

F/YR17/0139/F

**Applicant: Mr David Mason**

**Agent : Mr Edward Brand  
Brand Associates**

**346 - 348 Creek Road, March, Cambridgeshire,**

**Erection of 1no 2-storey 3-bed dwelling and 2no 1-storey 3-bed dwellings**

**Reason for Committee: The Town Council supports the application contrary to officer recommendation.**

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## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This application seeks full planning permission for a two-storey house and two semi-detached bungalows to the rear. Whilst the principle of development on the site is acceptable it is considered that the backland or tandem form of development is out of character to the area. Also the development is considered unduly cramped due to the cramped nature of parking provision, the inadequate quantity of private amenity space and insufficient separation between Plots 1 and 2. Therefore the development as proposed is considered contrary to Policies LP2, LP16(d and h) of the Fenland Local Plan due to being out of character in the area, and it resulting in adverse impact on the amenity of future occupiers and neighbours.

## **2 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 This application relates to land containing two bungalows located on the western side of Creek Road near the junction with Estover Road on the suburban edge of March. The existing bungalows have their roof tiles removed but no further demolition works have taken place. The rear gardens are now very overgrown.
- 2.2 The street has a mix of housing including bungalows and two storey housing that fronts Creek Road. Development to the south situated to the rears of properties on Creek Road, is a more comprehensive form of development accessed off Marsh Close.
- 2.3 The site is with flood risk zone 1 an area considered to be at the lowest risk of flooding.

## **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application is for the erection of a two-storey detached house that would front Creek Road with a shared vehicular access to the side serving two large semi-detached bungalows to the rear. The access is 5 metres wide by 10 metres from the highway narrowing to 4 metres within the site.
- 3.2 The 3 bedroom detached house has two parking spaces located at the back of footway perpendicular to the front boundary with a small front garden at the side and a small rear garden abutting two parking spaces serving bungalow 2 to the rear. The rear façade of the detached house would be separated by 12 metres to

the front bay window serving a bedroom of bungalow No 2. Bungalow No 3 also has two parking spaces and a small rear garden.

- 3.3 The 3 bedroom bungalows have been amended and now have a main pitched roof to a ridge height of 3.6 metres. In order to increase the garden area of Plot 3 the previously provided projection which accommodated the kitchen has been removed.
- 3.4 Plot 1 has been amended to remove any rear bedroom windows at first floor overlooking the front of Plot 2. This has addressed privacy concerns previously highlighted.
- 3.5 Plot 1 has also moved the first parking space deeper into the front garden to move the space outside the 2 by 2 metre pedestrian visibility splay to the main access.
- 3.6 The applicant has slightly reconfigured the access drive which now has curved lines. However no amendments to the parking provisions have been made.
- 3.7 The applicant highlights what he considered to be material increases to private amenity space for plots 1 and 3 and states the following:  
*'The amount of private amenity space for Plot 1 has been increased by moving the access drive to the east and is now 35% of the plot. The private amenity space for Plot 3 has been increased by reducing the size of the bungalow and is now 36% of the plot. Both of these are now in excess of the guidance in LP16.'*
- 3.8 Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OLO5MVHE0D800>

#### 4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

F/YR16/1031/DE1	Demolition of 2 x existing dwellings	Further details Not required	09/12/2016
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#### 5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **March Town Council** supports the application.
- 5.2 **CCC Highways** consider the application requires 2.4m x 43m visibility splays with no obstruction over 0.6m within the splay. If unachievable, speed survey data would be required to demonstrate safe visibility exists. It is noted that the pedestrian visibility on the southern side of the access is affected if a vehicle is parked within this space. This will need amending to show a workable solution. The shared access should be 5m wide for the first 10m from the back edge of the existing footway. The turning area should be detailed as a shared turning area for clarity and its provision and retention should be conditioned.
- 5.3 **Environmental Health Officer** has no objection but requests a condition be attached regarding unsuspected contamination.
- 5.4 **Objectors** no objections received.

