

**Application Number: F/YR14/0171/F**

**Minor**

**Parish/Ward: Wisbech/Peckover Ward**

**Date Received: 24 February 2014**

**Expiry Date: 21 April 2014**

**Applicant: Mr M White**

**Agent: Mr N Lowe, Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd**

**Proposal: Erection of 4 x 2-storey 4-bed dwellings with detached garages**

**Location: Land north west of Thornlands, Barton Road, Wisbech**

**Site Area/Density: 8dph**

**Reason before Committee: The comments received from the Town Council are at variance to the Officer recommendation.**

**1. HISTORY**

F/YR04/4255/F – Siting of 2 caravans for use as rest facilities for workers – Refused 07.01.2005 (Delegated decision)

F/93/0779/F – Use of land for the stationing of 26 residential caravans for agricultural workers – Withdrawn 16.02.1994

F/93/0456/F – Use of land for the stationing of 26 residential caravans for agricultural workers – Withdrawn 30.11.1993

F/92/0358/O – Erection of a dwelling – Refused 14.10.1992 (Committee decision)

F/1026/88/O – Residential development - 1.109ha Land off Barton Road (adj Manor Garden Estate) – Refused 10.11.1988 (Decision method unknown)

F/0442/88/O - Residential development - 1.109ha Land off Barton Road (adj Manor Garden Estate) – Refused 09.06.1988 (Decision method unknown)

**2. PLANNING POLICIES**

**2.1 National Planning Policy Framework:**

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

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

Paragraph 50: Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 58: Development should respond to local character and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and landscaping.

Paragraph 100: Directing development into areas of lower flood risk.

## 2.2 **Fenland Local Plan 2014:**

LP1: A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP3: Settlement Hierarchy

LP7: Urban Extensions

LP8: Wisbech

LP14: Responding to climate change and managing the risk of flooding in Fenland

LP15: Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland

LP16: Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments

## 3. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1 ***Parish/Town Council:*** Recommend approval, Members have no objections or observations.
- 3.2 ***Environment Agency:*** Recommend a condition relating to implementation in accordance with the recommendations and mitigation measures set out in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.
- 3.3 ***North Level Internal Drainage Board:*** No comments to make.
- 3.4 ***CCC Highways:*** Not entirely convinced that the required visibility to the west of the access can be achieved, notwithstanding the above am mindful of the existing use of the site as a commercial nursery and have no objection to the modest form of development now proposed. Conditions relating to provision of parking areas, visibility splays, erection of gates, access drainage and temporary facilities are required.
- 3.5 ***FDC Environmental Health:*** No objection, a contaminated land condition is required given the former nursery use of the site.
- 3.6 ***CCC Archaeology:*** The site should be the subject of a programme of investigation.

### 3.8 **Neighbours:**

3 letters of representation received (1 letter of observation, 1 letter agreeing with the observations, and 1 letter of objection). The comments raised are as follows:

- The development would result in 'island development';
- The site lies outside of the current town building area;
- It would occupy good class agricultural land;
- The application cannot be considered in isolation as it is sited in part of the whole field;
- Other applications for various other types of accommodation have been opposed by residents;
- Residents have always been in favour of maintaining good agricultural land;
- The houses are in keeping with the locality and are of low density;
- It is easy to have the plans amended to meet a revised business interest once the change of use from agricultural/horticulture has been approved;
- Only half of the land belonging to Thornlands forms part of the application, concerns with the development of the remaining land;
- Conflict between business vehicles and residential vehicles;
- Inappropriate use of the domestic garden could result in view of the proposed site boundaries;
- The site plan fails to show a drain which runs along the boundary between Manor Gardens and Thornlands;
- The drain should be piped and filled;
- There is an agricultural restriction on the land and the scheme should not be approved unless the business can support all four dwellings;
- If allowed, this proposal would result in the development of the rest of the field;
- Overlooking onto 5 Manor Gardens.

