

Application Number: FYR15/0077/O

Major Dwellings

Parish/Ward: Doddington Parish Council/Doddington

Applicant: Mr C Broughton

Agent: Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd

Proposal: Erection of 10 dwellings

Location: Land east of Askham House, 13 Benwick Road, Doddington

Reason before Committee: 7 letters of support have been received contrary to Officer recommendation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks outline consent for 10 dwellings on land located between Doddington Court Care Home and Askham House Care Home, Benwick Road, Doddington.

The site is agricultural land and forms a gap between the end of the existing built form of Doddington and Askham Care Home and begins the transition between the built environment and open countryside. Policies LP3, LP12 and LP16 are the determining factors in relation to developing this site.

The site is on the periphery of Doddington which is a growth village as set out in the Local Plan. However Policies LP12 and LP16 seek to ensure that all development should not harm the open character of the countryside and all development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area.

The development does not respect the character of development in Doddington by reason of its layout and the impact that the development will have on the existing natural features along the site frontage will be detrimental to the appearance of the area.

The proposal will result in ribbon development along Benwick Road that is out of keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement and will have an adverse impact on its character and appearance contrary to Policy LP12 of the Local Plan.

2. HISTORY

None

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Para.11 – applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise

Para.17 – core planning principles

Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Section 11 – conserving and enhancing the natural environment

3.2 **Fenland Local Plan 2014:**

LP1: A presumption in favour of sustainable development

LP2: Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents

LP3: Spatial strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside

LP4: Housing

LP5: Meeting housing need

LP12: Rural Areas Development Policy

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 across the District

LP19: The Natural Environment

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 ***Doddington Parish Council:*** No comments received.

4.2 ***Tree Officer (FDC):***

The length of the road frontage consists of a hawthorn hedge to the front, and behind, a line of semi-mature to early-mature silver birch, scots pine, Corsican pine with occasional cherry and ash.

The trees form a prominent linear feature providing significant landscape amenity. The trees are of long-term potential forming a visual link between the mature trees of Askham House and those in the gardens of properties on the west edge of Doddington.

The trees are likely to reach heights and spreads of 20m x 14m (ash) with lifespans in excess of 150years and will therefore contribute to the character and amenity of the area for a considerable time and should be retained.

4.3 ***Environmental Protection:***

The Environmental Health Team note and accept the submitted information and have 'No Objections' 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 ***Local Highway Authority:***

No highway objections subject to conditions relating to layout of the site, including roads, footways, buildings, visibility splays and surface water drainage; parking and turning within the site.

4.5 ***County Archaeology:***

Site lies in an area of high archaeological potential between the existing village of Doddington and the remains of a deserted Medieval village. To the west of the site is a Medieval moat with evidence of prehistoric and roman occupation.

Do not object to the development but consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work being undertaken prior to the commencement of any works on site.

4.6 **Public Rights of Way CCC:**

Public footpath No.17 Doddington runs along the western boundary of this proposal. No objections but requires an informative relating to the footpath remaining open and unobstructed at all times.

4.7 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer:**

No objection to use of land for residential properties but has concerns over adequacy of the rear boundary onto open farmland. This is compounded by the footpath from the road that gives access onto the farmland in question. The use of 1.2 m high post and rail fence gives insufficient security to the dwellings and their private areas to meet the NPPF requirements for a safe and secure environment for future residents. It is suggested that as a minimum the fencing should be 1.2 m high close boarded fencing with 600mm trellis topping or 1.8 m high heavy chainlink with 1 m high hedging to soften the visual appearance of the fencing.

4.8 **Middle Level:**

Will not be commenting on the application.

4.9 **Growth and Economy CCC:**

Primary School contribution: £16,000

Waste contribution: £2,670

4.10 **Local Residents:** 7 letters of support which also include 1 letter setting out concern:

- Good use of Grade 3 agricultural land;
- Attractive development;
- Better than large housing estates;
- Use of on site sewage systems;
- Doddington is a growth village.

Concerns:

- Increased traffic opposite a childrens play area;
- Speed limit needs reviewing;
- Articulated lorries use this road regularly.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

5.1 The site is located on agricultural land situated between Doddington Court Care Home and Askham Care Home at Benwick Road, Doddington. The application site is rectangular in shape utilising 1.4 ha of grade 3 agricultural land. The land is currently laid to crop.

