

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10

Application Number: F/YR12/0455/F
Major
Parish/Ward: Wisbech
Date Received: 20 June 2012
Expiry Date: 19 September 2012
Applicant: Mr G Bloys, Construct Reason Ltd
Agent: Mr G Bloys, Construct Reason Ltd

Proposal: Erection of 26 x 2-storey dwellings: 3 x 3-bed and 8 x 2-bed with attached garages, 2 x 3-bed and 12 x 2-bed with detached garages and 1 x 2-bed with attached garage and carport.
Location: Land East of Abraham Drive, Wisbech.

Site Area/Density: 0.857 hectares

Reason before Committee: The application is considered to be a wider interest proposal, and given the unresolved FRA Issue

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

1.

This application seeks full planning permission for 26 two-storey dwellings at Land East of the existing Abraham Drive development in Wisbech. The proposal would result in the development of the remaining part of this wider development site off Cromwell Road.

The key issues to consider are:

- Site History
- Layout, Siting and Design
- Section 106 Agreement

The key issues have been considered along with current Local and National Planning Policies and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the principle and design of the proposal. It is considered that there will be no adverse impacts on residential amenity, highway safety or the character of the surrounding area. Therefore the application is recommended for approval.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | F/YR10/0074/RM | Erection of 85 dwellings comprising of 19 x 1-bed flats, 19 x 2-bed flats, 31 x 2-bed houses, 16 x 3 -bed houses with associated garages and parking (amendment to plots 1-20, 67-131 inc of planning permission F/YR08/0259/RM) | Approved 6 th July 2010 |
| 2.2 | F/YR08/0259/RM | Erection of Health Centre (2-storey), bin and cycle stores and | Approved 12 th May 2008. |

		131 dwellings (incorporating 46 affordable dwellings) comprising; 41 flats (12 x 2-bed with integral car port, 20 x 2-bed, 8 x 1-bed and 1 x 2-bed with parking below) and 90 houses (39 x 3-bed 3-storey with integral garages, 12 x 3-bed and 39 x 2-bed) with associated garages, parking and Public Open Space.	
2.3	F/YR06/0464/O	Erection of 145 dwellings (maximum) and Health Centre (4.2ha)	Granted 24 th May 2007.
2.4	F/YR06/0859/O	Mixed use development including A1 (retail), A3 (Restaurants & Cafes) B1 (Business), B2 (General Industry), B8 (Storage & Distribution) and D2 (Leisure) and medical centre.	Refused 7 th August 2006.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.2 East of England Plan

Policy ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment

3.3 Draft Fenland Core Strategy:

CS1: Spatial Strategy, The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside.

CS2: Growth and Housing.

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

3.4 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

H3 – Settlement Development Area Boundaries

E1 – Conservation of the Rural Environment

E8 – Proposals for new development.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *Parish/Town Council*

Recommend approval as no objections or observations.

- 4.2 **Natural England** The proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes or have any significant impacts on the conservation of soils. We would encourage the authority to ask for further information that describes the impact of the proposal on protected species and any proposed mitigation. Notes the presence of the standing advice procedure.
- 4.3 **FDC Refuse Operations Manager** Initially no objection to the development however concerns in relation to some roadways in relation to the refuse collection vehicles.
- Following reconsultation on the amended plans the comments were:
Issues with accessing some plots with the refuse vehicles, queries over the proposed bin storage and the private drives being unsuitable for refuse vehicles.
- 4.4 **CCC Highways** No objections in principle however raised points relating to the width of the carriageway which could be reduced to 5 metres, junction radii and pedestrian splays, the need for rumble strips, the blocking of vehicular access to Lickings Drove.
- Following receipt of the amended plan comments were as follows:
The layout is now acceptable from a Highways point of view.
- 4.5 **Anglian Water** No objections. Request a condition in relation to a surface water strategy.
- 4.6 **Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue** Require a condition in relation to fire hydrants.
- 4.7 **Wisbech & District Chamber of Commerce** Thought that a medical centre was supposed to be going on this site. Feel that they are in a position to pay the rest of the 106 contributions if they are in a position to build more houses.