## **6 STATUTORY DUTY**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014).

## **7 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Paragraph 14 Presumption in favour of sustainable development unless adverse impacts outweigh benefits.

Paragraph 49 Consider relevant policies for the supply of housing unless local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply.

Paragraph 56 requires good design

Paragraph 64 Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

### **7.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

### **7.3 Fenland Local Plan 2014**

LP1, LP2, LP3, LP4, LP14, LP15, LP16.

## **8 KEY ISSUES**

- **Principle of Development**
- **Impact on the character of the area.**
- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Private amenity space**
- **Highway safety**
- **Flood Risk**
- **Design.**

## **9 ASSESSMENT**

### **9.1 Principle of Development**

The application is in March a Market Town in Policy LP3 which considers Market Towns appropriate to accommodate most of Fenland's growth. The site is within the built settlement of March and the development replaces two bungalows. As such the sustainability and principle of the development could be acceptable subject to compliance with other relevant planning policies.

### **9.2 Impact on the character of the area.**

The proposal is a backland or tandem development accessed from a narrow access at the side of the proposed two-storey house. This part of Creek Road is predominantly housing which fronts the highway. There are some pockets of development to the rear off Creek Road but these have a highway or more comprehensive form of private drive access. Therefore the development which would result in more piecemeal forms of housing, is likely to appear out of character with the immediate neighbourhood. Added to this is the concern regarding a somewhat cramped form of layout. The proposal includes the following:

- Inadequate car parking layout , the spaces are squeezed between front windows and plot boundaries and the front spaces are difficult to access,
- Minimal private garden space particularly house (plot 1) and bungalow (plot 3) although the amendment provides slightly more than the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> required by policy, this nevertheless demonstrates the cramped nature of the site,
- Minimal separation 12 metres between plot 1 and plot 2 with properties being tightly packed into the space available.

This proposal is therefore considered to be unduly cramped.

- 9.3 Whilst the LPA do not have adopted car parking space standards, best practice for residential parking spaces, as reflected in the adopted internal garage sizes (3 m x 7 m), requires a minimum width of 2.7 m in width but when spaces are constrained by abutting walls or fences on both side the space should be 2.9 m to enable reasonable access/exiting of vehicles. The 2.5 m wide spaces shown are not acceptable in this particular development layout and are likely to result in an inability to get in and out of the cars.
- 9.4 The proposed parking spaces will also result in vehicles parked abutting the windows of all three dwellings resulting in reduced outlook for residents within the proposed properties.
- 9.5 The parking to the front will have severely restricted access and egress. The parking space abutting the back of footway may result in an obstruction to the visibility of the access itself as there is no certain way to ensure vehicles will park outside the splay. Overall the parking layout is considered unduly cramped and unworkable, and is likely to lead to harm to amenity of future occupiers and neighbours.
- 9.6 The area has a wide variety of forms of housing and there some of which have little side to side gaps between houses. However the houses retain relatively large private amenity space and predominantly do not have houses located immediately to the rear (other than the original housing).
- 9.7 Due to the cumulative impact of these concerns it is considered that this backland and cramped form of development will detrimentally impact on the character of this part of Creek Road contrary to Policy LP16(d).

### **9.8 Health and wellbeing**

LP2 refers seeks to positively contribute to a healthy living environment by amongst other things, high levels of residential amenity and to avoid adverse impacts. Policy LP16(e) seeks the avoidance of adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring users which includes loss of privacy. In this instance the rear façade of the two-storey house has been amended and no longer includes first floor bedroom windows. However the separation distance has not increased. Whilst it is no longer considered to represent a separate reason for refusal, it further demonstrates concerns of the cramped nature of development

### **9.9 Private amenity space**

Policy LP16(h) seeks to provide sufficient private amenity space suitable to the type and amount of development proposed. The policy suggests a minimum of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> being set aside for private amenity space. All three properties would have three bedrooms. However the two-storey house has approximately 70m<sup>2</sup> of rear private amenity space being only 6.6metres deep (the front is small in nature, further reduced by the car parking area, and has limited value as private space).