To the east of the site is Hospital Road and the field has some dense landscaping on this eastern boundary. The southern boundary fronting Benwick Road consists of an existing hedge with a variety of trees to the rear consisting silver birch, scots pine, Corsican pine with the occasional cherry and ash. On the western boundary is a large landscaped area that forms the boundary of Askham House.

6. **PROPOSAL**

6.1 The proposal is for the erection of 8 detached houses and a pair of semi-detached houses (10 No.). The proposal is in outline only with all matters reserved.

The indicative layout shows 4 vehicular accesses, 3 directly off Benwick Road and one new access onto Hospital Road. Each access will be formed with a new dropped kerb and 2 m x 2 m visibility splays will be required. Vehicle visibility splays are also required measuring 2.4 m x 120 m in each direction due to the speed limit being 40 mph in this area. The existing footpath will be widened to 1.8 m to comply with the Local Highway Authority requirements.

The plots are set back off the road by approximately 20m – 25m and water attenuation swales will be located behind the existing hedging to the front of the site. It is proposed that each plot is serviced by individual sewage treatment plants which will drain to reed beds to the north and further water attenuation swales will be formed in the adjoining agricultural field.

Each plot will benefit from adequate parking and turning and there is adequate private amenity space to the rear. Design will be considered at Reserved Matters stage.

7 ASSESSMENT

This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of 10 dwellings on land east of Askham House, Benwick Road, Doddington.

The key issues for consideration to this application include:

- Principle of development and policy considerations
- Effect on character of the area
- Loss of agricultural land
- Flood Risk
- Section 106 contributions
- Other issues
- Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Growth

7.1 Principle of development and policy considerations

The site is located on the periphery of the built settlement of Doddington. Policies LP1, LP2, LP3, LP12, LP14 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 together with the National Planning Policy Framework are considerations in this respect.

Doddington is identified as a growth village in the Local Plan (LP3) where development in the existing urban area or as small village extensions will be appropriate. Further criteria to be met by any such development are set out in Policy LP12 including that the development should be adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village and should not extend existing linear features of the settlement or result in ribbon development. The Policy defines the developed footprint as being the continuous built form of the settlement excluding individual buildings and groups of dispersed or intermittent buildings that are clearly detached from the continuous built up area of the settlement. LP12 also supports development in villages where it contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside.

The continuous built form of the northern side of Benwick Road clearly ends at Doddington Court and residential development within the built settlement terminates approximately 250m east of the centre of the site. Fronting the site on the southern side of Benwick Road is an existing children's play area, pavilion and open agricultural land. To the west of the site is Askham Care Home with sporadic residential development opposite. Beyond the application site in a westerly direction is open countryside with sporadic residential frontage development including a small group of dwellings to the west.

The large group of buildings consisting of Doddington Care Home, Doddington Hospital and the Doctor's surgery renders the application site detached from the domestically scaled continuous residential development to the east.

It is considered that development of the application site, whilst adjacent to existing development, would amount to a reintroduction of residential ribbon development which presently terminates to the east of the site. It would extend residential development further into the countryside and be seen as an incremental erosion of the open countryside on the periphery of Doddington. In light of the above it is concluded that the principle of developing the site as proposed would be unacceptable and contrary to Policy LP12(a), (c), (d) and (e) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

Policy LP16 seeks to deliver and protect high quality environments across the district and proposals should demonstrate that the development meets the relevant criteria. In particular development should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, enhance its setting, responds to and improves the character of the local built environment and will not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms, on the street scene, settlement pattern or the landscape character of the surrounding area.

The site is considered to be in the open countryside in an area of transition between the built environment and open countryside characterized by sporadic development along Benwick Road. The principle of development is not therefore accepted in this location.

7.2 Effect on character of the area

The dwellings are shown on an indicative layout set back from the edge of the road with a number of vehicular accesses to be formed and the introduction of surface water swales to the front of the site. This layout is completely alien to Doddington with development along Benwick Road consisting of a mix of traditional houses set close to the back edge of footpath creating a street scene of dwellings with front gardens enclosed mainly by brick walls. The layout of the site will appear as an intrusion into the countryside, confusing, rather than enhancing the character of the area.

The proposal will require the removal of a number of trees along the frontage to accommodate the swales and the indicative layout does not show the retention of any of the frontage trees. The existing hedgerow will also be under threat with the removal of large sections to accommodate the new vehicle accesses and also the need to provide adequate vehicle and pedestrian visibility splays. The application is therefore contrary to Policy LP12 (f) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

It is concluded that the development would be harmful to the character of the area and therefore conflicts with Policy LP12 (c), (d) and (f) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

7.3 Loss of agricultural land

The application site is currently grade 3 agricultural land laid to crop. The Agricultural Land Classification provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent of which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long term limitations on agricultural use. Grade 3 is defined as good to moderate quality agricultural land which has moderate limitations which can affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation. It is evident that this land has been cropped continuously and is not agreed that the land is unsuitable for agricultural crop production.

