

F/YR12/0312/F

24 April 2012

Applicant : Mr S Wadsley

Agent : Miss A Grainger
Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd

Land North of Old Killeen, 172 Fridaybridge Road, Elm, Cambridgeshire

Erection of 4no x 2-storey 4-bed dwellings with detached garages

This application is before the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Farmer as he believes that the development would help facilitate the growth of the village and would be a natural extension to the settlement.

This application is a 'Minor'

Site area: 0.46ha

1. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is located on the eastern side of Fridaybridge Road and currently forms an open gap between two pockets of development. The site is vacant with open boundaries and is currently used as agricultural land.

2. **HISTORY**

No site history

3. **CONSULTATIONS**

Parish/Town Council: Supported

Environment Agency: No objection, provides advisory comments relating to foul water disposal

FDC Environmental Protection: Unsuspected contamination condition required

Middle Level Commissioners: Not received at time of report

CCC Highways: Request conditions relating to formation of access, visibility, and the provision of temporary facilities. In addition, request the provision of a footpath along the frontage of the site.

Neighbours: 4 representations of support received, reasons including:
- the large houses would look 'very good'
- the proposal would enhance the surrounding area

A letter with 7 representations of objection has been received, concerns regarding:

- air pollution due to increased vehicular movements
- the construction works would render neighbouring gardens unuseable
- the proposal would set a precedent
- the lack of review of the DAB is a testament to its strength
- the site lies outside of any Development Area Boundary
- the application is submitted on the strength of the IPPLS which are not binding
- the dwellings on the eastern side of the road are sporadic and do not constitute a 'built up settlement'
- the modern, executive dwellings are out of keeping with the scale and character of the existing development
- the proposal will have an impact on highway safety given the amount of vehicular movements generated
- there is no provision for 'significant common area amenity landscaping' as per IPPLS2
- permission for a single dwelling on this land has been refused
- deed on adjoining properties state that no development should take place on this land
- loss of view
- loss of light
- the proposal is more akin to a housing estate than the countryside
- loss of privacy
- devaluation of existing properties

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

FDWLP Policy

- | | |
|-----|---|
| E8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Proposals for new development should:- allow for protection of site features;- have regard to amenities of adjoining properties;- provide adequate access. |
| H3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To resist housing development outside DABs. To permit housing development inside DABs provided it does not conflict with other plan policies. |
| H16 | <p>Outside the DAB new dwellings must be justified as required for agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To protect gaps within settlements which are |

E2 - an important part of the character of the area by virtue of the views they allow.

ELM/H2 - Development will not normally be allowed beyond the defined Development Area Boundaries and this is particularly important to the south of the village in order to protect the visual break between Elm and Friday Bridge. Any other development on the eastern side of Fridaybridge Road, unless within the existing small groups of dwellings, should be resisted

Core Strategy (Draft Consultation – July 2011)

CS1 - Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

CS2 - Growth and Housing

CS10 - Rural Areas Development Policy

New development in villages will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside. Any proposal will need to satisfy policies CS1 and CS2 as well as specific criteria:

- Site is in or adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village
- Would not result in coalescence with neighbouring villages;
- Not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of surrounding countryside and farmland;
- Proposal is of a scale in keeping with the shape and form of the settlement
- The proposal will not adversely harm the settlements character and appearance
- Site retains and respects natural boundaries
- Not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land
- Not put people or property in danger from known risks and would not result in unacceptable nuisances to residents and businesses.

CS14 - Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paras 2 and 11 - Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

	Para 14	- Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core planning principles	Para 17	- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	Para 109	- The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains where possible.

5. ASSESSMENT

Nature of Application

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 4 houses within the open countryside. The application is considered to raise the following key issues;

- Principle and policy implications
- Design, layout and impact on surroundings
- Residential amenities
- Other matters.

Principle and policy implications

The site is located outside of any established settlement. The NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas where it will maintain the vitality of rural communities. This is the general thrust of policies contained within the Local Plan and Core Strategy where new development in villages will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of the settlement and does not harm the wide, open character of the countryside.

