facilities provided with such a scheme include a resident's communal lounge and bar, fitness trail and possible opportunity for a small gym, consulting room for visiting GPs, physiotherapist, hair dresser etc. These could be made accessible to the local community which we note seeks some form of local venue such as a public house or community hub. This scheme could accommodate such a facility. A preliminary draft concept of the scheme is included at **Appendix B**.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit representations to the draft Preston Neighbourhood Plan Consultation. We would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this representation on behalf of James Gegg, Roger Gegg, Robert Gegg and Emily Robertson. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and the parish council further. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this.

Yours Faithfully,

**Rachel Bird** 

Senior Planner BA (hons), MPLAN, MRTPI

# Appendix A



## JGG/001 Site Location Plan - JGG/001 Land to the west of the A417, Preston near Cirencester 01.08.19





# Appendix B





The development concept for this site to the east of the village of Preston is for active elderly housing.

It is a collection of houses set within a secure parkland setting with shared communal facilities and is unlike anything currently available in the UK housing market.

The houses are detached with generous, light-filled rooms and a private garden terrace. They are a contemporary design made from high quality traditional materials that are low maintenance. The development achieves the highest standards of sustainable design.

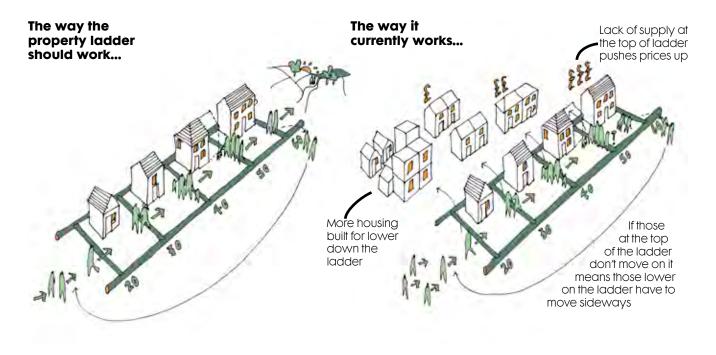
The parkland in which the houses sit is picturesque, and large enough to exercise within either walking, cycling or otherwise.

The development village centre is the heart of the community parkland with social areas, indoor exercise spaces and consulting rooms all arranged in a series of courtyards, terraces and gardens.

There are also guest facilities and secure private storage. It is envisaged that the village will have an on site manager to look after the residents and facilities as well as organise community events.



This concept could be part of a solution to the problem of a lack of properties in the UK housing market. It provides an option for elderly house owners to downsize or relocate to somewhere better suited to their wants and needs in later life which frees up their current property for others further down the property ladder.



75% of property owners aged over 65 have houses with three bedrooms or more which are not typically in use.

Britain's population of over 65's will grow four times faster than the general population over the next 5 years and already totals about 5 million people. This market has the means to purchase new properties - Knight Frank estimate that the over 60's population currently have £1,200 bn in unmortgaged property wealth.

# **Current Supply: Demand:** Private retirement housing units in the UK Potential number of people with a demand for Retirement Housing, 2018-2028 WEST MIDLANDS 74.241 EAST OF ENGLAND 88.530 SOUTH EAST

The above diagram shows the number of over 60's households in the South of England and how many retirement properties are currently available. In some parts of the south Savill's report that 80% of vendors are downsizers looking to sell the family home and at present they are often looking for between 5 and 10 years due to a lack of suitable properties.

Owner occupier retirement housing is currently only 2% of the UK housing stock whereas it is 17% in the US and 13% in Australia and New Zealand. The UK retirement housing market is dominated by Macarthy and Stone who claim 70% of UK retirement housing and provide this almost exclusively in apartment developments.













These apartment developments are typically on relatively constrained sites in town centres. These developments target downsizers that want to be within an urban or suburban environment. The internal facilities on offer are remarkably similar across the market and the external facilities of open spaces, garden and garaging is not the focus of the offer so is therefore not generous or attractive. This development concept proposes that downsizers and retirees want other options to MaCarthy & Stone type retirement apartments in later life. They like the modern looks, low maintenance and security of purpose built apartments, but want houses in larger sites where they can be more active. They want more space for storage of lifelong possessions and more generous communal facilities.













One of the reasons that more people are not downsizing or relocating to purpose built housing is that this current UK housing doesn't provide what they want and need in order to give up their precious family home. They want to take their garden and allotment with them, and the extra garage for the hobbies, and not necessarily have to throw away a lifetimes accumulation of possessions, whilst still be able to house several guests every now and again.

# This development concept is for a new type of rural active elderly housing not currently available in the UK.

This is housing where the owner occupiers have houses located on generous sites within a English Parkland countryside setting.