7.4 Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 however as the site is over 1 hectare in area a Flood Risk Assessment is required. The NPPF and the Local Plan seeks to ensure that all development is steered towards areas within the lowest probability of flooding and therefore the proposal accords with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

7.5 Section 106 contributions

The proposal will require the applicant to enter into a S106 in relation to developer contributions as required by Policy LP13 of the Local Plan. These requirements relate to:

- Affordable housing – 3 units
- £16,000 for education
- £2670 for strategic waste
- Public open space in accordance with SPD.

7.6 Other issues

The agent has included a justification for the need for the houses relating to the applicant's existing business at Field End Water, Benwick Road, Doddington. Whilst this justification has been viewed and appraised, it is considered that there is no direct correlation between the aspirations of the applicant and the harm that the development of these 10 houses would have on the area. Therefore no weight can be attached to it as a relevant material consideration.

Pre-application advice was given to the agent in May 2014 which concluded that the development could not be supported in line with Policy LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

7.7 Health and Wellbeing

Policy LP2 seeks to achieve development that positively contributes to creating a healthy, safe and equitable living environment and to promote high levels of residential amenity. The dwellings are generous in size with adequate amenity space to provide a high quality development.

The site is within walking distance of the village centre and existing services. The development will provide adequate parking and amenity space for future occupiers and the development therefore complies with Policy LP2 of the Local Plan.

7.8 Economic Growth

Whilst the development would support some economic growth for the area by way of employment during construction, this is outweighed by the loss of agricultural land and the harm that the development would have on the area.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This application seeks outline planning consent for the erection of a 10 dwellings on land to the east of Askham House, Benwick Road, Doddington.

All matters raised within the application have been fully considered, as set out above, and it is concluded that the proposed development would be contrary to the requirements of the development plan being, in particular, harmful to the character of the surrounding area. There are no material considerations sufficient to outweigh the policy considerations or the harm that would be caused.

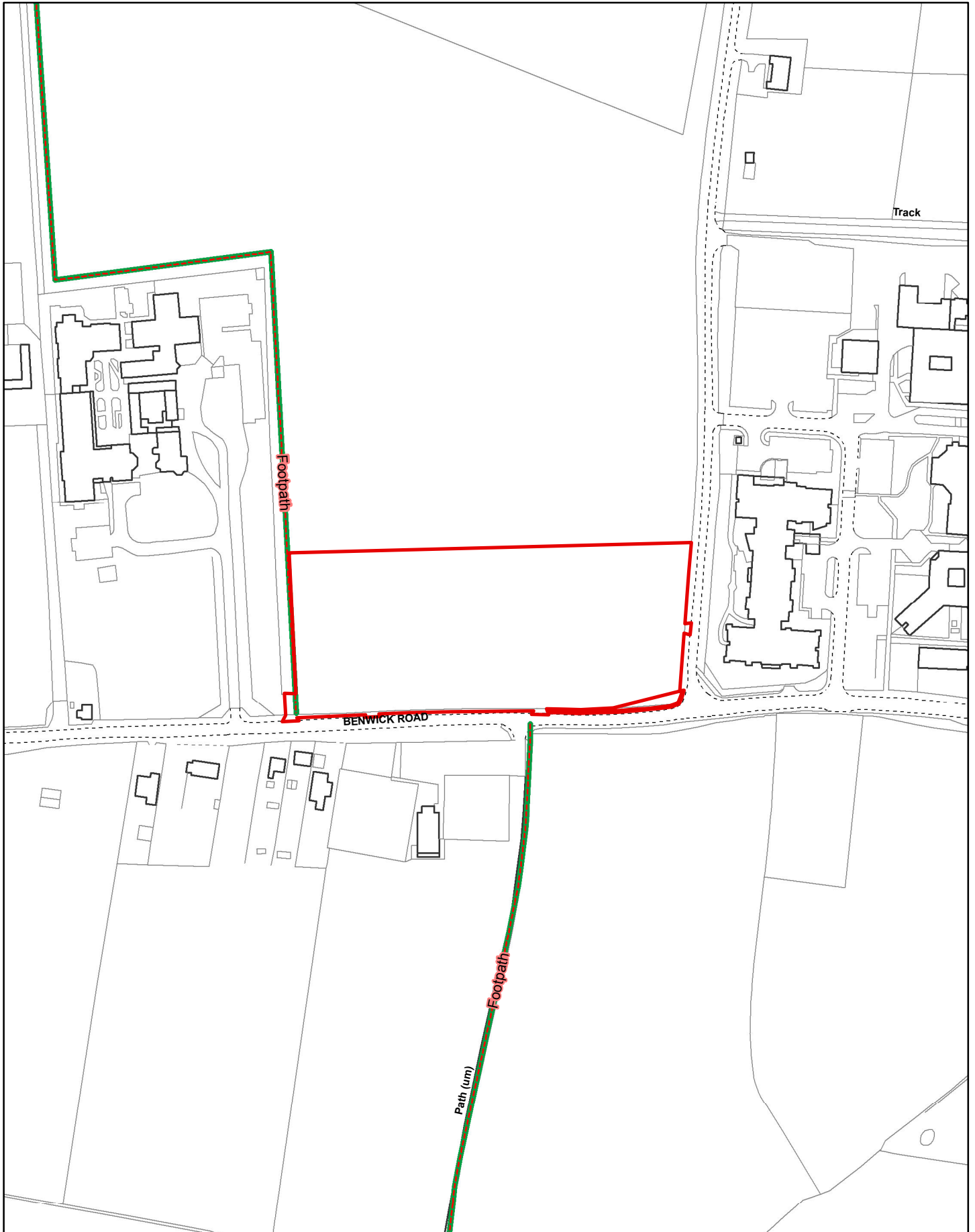
The proposal is contrary to Policy LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