The policies of the Local Plan require consideration as the application site lies beyond any settlement core where new development should be resisted (H3) unless justified. In terms of emerging policy the general good practice criteria set out in Policy CS10 of the Draft Core Strategy should be observed. This document is still emerging and only limited weight can be attached to the policy at this time. However, it is important to note the direction of travel of the emerging Core Strategy and its conformity to the policies of the NPPF in terms of the approach to rural housing and the requirement for sustainable development which is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The site is located within the gap between the settlements of Elm and Friday Bridge. ELM/H2 stipulates that development on the eastern side of Fridaybridge Road should be resisted in order to protect the visual gap between the two settlements. As the proposal does not constitute infill development within the existing clusters of sporadic housing, it fails to satisfy policy ELM/H2. By allowing housing development on this site, the settlements of Elm and Fridaybridge are at risk of merging together. This is contrary Part A, point 2, of Policy CS10 of the emerging Core Strategy.

Policy E8 of the Local Plan, CS10 of the emerging Core Strategy and Section 7 of the NPPF stipulate that new development should be of a high quality design which responds to local character and history, and should reflect the identity of local

surroundings and materials. In principle, it is considered that the development of this land for residential purposes would be contrary to the spirit of these policies given that the character of the immediate area is that of open countryside and sporadic housing. The design and layout of the proposal will be discussed in the next section of this report.

Design, layout and impact on surroundings

The proposal includes 4 dwellings in regular road frontage positions. Each dwelling is afforded a double garage and a turning space and a large rear garden. It is proposed that landscaping will be planted on the front and rear boundaries of each plot.

Principle aside, the development raises concerns due to its design and general appearance. The proposed dwellings have been designed to have a relatively grand, modern appearance which would typically be expected in an urban or suburban setting. The dwellings are essentially of the same design, albeit handed versions of each other. The design philosophy of the development is at serious odds with the surrounding area which is characterised by sporadic, modest cottage-style dwellings which are of varying styles and designs. It is contended that due to the regular design, siting, and grand scale of the dwellings, the proposal fails to respect the character of the surrounding area. This is of particular concern given the prominence of the site which forms an important visual gap between the existing settlements to the north and south of the site. The incongruous nature of the development would instigate the merging of Elm and Friday Bridge in an unsympathetic manner which would not contribute to the quality of the area. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, CS10 of the emerging Core Strategy and Section 7 of the NPPF.

Residential amenities

Neighbouring residents have objected to the proposal due to loss of view, loss of privacy and loss of sunlight. Whilst these comments have been noted, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to cause undue harm to neighbouring amenities given the siting of the buildings and the location of first-floor windows. However, whilst it is usually accepted that the loss of a view is not a material planning consideration, Officers attach weight to the loss of this particular open view as it is intrinsic to the character and quality of the area and reducing the risk of coalescence two villages.

Other matters

The comments received in support of the application have been noted and have been addressed previously in this report. The comments received objecting to the proposal on the grounds of scale, style, character and location have already been addressed above.

One notable objection relating to the proposal setting a precedent is considered to have significant weight when assessing this application: If this development is allowed on an area which has been identified as protecting the visual gap between Elm and Friday Bridge, Policy ELM/H2 will have been undermined. As a result it would be difficult to resist similar proposals for housing on the eastern side of Fridaybridge Road, thereby resulting in a situation where the two villages will be merged into one. This would undermine the principles of sustainable communities as the settlement would be long and drawn out, without a central hub thus reducing opportunities for community cohesion.

CCC Highways have not objected to the proposal, however, have requested that a footpath is provided to the front of the site. It is considered that the nature of this request demonstrates the unsuitability of the site for residential development.

Conclusion

The principle of the proposal fails to comply with the sustainability agenda as the site lies beyond any established settlement and within a gap required to prevent the merging of two villages. The proposal would undermine an important site specific policy which could set a dangerous precedent of non-comprehensive, unsustainable development of the area. The design of the proposal is inappropriate within its context and would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surroundings. The development fails to satisfy the requirements of both existing and emerging local policy and the National Planning Policy Framework. It is, therefore, recommended that the application is refused.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

- 1. The proposal constitutes unjustified development beyond any established settlement boundary. The application is, therefore, contrary to Policy H3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, CS10 of the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan and Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- 2. The proposal would encroach on an area of open land required to prevent the merging of the villages of Elm and Friday Bridge. The development is, therefore, contrary to Policy ELM/H2 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and CS10 of the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan.**
- 3. By virtue of the scale of the proposed dwellings, their regular positions within the site and their regular design, the development would result in an incongruous feature which fails to respect the character or quality of the surrounding development. The application is, therefore, contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, CS14 of the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan and Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**



