

**Application Number: F/YR13/0829/F**

**Minor**

**Parish/Ward: March North Ward**

**Date Received: 5 November 2013**

**Expiry Date: 31 December 2013**

**Applicant: Mr R Skoulding**

**Agent: Mr B Skoulding, Snowmountain Enterprises Ltd**

**Proposal: Change of use of ground floor classrooms to 1 x 2 bed flat and 2 x 1 bed flats**

**Location: 5 Queen Street Close, March**

**Site Area/Density: 2172 square metres**

**Reason before Committee: This proposal is before the Planning Committee due to the applicant being a Councillor**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application relates to an existing building formerly used as classrooms and being used for flats on ground floor and first-floor. The proposal would raise the number of flats within the building to 7 units.

The principle of conversion to residential in this location is considered acceptable in policy terms. The proposed layout and access arrangements for the site are considered to demonstrate an acceptable and sustainable form of development.

Consequently the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the development plan and to national guidance contained within the NPPF, and therefore approval is recommended.

## 2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

2.1	F/95/0471/F	Change of use of existing garages and laundry room to 1-bed dwelling.	Granted 12 January 1996. Delegated.
	F/94/0219/F	Change of use of existing childrens residential home to offices and meeting rooms at ground-floor and 3 no. flats at first-floor	Granted 18 September 1995. Committee.
	F/92/0479/F	Erection of a single-storey ground-floor extension to link existing buildings; change of use of garages including elevational alterations to provide additional residential accommodation and the erection of extension to existing dormer.	Granted 29 December 1992. Delegated.

### 3. PLANNING POLICIES

#### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

- Paragraph 2 - Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise
- Paragraph 14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Paragraph 17 - Core planning principles
- Paragraph 18-22 - Building a strong competitive economy
- Paragraph 32, 34 - Promoting sustainable transport  
– 37, 39
- Paragraph 47-50 - Delivering a wide choice of quality homes
- Paragraph 56-61 - Requiring good design
- Paragraph 69-70 - Promoting healthy communities
- Paragraph 95-97, 99 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

#### 3.2 Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy (Submission Version September 2013):

- CS1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS3 - Spatial strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
- CS4 - Housing
- CS5 - Meeting Housing Need
- CS9 - March
- CS14 - Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland
- CS15 - Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland
- CS16 - Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.
- CS17 - Community Safety
- CS19 - The Natural Environment

#### 3.3 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

- H3 - To resist housing development outside DABs. To permit housing development inside DABs provided it does not conflict with other policies of the Plan.
- E3 - To retain existing trees and hedgerows. To impose, where appropriate, conditions on planning applications requiring landscaping and tree planting schemes. To request the submission of a landscaping scheme with planning applications on visually important sites.
- E8 - Proposals for new development should:
  - allow for protection of site features;
  - be of a design compatible with their surroundings;
  - have regard to amenities of adjoining properties;
  - provide adequate access.

- TR3 - To ensure that all proposed developments provide adequate car parking in accordance with the approved parking standards.

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 **March Town Council:** Recommend approval.
- 4.2 **Middle Level Commissioners:** Will not be commenting on this application.
- 4.3 **FDC Environmental Health:** No objection to the proposed development, as it is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality or the noise climate nor be affected by ground contamination.
- 4.4 **Highway Authority:** No objections in principle in the context of the established former use, subject to the provision of adequate parking provision and separate turning facilities. Further to the amended plans no further observations in respect of the development and recommends conditions relating to no gates, on site turning and parking, and details of temporary facilities during period of construction.
- 4.5 **Local Residents:** No comments received.

#### 5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The site is located on the north side of Queen Street Close and comprises a 2-storey building formerly used as classrooms. Part of the building currently occupies 1 flat on ground-floor and 3 flats on first-floor.

The site occupies a two-storey building with associated parking and amenity areas. The area around the site contains a mix of residential properties, a primary school, ambulance station and car park.

#### 6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing ground floor classrooms to 1 x 2-bed flat and 2 x 1-bed flats.

The existing building already consists of 4 flats of various sizes, this proposal, if permitted, would result in a total of 7 flats occupying the entire building.

The application is considered to raise the following key issues:

- Policy and Principle
- Access and Parking

- Residential Amenity
- Other Matters

### **Policy and Principle**

The site is located within the established settlement of March and therefore the principle of residential development is considered acceptable in line with Policy H3 of the Local Plan and to Policy CS3 of the emerging Core Strategy.

### **Access and Parking**

The existing access to the site is to remain and in the context of the established former use of the site, the Highway Authority has no objections in principle with utilising this access for the proposed development.

The original submission raised concerns in respect of inadequate parking provision and useable turning facilities within the proposed layout. A revised layout plan has been received which demonstrates that 10 on site parking spaces with workable turning facilities can be achieved within the site which is considered acceptable in line with the Council's parking requirements.