9.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

REFUSE

- 1. Policy LP12 and LP16 seeks to support development that does not harm the wide open character of the countryside and makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area and street scene in general. This development will result in ribbon development which is viewed as an incremental erosion of the countryside. It is also likely to result in the removal of landscape features to the front of the site and will therefore have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and does not respect the settlement pattern. For these reasons the proposed development is contrary to Policy LP12 (c), (d), (e) and (f) and Policy LP16 (d) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.**
- 2. Policies LP5 and LP13 requires all development to be supported by and have good access to infrastructure. The applicant has failed to enter into an obligation that would provide affordable housing/relevant financial contributions which would offset any potential harm that the development may otherwise have on the locality. For this reason the proposed development is contrary to Policy LP5 and LP13 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.**

3. **Policy LP18 seeks to protect the historic environment and assess the significance of architectural, historic or archaeological interest. The proposed development site lies within an area of high archaeological importance and the applicant has failed to prove that there will be no substantial harm to any important archaeological remains within the site. For this reason the proposal is contrary to Policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.**



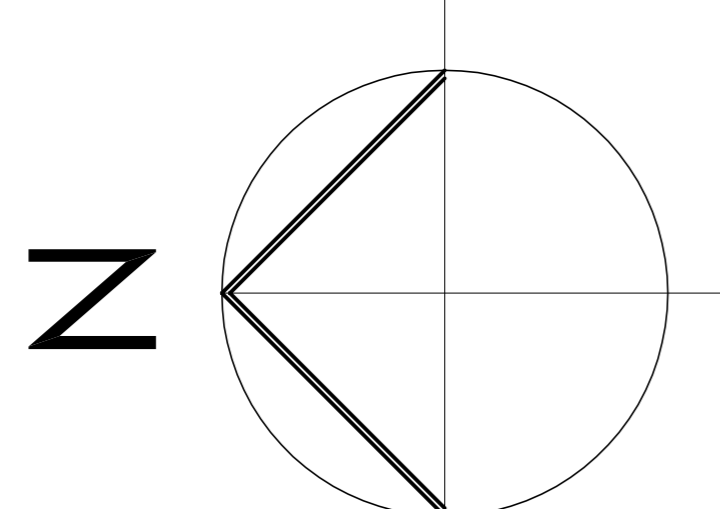
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F/YR15/0077/O





SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

2-bed semi-detached home	2
4-bed detached home	4
5-bed detached home	4
Total units	10

Peter Humphrey Associates
 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND BUILDING

PROJECT
 Proposed Residential Development
 Land East of Askham House
 Benwick Road
 Doddington

CLIENT
 Mr C Boughton

DRAWING TITLE
 Illustrative Site Plan

DATE March 2014 **SCALE** AS SHOWN **JOB No.** 5092-PL01C

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