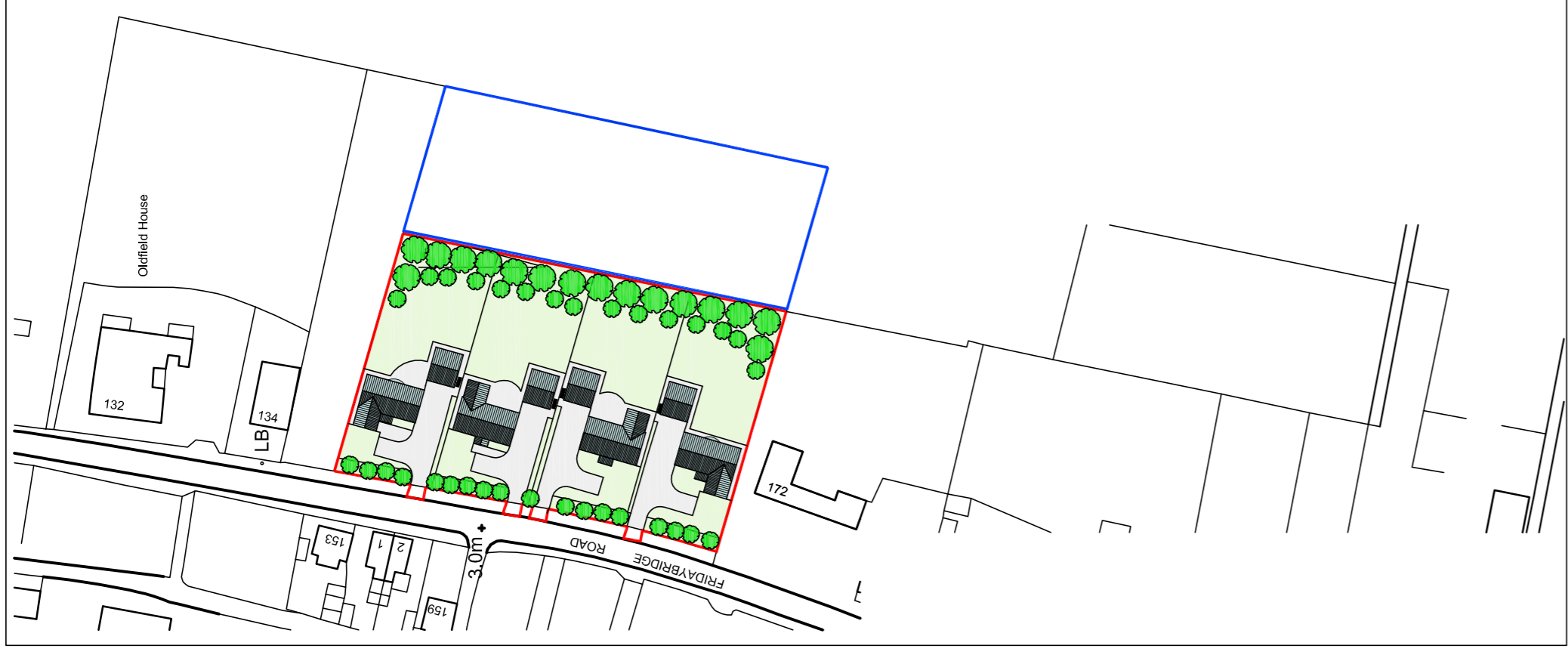
Created on: 03/05/2012

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Scale = 1:1,250





Proposed Location Plan 1:1250

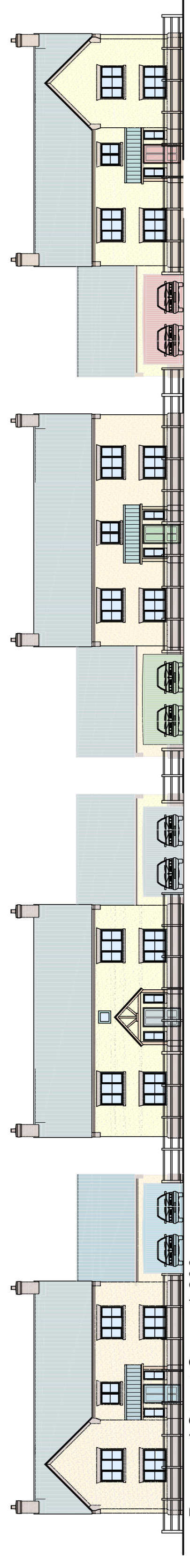


Proposed Site Plan 1:250

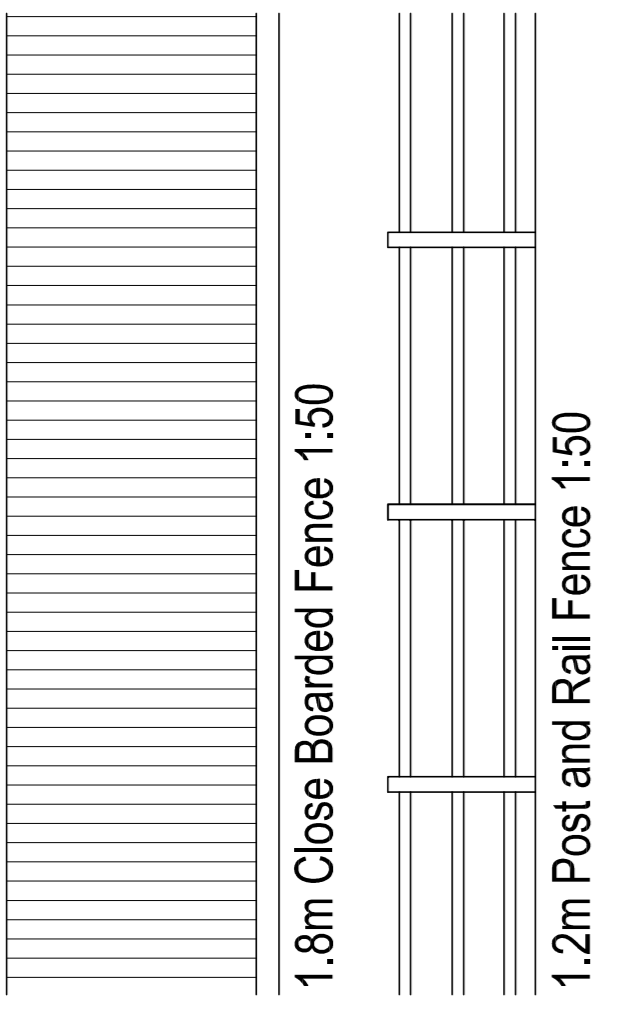
- TREE PLANTING
- A SILVER BIRCH - BETULA
 - B CHERRY - PRUNUS
 - C WHITEBEAM - SORBUS
 - D HORNBEAM - CARPINUS
 - E OAK - QUERCUS
 - F WALNUT - JUGLANS
- TREE'S PLANTED TO BE 1,800mm HIGH

- SP SHRUB PLANTING TO INCLUDE
- BARBERRY(BERBERIS) GUELDER ROSE(VIBURNUM)
 - BUDDLEIA DAVIDII,FORSYTHIA X INTERMEDIA,LYNWOOD
 - MOCK ORANGE(PHILADELPHUS)SNOWY MESPILUS(AMELANCHIER)
- C3 POT SIZE
PLANTING SIZE 40-60cm
