

APPENDIX 4 – WORKING WITH THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT: KEY QUESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL DEVELOPERS AND RESIDENTS

In order to promote good design within Otford, the Village Design Team has prepared a check list of key questions addressed to developers, builders and residents.

We believe we are aware of what the residents of Otford will and will not accept in terms of any development. They have contributed to this Design Statement and have made their wishes clear.

Evidence that these questions have been addressed will be of benefit to anyone putting forward applications for development.

Comparable density, scale and design

- Will your development be appropriate in terms of comparable density in relation to the surrounding houses? *'Comparable density'* refers to the spacing between the proposed house(s) and neighbouring houses as well as the generous allowance for both front and rear garden.

- Will your development be appropriate in terms of comparable scale in relation to the surrounding houses? *'Comparable scale'* refers to roof height, angle of roof pitch and number of habitable floors. It also includes the need for the footprint and overall mass of the building to be comparable with the majority of adjoining homes.

- Will your development be appropriate in terms of comparable design in relation to the surrounding houses? *'Comparable design'* implies design which is in harmony with the majority of nearby houses. It is important for any proposed design to include the use of local vernacular design features and materials which are in sympathy with Otford's village architecture. Individual thoughtful design will always be welcome. Pattern-book, mirror-reflection or pastiche designs will not.

Affordable housing

- If the above conditions have been met, will your development include a 35% minimum proportion of affordable housing? Have you therefore established the local requirement for this and can you produce figures which prove compliance with any such requirement?

- Affordable housing is welcome in our community. However, we draw developers' attention to the need for the ratio of building-to-plot size of all housing, affordable or open-market, to be in harmony with that of other homes in the vicinity.

Effect upon the green spaces or landscape

- Is your proposed development so sited that it is likely to have a negative effect by dominating or overlooking any of the traditional green spaces within the village or the community's surrounding landscape? These areas are of great value to residents and comprise an integral part of the village's unique identity. Any plans which appear to endanger them will be resisted.

Over-stretching the village infrastructure

- Otford is a rural community, surrounded by countryside. Much of our infrastructure will not be sustainable if it is required to support a significant increase in housing. Developers are advised to check carefully on the capacity of the existing infrastructure to support any proposal, before plans are submitted.

Parking and increasing traffic

- Although Otford benefits from a wide variety of shops there are currently only two small convenience shops and one post office within the village. The limited public transport facilities mean that cars are a necessity for most Otford residents. Will your development provide sufficient on-site parking for these new residents, without covering the front garden area with impermeable paving or creating a requirement for on-street parking? As a developer, have you weighed the effects of the additional traffic created upon local residential streets as well as the highways?

Landscaping

- Will your proposal include full landscaping details? '*Landscaping*' refers to the planting of trees as well as hedging around all boundaries of the proposed plot so that the development does not appear, from any angle, as a raw scar within the landscape. High close-boarded fencing is not considered a suitable alternative.

Damage to verges and footpaths

- Some temporary damage to verges and footpaths can occur in any building process. Will you/your company accept that you are responsible for maintaining adjoining highways and verges, as far as possible, in a clean and undamaged manner throughout the building process and for replacing any breakages or verge destruction caused by you/your sub-contractors, prior to your quitting the premises?

Within the VDS document, we have sought to be as clear as possible about what features this community values about our village as well as what is disliked in terms of potential future development. The Sevenoaks Planning Authority has agreed to take into consideration the views expressed in the Otford VDS when considering future potential development within our parish.

Thank you for the consideration you are showing to this community.