The bungalow (No 3) has increased to approx. 71 m<sup>2</sup> representing approximately 34% of the site area. The rear garden would now be 10metres deep at its deepest point 6,4m at its shortest. The Applicant points out that the private amenity area is now greater than 1/3 as required by Policy LP16(h). Plot 1 is a large two-storey house capable of accommodating a family. However it would be served by a useable rear garden of only 6.6m in depth. Although not contrary to policy this degree of space is considered to be poor provision for properties of this scale.

#### **9.10 Highway safety**

The Highway Authority does not object but highlights concerns regarding visibility. Properties either side of the proposed access have open plan front gardens/car parking areas which assist with proposed visibility to the access. However it is noted these are not within the applicant's control. At this point Creek Road is almost straight in highway alignment providing reasonable visibility on approaching the proposed access. Officers on visiting the site at an off-peak time noted that when vehicles could travel at higher speeds than a more congested period, traffic speeds did not appear excessive. The applicant has moved the first parking space further into the front garden space resulting in vehicles outside pedestrian to vehicle visibility. However there would be no way to ensure parking always took place outside the visibility splay. Whilst this is unlikely to result in severe harm to the safe use of the highway network, this further demonstrates the cramped nature of the development. The proposed reasons for refusal are on amenity grounds and which refer to inadequate car parking. For clarification the reasons do not refer to highway safety.

#### **9.11 Flood Risk**

The site is located in flood zone 1 and as such is considered to pass the sequential test. The application therefore accords with Policy LP14

#### **9.12 Design**

The proposed house at the front is considered to be visually acceptable in terms of its impact on the street scene. If the two bungalows were to be located at the front of the site it is likely that the design would be considered to be acceptable. However due to the unacceptable backland form of development, the proposal is considered to be poor in overall design layout.