The Highway Authority are content with the proposed development subject to appropriate conditions relating to no gates across the access, on site parking and turning areas to be laid out, surfaced and drained in accordance with the submitted plan and details of temporary facilities during the period of construction.

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed changes to the building relate to the ground floor area only. All elevations are to remain the same and the proposed development does not seek any additional window openings. Accordingly the proposal does not raise any significant concerns in respect of the adjoining residential properties.

The proposed layout provides a large communal garden area and a secured area for cycle storage.

### **Other Matters**

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, defined by the Technical Guide to the NPPF as having a low probability of flooding. The site is located within a sustainable location and given the nature of proposal the scheme is considered acceptable from a flood risk perspective.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed development is fully supported by national and local policies and as such approval is recommended subject to the conditions detailed below.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

### **Grant**

- 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. Notwithstanding the provision of Class A of Schedule 2, Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, (or any order revoking, amending or re-enacting that order) no gates shall be erected across the approved access unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

**Reason: In the interests of highway safety.**

- 3. Prior to the first occupation of the development the proposed on-site turning/ parking areas shall be laid out, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and thereafter retained for that specific use.**

**Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of the parking / manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety.**

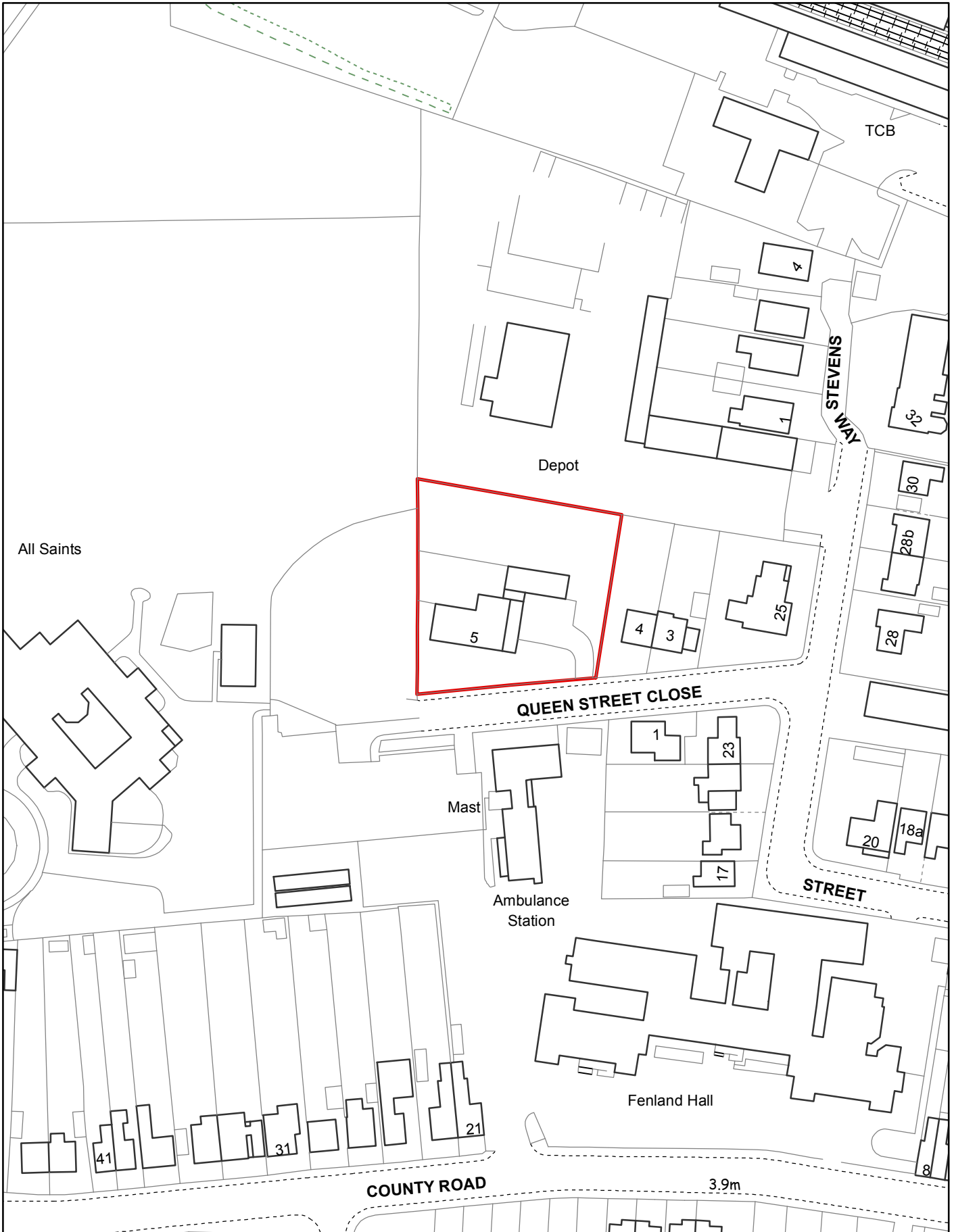
- 4. Temporary facilities shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction details of which shall be submitted for approval by the LPA before the development commences.**

