

# **Hoo Development Framework**

## **Consultation Document**

**REPRESENTATIONS SUBMITTED BY**

**ESQUIRE DEVELOPMENTS LTD**

**November 2022**

**HOO DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
CONSULTATION**

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ESQUIRE DEVELOPMENTS**

**November 2022**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by Esquire Developments Ltd, a multi-award-winning SME developer based in Longfield, Kent.
- 1.2 Esquire Development has a number of land interests in Medway, including land to the South of Stoke Road which includes the former Sturdee Club and adjacent parcels - identified within the consultation document as a growth area in 'East of Hoo St Werburgh'.
- 1.3 We consider the land south of Stoke Road to be suitable, available and deliverable and therefore an appropriate allocation for inclusion in the wider growth proposals for Hoo - which we support.
- 1.4 We support the general visions of the document and offer a number of suggested improvements, for how land south of Stoke Road could come forward in both the short and medium term.
- 1.5 In addition, as a local SME Housebuilder, the development of this site brings forward the opportunity to help diversify the housing market and offer a wide choice of housing from different developers.

## 2.0 RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

### Q.1. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed vision?

- 2.1 We support the general visions and aspirations of the document alongside Medway's desire to deliver high quality development whilst seeking to meet its housing requirement.
- 2.2 We support the expansion of Hoo St Werburgh including and the opportunity to grow the area by 10,000 homes over the next thirty years.
- 2.3 We recognise that growth of this scale requires a significant number of upgrades and/or delivery of new infrastructure. It should therefore be recognised that sites may come forward at different times to meet ongoing housing need requirements, reflecting the current market demand or developer requirements.

### Q2. Please tell us what you think about any aspect of the proposed key principles.

- 2.4 We support the key principles of a landscape-led development, access and movement, vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods, and an attractive and tailored built form. We consider later on how South of Stoke Road can contribute to these key principles.
- 2.5 We support Principle 1: Landscape-led development and support the potential of accessibility and connectivity in and around Hoo St Werburgh. We note the masterplans include a number of primary green routes plotted on various diagrams throughout the document. There are however some inconsistencies in this regard and we therefore understand that the diagrams and plans are not prescriptive with the full extent of developable areas being established through more detailed master planning on a site by site basis (for instance in and around the Hoo Stop Line and the extent of green space required to this heritage asset).
- 2.6 By way of example, the attached plan 30157A/SK01 shown in Appendix I of this statement shows how this can be managed appropriately, whilst still offering a green route through the development and still respecting the heritage asset. This shows how a more detailed masterplan can build on the established principles in this document and how development could be brought forward as landscape-led development which celebrates and promotes local heritage through carefully planned green infrastructure.

- 2.7 We support the encouragement of sustainable growth that respects the limits of our natural resources and achieve net zero carbon target to mitigate the impacts of climate change (assuming this timescale is in line with the central government agenda to achieve net zero).
- 2.8 Esquire Developments take a proactive approach to address the Climate Change emergency. We recognise that as a small housebuilder, we have an impact on the environment and we wish to minimise this as best we can. In this regard, we have already committed to deliver ‘electric only’ developments, meaning we no longer provide homes with traditional gas boilers. We are presently installing air source heat pumps and alongside a ‘fabric first approach’ we are achieving approximately a 50% carbon reduction in our homes over and above current building regulations across sites in Medway.
- 2.9 The fabric first approach means that the improved efficiency of our dwellings is inherent within the build. This means that not only is it more efficient, but also that they are not features that can be easily (if at all) removed by future homeowners, resulting in the efficiency of the building being maintained for its lifetime. By way of example, we build our homes with greater cavity wall thickness allowing for increased thermal protection, higher specification glazed windows and greater base floor depths.
- 2.10 Coupled with the air source heat pumps and that all our homes come with rapid charge electric vehicle chargers, we feel that we are playing our part in trying to minimise the impacts of our developments on the environment and help accelerate the culture change in regard to greener living, reducing the amount of fossil fuels used by the home and vehicle.
- 2.11 We support Principle 4 Distinct Neighbourhoods and villages and the neighbourhood of East of Hoo St Werburgh and the growth directed to this area. The East of Hoo St Werburgh includes land located south of Stoke Road.
- 2.12 The housing density across the framework area is noted and that south of Stoke Road is identified for up to 35dph. We trust that there is flexibility in regard to density to reflect local characteristics and any settlement edge transition zones. We consider that it is important that the term ‘up to’ is maintained and that a flexible approach is taken to sites when they come forward in this regard, respecting both the sites’ characteristics and the developers desire to deliver high quality developments.

Q3a. To what extent do you agree / disagree with the Overall Framework Plan?