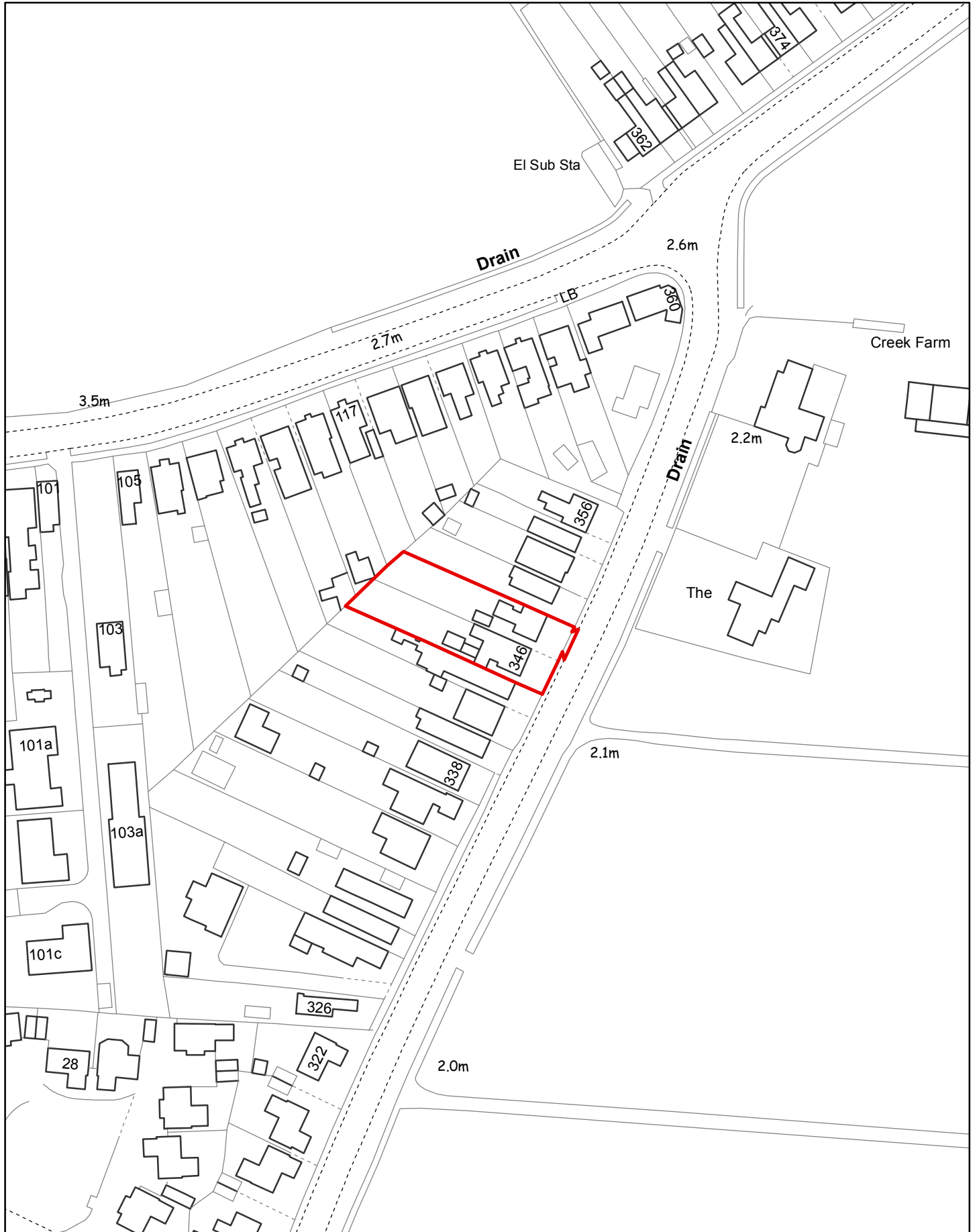
### **10 CONCLUSION**

Whilst development of the site may be welcomed in principle the proposal is considered to be unacceptable representing a backland or tandem form of layout contrary to the prevailing character of the area contrary to Policy LP16(d). The amendments submitted are considered to address the previous concern regarding impact on privacy. However the other alterations are relatively minor and the proposed amenity space remains poor for relatively large buildings. The parking proposals remain cramped and two spaces are difficult to access. The amended layout remains an unduly cramped form of development considered out of keeping with the area with poor separation between properties, cramped parking spaces the use of which may obscure visibility splays, and there is inadequate private amenity space for future residents. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies LP2, LP16 (d).

## 11 RECOMMENDATION

### Refuse

- 1 Policy LP16 (d) requires all new development to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area and responds to and improves the character of the built environment. The proposed bungalows would be located in a backland detached position unrelated to properties fronting development on Creek Road. The development is also considered unduly cramped resulting in poor rear amenity space for (Plot 1 and 3), and the cramped form of car parking. The proposal is therefore considered out of character with the predominant built form in this part of Creek Road. As such, the proposal is contrary to criteria (d) of Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 failing to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area and to improve the character of the built environment.



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Scale = 1:1,250



- KEY -**
- G = Garage parking min 3m x 7m internal
  - P = Parking spaces min 2.5m x 5m
  - BP = Block paving
  - GR = Gravel with edging
  - TS = Top soil/Garden planting/Grass
  - (cloud icon) = Proposed hedge
  - (circle with dot icon) = Existing trees
  - (circle with x icon) = Proposed trees
  - (square icon) = Bin collection point

B, C, D, E, F AND H TO I  
1.8m HIGH CLOSE  
BOARDED TIMBER FENCE  
A TO B & F TO G 0.9m HIGH  
CLOSE BOARDED TIMBER  
FENCE

CHANNEL DRAIN TO  
PREVENT SURFACE  
WATER RUNNING ON TO  
SITE  
NEW DROP KERB  
ACCESS TO LHA  
SPECIFICATION

REVISIONS

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PROPOSED SITE PLAN &  
LANDSCAPING  
1:200 : NEM : NOV.16  
MAS.16 : 1 : A