## 4. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The site is located on the northern side of Barton Road, to the rear of the existing dwelling known as Thornlands. The site adjoins the built up settlement of Wisbech and is within an area identified as a broad location for growth and is within flood zones 2 and 3. The current use of the site is as a plant nursery and there are various planting beds occupying the south west of the land. There is landscaping defining the south, east and west boundaries and the north (rear) boundary is open. The site adjoins a residential development known as Manor Gardens to the east and there is agricultural land to the west. There is some housing, albeit sporadic development, located along the Barton Road frontage.

## 5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The key considerations for this application are:
- Policy implications
  - Design, layout and residential amenity
  - Flood risk

### (a) Policy implications

The site is located in Wisbech which is defined as a Market Town where the majority of growth should be directed in accordance with LP3 of the Local Plan. The development of this land for housing, in principle, is supported however concerns are raised with the scale of this particular proposal. The site is located within a broad location for growth as identified in LP8 of the Local Plan. The broad location is described as north of Mile Tree Lane, south of the B1169, and east of Gadd's Lane and Barton Road. The land subject of this application comprises of a very small parcel of land located in the south east of this allocation. LP8 specifically states that development in this area will be subject to the preparation of a comprehensive delivery scheme for the area. This is reiterated in LP7 where it stipulates that 'proposals for development within the identified growth locations which come forward prior to an agreed comprehensive scheme being produced will be refused'. Notwithstanding the requirements of these policies, the application does not provide a comprehensive scheme for the wider area.

Without the provision of a masterplan or comprehensive scheme for the broad location there is a danger that the land will be developed in a piecemeal fashion which does not provide adequate links, access or social and financial contributions. Allowing the development of this site in this manner would compromise the effective delivery of growth in this part of Wisbech thereby undermining the aspirations of the newly adopted Local Plan. There is no dispute that the land is capable of accommodating development however it is imperative that it forms part of the wider comprehensive extension to the Town in accordance with policies LP7 and LP8 to ensure that the land is developed in a sustainable manner.

(b) Design, layout and residential amenity

The four dwellings are located around a central access and turning area. The dwellings are of a scale and design which raise no concerns in terms of the consistency with the surrounding development. However the location of the dwellings, behind the road frontage, and along a 75m (to the closest dwelling) long private drive, raises significant concerns in terms of the impact on the character of the area and residential amenity in terms of the provision of the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide.

The proposal would be visible from distances along the highway and concerns are raised with regard to the consolidated block of development behind the sparse linear pattern of development along the Barton Road frontage. The introduction of tandem development in this location, which would be in an ad-hoc manner, would appear as an incongruous feature to the detriment of the character of the area. The application is therefore contrary to the provisions of policy LP16 of the Local Plan and Section 07 of the NPPF.

The site is located via a private access which would result in residents having to wheel bins over 30m to be collected. The RECAP Waste Management Design Guide stipulates that 30m is the maximum residents should have to wheel their bins to be collected. Given that the proposal is sited over double the recommended distance it is contended that future occupants would suffer from reduced residential amenities. This would be contrary to the provisions of the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide.

(c) Flood Risk

Although the site is located within flood zones 2 and 3 it is considered that the principle of the development, on flood risk grounds, is not an issue as the land has been identified as an area for growth within the Local Plan which has evidenced by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the area.