**Reason: In the interests of highway safety.**

- 5. All trees that are to be retained shall be protected during the course of construction in accordance with British Standard 5837:2005. Moreover measures for protection in accordance with that standard shall be implemented prior to the storage of materials or commencement of work on the site and shall be maintained to the Local Planning Authority's reasonable satisfaction until the completion of the development.**

**Reason - To ensure that retained trees are adequately protected.**

- 6. Approved plans**



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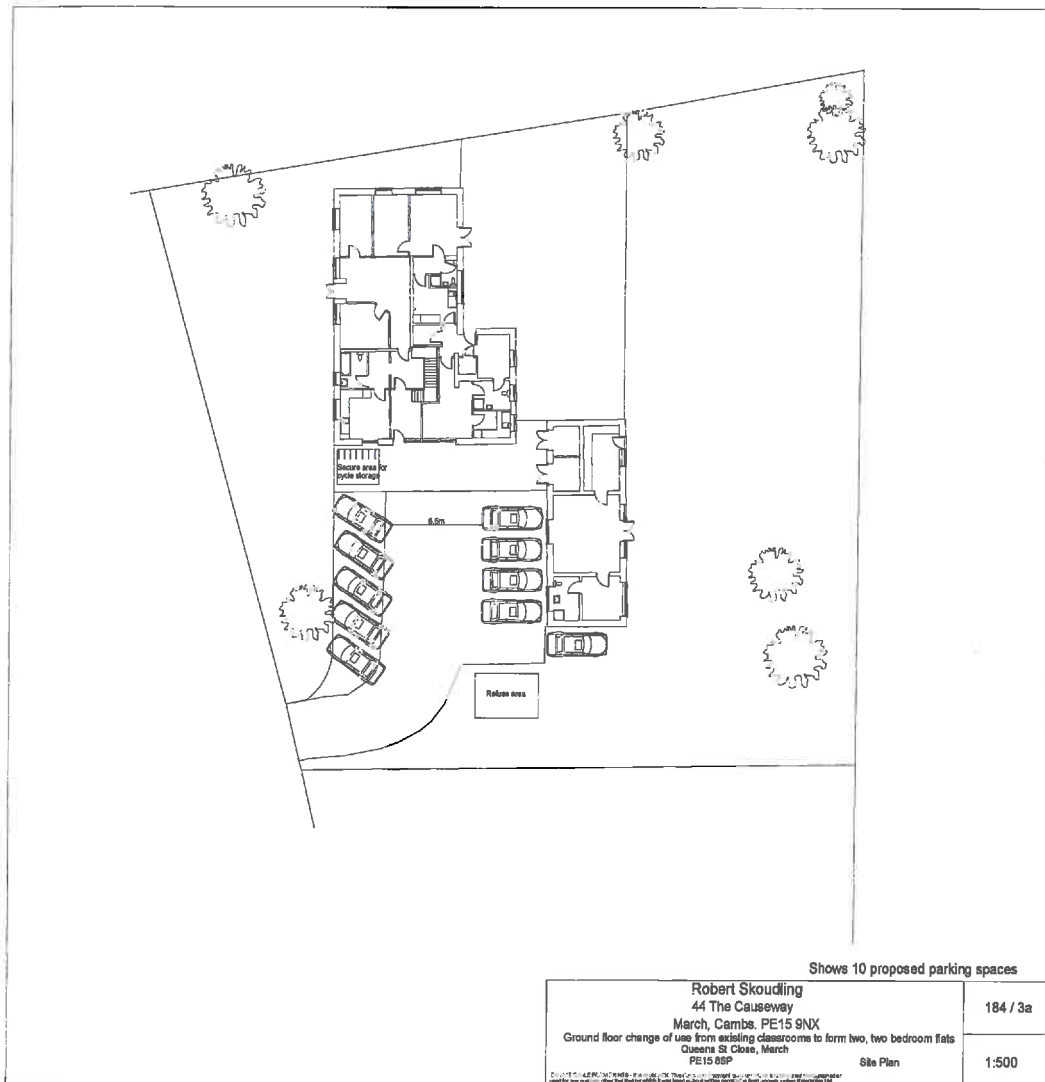
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