- 4.8 **Environment Agency** Object to the proposal on the grounds that the submitted FRA does not comply with the requirements set out in the Technical Guide to the NPPF. Discussions are ongoing.
- 4.9 **Cambs Police Architectural Liaison** The development meets the Secured by Design Standards and therefore no objection.
- 4.3 **Local Residents:** None received.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The site currently comprises an area of undeveloped land forming a building site area measuring approximately 0.857 hectares. It sits within the defined settlement core of Wisbech. The site is currently fenced off by Heras fencing with a pathway running centrally through the site. Adjacent to the site to the North is the existing Abraham Drive development and Cromwell Road sits to the South of the site. Access to the site is off Cromwell Road along Weasenham Lane. The development of this site would result in the completion of a larger comprehensive scheme when viewed with the wider Abraham Drive scheme. In the wider area are commercial and industrial premises including Tesco, KFC and McDonalds.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The key considerations for this application are:
- Site History
 - Layout, Siting and Design
 - Section 106 Agreement

(a) Site History

This application is for the erection of 26 two-storey dwellings on an existing open site adjacent to an existing residential development. This piece of land was subject to a previous outline permission, approved in 2007, (F/YR06/0464/O) which saw this area being used for a Health Centre as part of the wider proposal for the development of this whole area. This aspect is considered later in this report.

(b) Layout, Siting and Design

This application seeks full planning permission for 26 two storey dwellings with access off Abraham Drive. The layout has been designed to reflect the Abraham Drive development and to make efficient use of the site. There is a mix of 3, 2 and 1-bed properties, some with detached garages and some with attached garages. The dwellings have been designed as chalet style dwellings and are considered to represent an attractive scheme. Each dwelling has its own rear private amenity space and a driveway and garage allowing vehicles to park clear of the highway.

The Refuse Operations Manager has raised concerns with the potential refuse

arrangements for some of the plots served by private drives rather than adoptable highway. The issues with refuse collection for these plots are not insurmountable and a solution can be found via the siting of bin collection points. This may be dealt with by a refuse strategy condition. It is not considered reasonable to resist the scheme over this issue which can be resolved via condition.

Natural England suggested that further information in relation to habitat protection and mitigation might be submitted however the Agent has responded pointing out that the site is currently a building site and is therefore very unlikely to harbour any protected species and therefore consider a habitat survey to be unnecessary and the Local Planning Authority agree with this stance in this instance.

The Environment Agency currently object to the scheme in relation to the submitted FRA. Discussions between the developer and the EA are currently ongoing in order to resolve the issues and in light of earlier approvals on the wider site it is clear that appropriate technical solutions exist. The area is currently home to a number of existing residential dwellings and the EA issues will be updated at the Planning Committee Meeting.

The Local Highway Authority have raised no objections to the scheme and are content with the proposed layout. The layout, siting and design of the proposed development are considered to be acceptable and will improve the visual character of the area and fit in well with the existing Abraham Drive development. There are not considered to be any adverse impacts upon residential amenity in the surrounding area as a result of this proposal.

(c) Loss of Health Centre

The concept of a Health Centre on the original scheme responded to an identified need for local health care provision and required input from key health care agencies. NHS – Cambridgeshire have recently confirmed that they are not intending to pursue this on-site option, either at this time or in the future; in addition the remaining local provider is not in a position to pursue the scheme without NHS – Cambridgeshire's support. As such, there is no end user for such a facility.

This has required the developer to revisit this element of the scheme and investigate alternative proposals. Officers and the developer have explored on-site alternative health and wellbeing options to comply with the originally expressed 'health' benefits; these discussions have not identified a suitable substitution.

It has been agreed between the officers and stakeholders that a contribution in lieu of on site provision is the appropriate resolution to this matter. The contribution of £260,000 is required by the Council for the Health and Wellbeing of Wisbech. (This is considered at agenda item the deed of variation).

It is clear that National Planning Policy requires efficient and sustainable use of land and it is not the desire of Officers to mothball this site indefinitely. Therefore further housing development is considered the most appropriate

land use on the remaining site, given the existing context of the site.

(d) Section 106 Agreement

Education Contribution

Following consultation with Cambridgeshire County Council a contribution towards both Pre-School Education and Primary School Education is sought. The contribution sought is £10,950 (£4,200 for pre-school education and £6,750 for primary school education). The Contribution is payable prior to the occupation of 50% of the dwellings.