PLANTED AT 750mm c/s

- GC GROUND COVER PLANTS
- COTONEASTER HORIZONTALIS,
 - HEDERA HELIX,LAVANDULA SPICA
- 6 PLANTS PER METRE SQ.



Proposed Street Scene 1:200



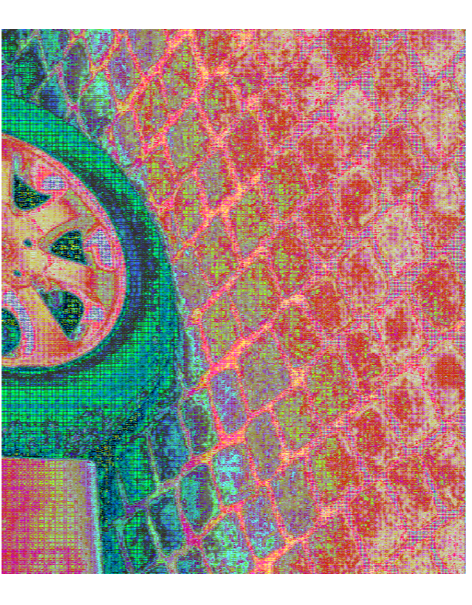
PLOT 2 and 4 (house type B and D)



PLOT 1 and 3 (house type A and C)



Cobble pavior driveways to all plots



Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd.
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND BUILDING

PROJECT
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
4 EXECUTIVE HOUSES
LAND NORTH OF 172
FRIDAY BRIDGE ROAD
ELM

CLIENT
MR AND MRS WADESELY
DATE MARCH 2012 SCALE as shown JOB No. 4796/PL04

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