

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH  
LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**

**SESSION 13B - ALTERNATIVE SITES  
29 NOVEMBER 2016**

**LAND AT ALBION ROAD  
MARDEN**

**HEARING STATEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF RYDON HOMES LTD**



1. This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of Rydon Homes Ltd in response to the questions set out by the Inspector in relation to Session 13B – Alternative Sites and with specific reference to land east of Albion Road, Marden.
2. Rydon Homes Ltd have an interest in this land which has an area of about 2 ha (5 acres) and is identified by red edging on the attached Drawing No. 10574-L-01 Rev A (Appendix RH1). The area of land identified in the original submission made by Rydon in response to the Reg 19 Consultation included this site and adjoining land to the south extending to a total of about 6 ha (15 acres), but this has now been reduced to 2 ha area edged red on the plan.
3. Rydon consider that the site would be suitable to provide a total of about 60 dwellings with access from Albion Road to the west.
4. The land lies immediately adjacent to Local Plan Allocation H1(47) Marden Cricket and Hockey Club, Stanley Road, which is due to be developed by Countryside Properties , who are also providing replacement sports facilities to the north of the village. A plan showing the extent of Allocation H1(47) is attached (Appendix RH2), together with the detailed site allocation policy for that site.
5. The Rydon Alternative Site proposal has an extensive common boundary with Allocation H1(47) and would form a logical expansion of that site with scope for pedestrian, cycle and vehicle links between the two sites. There would be advantages in both sites being allocated in the Borough Local Plan to secure comprehensive and co-ordinated development of the two sites.
6. This potential relationship and the location of the Rydon site in relation to other allocations, recent permissions and proposed alternative sites around Marden is shown on the attached Context Plan (Appendix RH3).
7. The Inspector’s Agenda makes it clear that Alternative Site proposals, such as this, are unlikely to progress any further, unless the Inspector has concluded that there is a shortfall in the development proposed in the Plan or that other proposed developments are unsuitable, meaning that the Local Plan is unsound as submitted. This alternative site proposal is made in the context of either of these conclusions being reached and aims to confirm to the Inspector that there are suitable and sustainable housing sites to add to the supply of allocations in Policy H1 if additional housing numbers are required to be provided or sites in Policy H1 are found to be unsuitable.
8. In response to the Inspector’s questions the following details about this site are provided:-

**Qn 13.20 Does the site have any relevant planning history? (applications, permissions, appeals, previous allocations)**

No, there is no material planning history attached to the site.

**Qn 13.21 What is the site's policy status in the submitted Local Plan? (eg whether in defined settlement/countryside/AONB/conservation area/Landscape of Local Value etc)**

The site lies outside the existing settlement boundary for Marden and is presently subject to countryside policies. It is not subject to any specific policies indicating any special landscape, heritage, ecological value or any other policy constraint that might inhibit its development potential. It lies adjacent to the revised settlement boundary proposed in the submission plan along the southern boundary of Allocation Site H1(47). The submission plan does not propose any special designation beyond "countryside" on the site or any nearby land.

**Qn 13.22 What is the site's policy status in any made or emerging neighbourhood plan?**

The Marden Neighbourhood Plan is emerging but is still at the evidence gathering stage and will not make housing allocations. It is therefore unlikely to make any specific policy designation over this site apart from policies generally applicable to new housing development sites at the village.

**Qn 13.23 - Is the site greenfield or previously developed (brownfield) land according to the definition in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework?**

The site is currently an undeveloped greenfield site.

**Qn 13.24 What previous consideration by the Council has been given to the site's development (eg inclusion in a Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessment (SHEDDLAA) and does the Representor have any comments on its conclusions?**

The site was not considered in the SHEDDLAA because the land was not under the control of Rydon Homes at that time and the landowners did not participate in the process. A larger site of 6 ha including the subject site was considered by the Council at Regulation 19 Consultation stage but was not taken forward.

**Qn 13.25 - What is the site area and has a site plan been submitted which identifies the site?**

The site has an area of 2 ha (5 acres) and is identified by red edging on the attached plan RH1.

**Qn 13.26 What type, and amount of development could be expected and at what density?**

The site is suitable for a range of housing types and sizes and would produce about 60 dwellings at an average gross density of 30 dph. This is comparable with the adjoining site allocation H1(47).

**Qn 13.27 When could development be delivered and at what rate?**

Development could commence immediately following the grant of necessary consent – say first completion 2 years from the grant of outline planning permission and could be completed comfortably within a further period of 2 years. It can be developed independently of the adjoining site allocation H1(47) and is not dependent on that site for any access, drainage or provision of other services. Local Plan policy can secure the achievement of co-ordinated and compatible development to the two sites.

**Qn 13.28 What evidence is there of the viability of the proposed development?**

Rydon are well established housebuilders with over 30 years' experience of building houses in this general area. They are confident that the site can be developed viably and will be able to make a full contribution to affordable housing in accordance with policy. Necessary financial contributions to the provision of local infrastructure will also be made. The site is greenfield and is accessed from a simple priority junction with no major off-site highway works anticipated. The ground is level and development will be straightforward with no known exceptional costs or constraints. Site ground conditions are good and there are no trees on the site requiring to be cleared. There is therefore no reason to suppose that the development would not be viable.

**Qn 13.30 Has the site been the subject of sustainability appraisal and does the Representor have any comments on its conclusions?**

No, but the adjacent allocation site H1(47) has been subject to SA and has been concluded to be a suitable and sustainable site for housing development and allocation in the Plan. There is no known reason why the same conclusion would not be reached by SA of the subject site.

**Qn 13.31 What constraints are there on the site's development and how could any adverse impacts be mitigated?**

There are no constraints to the development of this site for housing so far as Rydon are aware. It does not adjoin existing housing except at the access point with a narrow frontage onto Albion Road.

The adjoining property, The Howlands, is likely to be included with any development proposals, but if not, there is scope for suitable boundary screening and acoustic attenuation to protect residential amenity. No other residential properties lie close to the site and therefore residential amenity will be largely unaffected. The site is well screened by existing vegetation and will not be widely visible in the landscape or intrude unacceptably into the rural area. It would form a logical extension of allocation H1(47).

9. For these reasons the Inspector can safely conclude that this site would be a suitable, sustainable and deliverable alternative to any current allocation in the submission plan that he considers to be unsuitable. It would also be an appropriate way of delivering additional housing numbers, with flexibility of timing, to address any identified under-provision against OAN that causes the Plan to conflict with the Framework Paragraph 47 and consequently be unsound.