Affordable Housing

In accordance with policy CS3 of the emerging core strategy the Council require all sites of 10 dwellings or more to provide 30% Affordable Housing on-site. The developer provided to the Council a viability assessment to the Council which demonstrates that the site cannot accommodate any provision of Affordable Housing in this current economic climate.

The Council appointed Housing Expectations as an independent housing viability assessor to review the viability assessment that had been submitted by the developer. Housing Expectations concluded that it would not be viable for this development to provide any Affordable Housing and recommended that officers should the Council be minded to grant the application it should do so without the Affordable Housing requirement. Officers have accepted this recommendation; as such no Affordable Housing is being sought as part of this development.

It should be noted that 46 Affordable Housing Units have been provided and transferred to Sanctuary Housing in respect of the wider site, this equates to a provision of 30% Affordable Housing within the overall development; accordingly meeting the current policy requirements should the scheme be considered as a whole against current standards.

Public Open Space

In accordance with the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Public Open Space the Council requires Public Open Space to be secured, either by provision on site or an in lieu contribution, on all sites of 15 dwellings or more.

The developer had provided sufficient Public Open Space as part of the original planning application (F/YR06/0464/O) to accommodate the requirements of this site, as such no Public Open Space provisions/contributions are being sought.

Given the history of the site and current economic climate it is considered, by Officers, that the application has suitably evidenced all viability considerations and the Section 106 package is appropriate and equitable. Whilst the comments of the Wisbech Chamber of Commerce are noted it is not considered, in light of the viability assessment put forward, that any weight may be given to the same.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal has been assessed in line with Local and National Planning Policies in relation to the siting, design, layout, highway arrangements, residential amenity and legal obligations. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of siting and design and will not give rise to any adverse visual, highway or residential amenity impacts. As such the proposal is recommended for approval with appropriate planning conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant – Subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 Agreement to secure the Education Contribution and the following conditions.

1. **The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
Reason:
To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**
2. **Prior to the commencement of development a refuse collection strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The refuse collection shall accord with the agreed details and thereafter retained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing.
Reason:
To ensure a satisfactory form of refuse collection.**
3. **Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details of the route and surface treatment of Lickings Drove where it passes through the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with the County Rights of Way Team and County Highway Team. The agreed scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the first dwelling and thereafter retained in perpetuity.
Reason:
In the interests of highway safety and providing an acceptable access way.**
4. **No dwellings shall be occupied until the works have been carried out in accordance with the surface water strategy so approved, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason:
To prevent environmental and amenity problems arising from flooding.**
5. **Temporary facilities shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction.
Reason:
In the interests of highway safety.**
6. **Approved Plans**
7. **An Informative for Fire Hydrants**



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F/YR12/0455/F

Scale = 1:1,250

N

Fenland
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council



WEASENHAM LANE

CROMWELL ROAD

LICKINGS DROVE



CROMWELL GARDENS
WISBECH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

SITE LAYOUT
MEDICAL CENTRE SITE RE-PLAN

REV	DATE	DETAILS	BY	CHKD
A	18.06.12	DRAWING SCALE AMENDED; ROOFLIGHTS ADDED; DORMER ADDED TO LOT 217	GB	GB
B	05.12.12	AMENDED TO ACCORD WITH COMMENTS FROM HIGHWAYS & ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE	GB	GB

DESIGNED BY	DATE
GB/CPM	MAY 2012

SCALE
1:200

DRAWING NO.
2066 / AD / 1 / 300

Beaver House
Northern Road
Sudbury
Suffolk CO10 6XQ
Sudbury 01787 376241

INDICATES AREAS OF SHARED
PRIVATE DRIVE CONSTRUCTED
TO ADOPTABLE STANDARD

HEDGE PLANTING BEHIND
1200mm HIGH STEEL BOW
TOP FENCING TO FRONTAGE

HEDGE PLANTING BEHIND
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HEDGE PLANTING BEHIND
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TOP FENCING TO FRONTAGE

CONCRETE BOLLARD
TO PREVENT VEHICULAR
ACCESS

1200mm HIGH STEEL
BOW TOP FENCING
TO FRONTAGE

HEDGE PLANTING
TO DELINEATE
PRIVATE AREA

1800mm HIGH STEEL
BOW TOP FENCING

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TO ALLOW VEHICLE
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