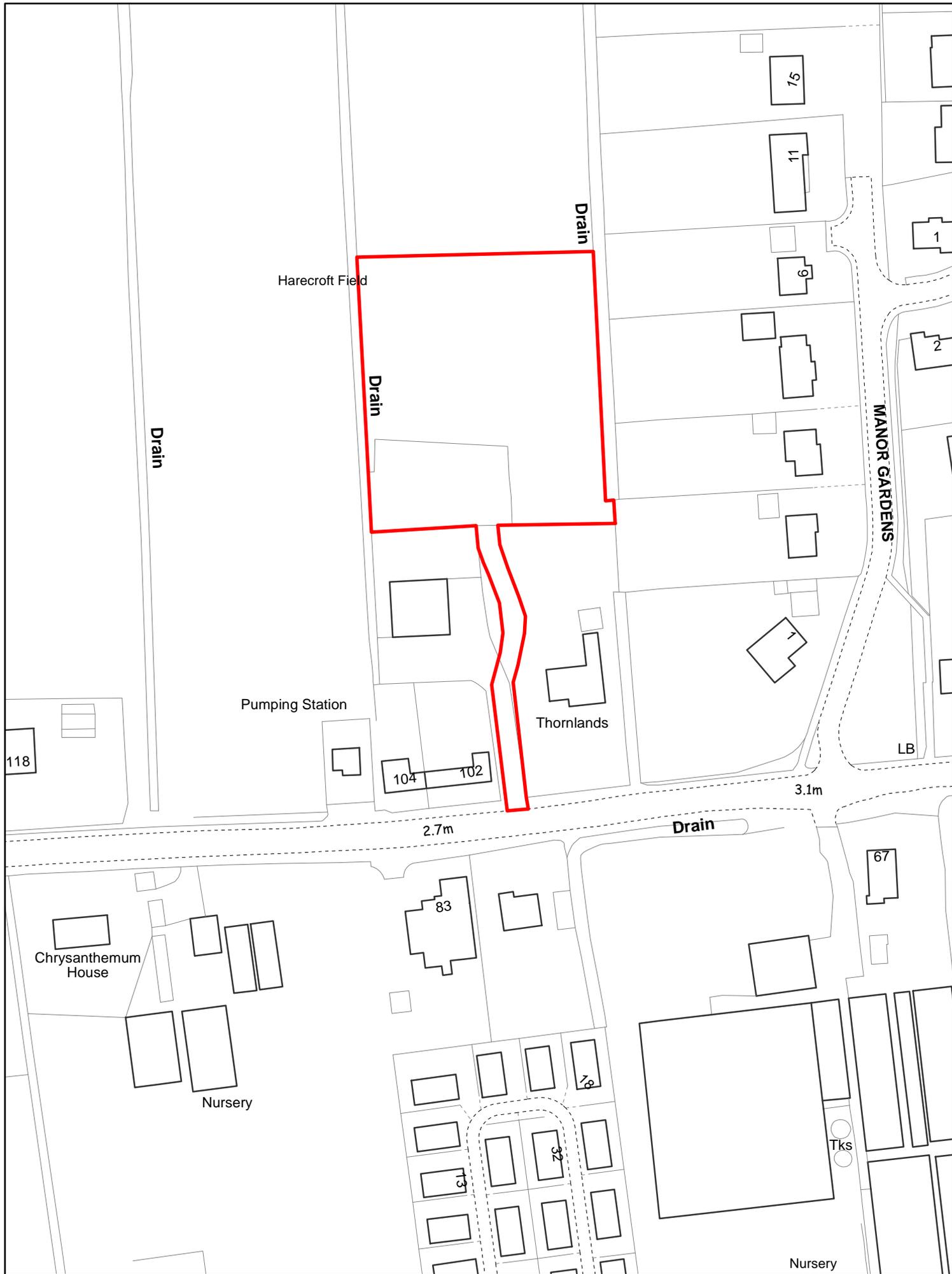
## 6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The site comprises a small parcel of land located within a larger area which has been identified as a broad location for growth. A masterplan has not been carried out for the wider area therefore, without knowledge of the nature of the future development of the area, this particular proposal has the distinct potential to compromise the effective delivery of growth within the area and to undermine the financial and social contributions required for the sustainable growth of the Town. The in-depth, block form of the development would appear incongruous within the location in view of the sporadic linear development which fronts Barton Road. In addition future occupiers would suffer from reduced residential amenities as a result of the necessity to wheel their bins over double the distance specified in the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide. It is contended that the proposal is contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is refused.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

### **Refuse**

- 1. By virtue of the scale of the application site, the location of the site within an identified 'Broad Location for Growth' and in the absence of a masterplan for the area, the proposal constitutes piecemeal development which would compromise the effective and sustainable delivery of growth within the area. The situation is exacerbated by the block form of the development which is out of keeping with the sporadic linear development which characterises the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to LP1, LP3, LP7, LP8 and LP16 of the Local Plan 2014 and Section 07 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
  
- 2. The proposal would result in reduced residential amenities for future occupiers by virtue of the necessity to wheel bins over 30m to be collected. The application is therefore contrary to the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide.**



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