The housing works with the natural setting to create sufficient density that residents feel part of a community, but not too dense that the parkland countryside setting is compromised.

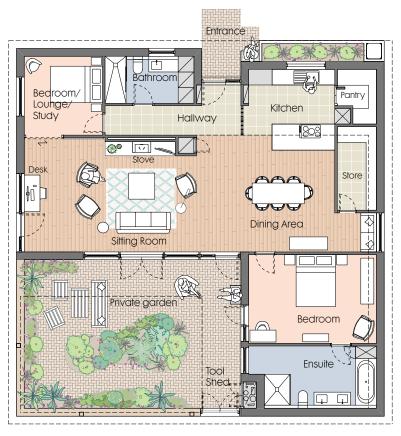
The orientation and rural location enable the concept to generate all of the energy it consumes and processes all of the waste it generates.

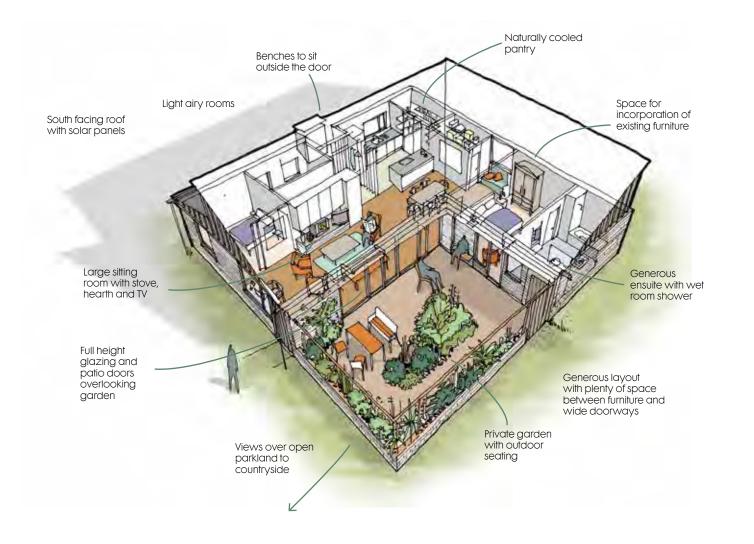


The houses will be contemporary, using high quality, long lasting, environmentally friendly, traditional materials. They are open plan, with opportunities to customise the layout to make it more cellular if desirable.

The typical house contains the following accommodation:

- Open Plan dining and living with window seat & writing desk
- Modern fitted kitchen with pantry, American style fridge and counter height oven
- Master bedroom with Ensuite bathroom
- Second bedroom has dual use if required as study or snug
- Generous hallway with coat cupboard, space for bags and mobility aids
- Dedicated store room for private personal possessions with easy access
- Private garden with seating and tool shed
- Wood burning stove
- Overall 125m<sup>2</sup> GIA





The interior of the houses will be spacious, light and modern with natural finishes. The spaciousness extends to the kitchen and bathrooms. All the principle spaces face south onto a private garden with the kitchen overlooking the front door and the communal entrance courtyard.











The feel of the interiors will be modern but will use traditional materials such as brick, wood and tiles. Although generous, the rooms will still feel cosy and easy to use. Some of the furniture such as the kitchen and pantry will be built-in but there will be plenty of space for owner's furniture if they wish.

The houses will be arranged in clusters of five around communal courtyards and shared garaging. This creates an intermediate neighbourhood as part of the wider housing community.



The communal facilities will be at the centre of the community and will provide a place to meet, socialise and be active. There is a leisure suite for residents use which will also host a programme of group activities. The consulting rooms will host regular health check ups.



It is also around the communal facilities that there will be additional secure storage for both small and large possessions. A manager will look after the facilities, including the wider landscape and residents will be able to use these like they would a members club.



- 1. Precious possession storage and additional garaging
- 2. Guest suites
- 3. Dining room and bar
- 4. Management offices
- 5. Courtyard

- 6. Leisure complex with Gym
- 7. Consulting rooms for incoming health services
- . Village green
- 9. Bowling green
- 10. Footpaths to neighbourhood clusters
- 11. Allotments

## Site to East of Preston Active **Elderly Housing Masterplan**

- Site entrance
- One way access drive
  Five house Neighbourhood Cluster
  Communal courtyard in each cluster
- 5. House

- Flouse
  Pedestrian and Cycle paths
  Parking Garage in each cluster
  Sustainable drainage and water recycling
  Communal Facilities (see previous page)
  Woodland fitness trail
- 11. Ecology meadow 12. Wildlife ponds 13. Allotments



## Developing the masterplan