Q3b. Please explain your answer to Q3a:

- 2.13 The Overall Framework Plan combines the vision, aspirations and four key principles into an illustrative plan.
- 2.14 We support the overall framework plan and the inclusion of land south of Stoke Road. We would however recommend that a number of other uses could be suitable for the site to come forward as part of a mixed use scheme. This could include uses such as rural office space, a children's nursery (uses Esquire Developments has successfully delivered in Medway) or other uses such as a gym, café etc.
- 2.15 Accordingly, while the overall framework seeks to deliver a multitude of uses as part of a framework, this should not be so prescriptive that it precludes the delivery of similar mix of uses within site specific proposals if brought forward and at a scale that is complementary to the overall vision.
- 2.16 We would suggest that it is highlighted that this diagram is a high-level illustration of the principles and where sites could come forward, this diagram is a guide.

Q4. Please tell us what you think about any aspect of the proposed neighbourhoods.

- 2.17 Esquire Developments has interest in land south of Stoke Road which is identified as an area to come forward for up to 35dpha.
- 2.18 We support the vision of the East of Hoo St Werburgh and support the inclusion of the site within this.
- 2.19 Appendix I demonstrates how a comprehensive form of development has the potential to deliver approximately 330 residential units alongside up to 22,000sqft of commercial units comprising office space, a children's nursery, a gym and other complementary uses. The scheme would also deliver extensive areas of open space, net biodiversity gain and policy compliant affordable housing – all delivered by an award-winning local SME Housebuilder with an excellent track record of delivery in Medway.

- 2.20 We are however concerned with the extent of the open space shown to the west of the proposed site area which respects the Hoo Stop Line. This area is within our proposals and Appendix I demonstrates how we have integrated the historic Stop Line sensitively.
- 2.21 The framework sets out that this area will form a green open space, with potential for a heritage trail with interpretive signage, connecting Hoo with its military past. Within the proposals, this area is key for connectivity between the proposed sites and the historic value of the stop line can be appreciated while being used as a connection between the two sites. This is important in the cohesion of the development. We have interpreted figure 5.38 (East of Hoo St Werburgh summary diagram) as a high-level diagram which highlights the recognition of the Hoo Stop Line and we have produced the attached layout which takes this into account.
- 2.22 We note that the buffer area to the north of Stoke Road where the Hoo Stop Line extends is significantly narrower and the question why the Stop Line south of Stoke Road is being treated differently to the Stop Line north of Stoke Road in this context.
- 2.23 Our proposals have been designed to complement the existing character of the area and deliver a mix of units. The site area for the land south of Stoke Road is circa. 22ha, reflecting a gross density of around 15 dwellings per hectare - which we consider reflects the character of the area and its relationship to the wider countryside and edge of settlement location.

Q5. Do you have any other comments?

- 2.24 We fully support the delivery of the Hoo Development Framework. We recognise the challenges that face the Council in seeking to deliver growth at this scale. We note the Framework does not include a phasing plan and therefore it is unclear if the overall level of growth requires key pieces of infrastructure to be delivered or if there is capacity to deliver in the short term to allow sites to come forward to help meet Medway's needs. Whilst a phasing plan is not essential, it would be welcomed to understand if there are key constraints which need to be overcome and/or delivered before a certain scale of growth is achieved.
- 2.25 Likewise, if there is current capacity for sites to come forward early, either now (to meet current unmet need) or prior to key infrastructure delivery, the Councils should identify such sites. The site is such a site and can deliver a mix of uses that is of a scale that would not have significant impacts on the local environment and offer a scheme that can be delivered quickly by an SME that will offer uses for the wider growth area from an early stage (i.e. the children's



nursery and gym) and set a good benchmark for quality design to be expected from future development sites.

## **Appendix I**

Proposed Sketch Scheme  
30157A/SK01

NOTES:  
 Do Not Scale  
 Report all discrepancies, errors and omissions.  
 Verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work on site or preparing shop drawings.  
 All materials, components and workmanship are to comply with the relevant British Standards, Codes of Practice, and appropriate manufacturers recommendations that from time to time shall apply.  
 For all specialist work, see relevant drawings.  
 This drawing and design are copyright of Clague LLP.  
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Rev	Date	Description
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Project Title  
**Proposed Residential Development  
 Land at Stoke Road  
 Hoo St Werburgh**

Drawing Description  
**Proposed Sketch Scheme**  
 Total = 319 Residential Units

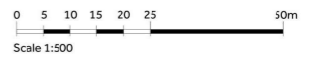
Scale  
 1:500@A0  
 Date  
 June 2021  
 Drawn by  
 JS  
 Checked by  
 TW

**CLAGUE ARCHITECTS**

62 Burgess, Canterbury  
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 Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 3BL 01582 766102  
 8, Disney Street  
 London EC3A 1JF 0203 597 1112

CANTERBURY LONDON HARPENDEN

Drawing Number  
**30157A / SK01**  
 Revision



Proposed Residential Development, Stoke Road, Hoo St Werburgh