

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE -

AGENDA ITEM NO	
APPLICATION NO	2178/14
PROPOSAL	The demolition of 30-40 evens & 46-64 evens Steeles Road Woolpit and the erection of 31 dwellings including associated external works and alterations to the highway.
SITE LOCATION	Land at Steeles Road, Woolpit
SITE AREA (Ha)	0.73
APPLICANT	Orbit Homes
RECEIVED	July 8, 2014
EXPIRY DATE	November 4, 2014

REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason :

- (1) it is a "Major" application for:-
 - residential development of over 15 dwellings.

- (2) Mid Suffolk District Council has an interest in the land.

Members should note that this application is part of a wider scheme for 'Tranche 2' of Unity homes redevelopment.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

1. The applicant received detailed pre-application advice prior to the submission of this application. This application has been brought to Committee in line with an agreed timetable in order to safeguard the potential delivery of this redevelopment in a timely manner.

The application is subject to a Planning Performance Agreement which has enabled consensual project management and cost recovery.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2. The application site consists of an 0.73ha site which consist of sixteen existing properties known as 30 to 40 and 46 to 64 Steeles Road in Woolpit and

agricultural land that lies directly to the south of the dwellings known as 46 to 64 Steeles Road.

The properties in the Steeles Road area are terraced two storey housing the majority are of the Unity style which was a type of low cost dwelling built of concrete pillars with walls made of stacked concrete panels between them. These properties date from the post war period.

Steeles Road runs to the north of the site with the properties from number 12 to number 92 lying to the south of a green open space area within a U shaped spur of the highway. To the west of the site, the other half of the U shaped spur of Steeles Road (nos. 66 to 80) is being redeveloped under 'Tranche 1' of the Unity Project. This development was approved under planning application 2228/13.

The properties that are to be demolished are a terrace of six dwellings to the front of the site facing onto the open space, and to the south of these, a pair of semi-detached bungalows and two terraces comprising four, two storey dwellings. These are to be replaced with a terrace of five dwellings and a pair of semi-detached dwellings to the front of the site.

HISTORY

3. The planning history relevant to the application site is:

2228/13 Land at Steeles Road, Woolpit The demolition of 66-80 Steeles Road and the replacement with 25 affordable dwellings. **Tranche 1 application.**

PROPOSAL

4. The proposal involves the demolition of 16 existing dwellings and their replacement with 31 dwellings. At the northern end of the site the existing terrace of six two storey dwellings will be replaced by one terrace of 5 dwellings and a pair of semi-detached dwellings. These new dwellings will be located on a similar footprint of the properties proposed to be demolished.

To the rear of these dwellings it is proposed to build a pair of bungalows and 90 degrees to these would be a terrace of four dwellings. These would be 1 bedroom dwellings facing onto a private drive. Along the newly aligned Steeles Road would be four pairs of semi-detached dwellings leading to a turning head with a further three pairs of semi-detached dwellings. A further two pairs of semi-detached dwellings would be accessed via a new shared private drive built as part of the Tranche 1. All the dwellings would have private rear gardens, the majority of these are relatively small, but the 4 bedroom house and 5 of the 3 bedroom houses would have large gardens.

The breakdown in housing types and sizes are as follows:

2 x 1 bedroom 2 person bungalow
 2 x 2 bedroom 3 person bungalow
 4 x 1 bedroom 2 person house
 14 x 2 bedroom 2 person house
 8 x 3 bedroom 5 person house
 1 x 4 bedroom 6 person house

60 car parking spaces would be provided either within driveways or in parking courts. The 1 bedroom dwellings would have 1 parking spaces, the 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings 2 parking spaces and the 4 bedroom dwelling, 4 parking spaces.

As part of the overall redevelopment of Steeles Road, a proposed deed of variation has been included to vary the s.106 for Tranche 1 (Planning application no. 2228/13) to allow for one of the dwellings on Tranche 1 to be sold on as a market dwelling.

This dwellings would be for one of the two owner occupiers how currently live on Tranche 2 (this application) and enables a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. It is proposed that the other private sector dwelling would be replaced within Tranche 2. It is considered that this "swap" arrangement facilitates the proper and comprehensive planning and redevelopment of Tranche 1 and 2 whilst safeguarding the timely delivery of the scheme.

POLICY

5. Planning Policy Guidance

See Appendix below.

CONSULTATIONS

6. Woolpit Parish Council Support the proposed development

MSDC Communities

This application is proposing the demolition of 16 dwellings (current number of bedrooms unknown so for the purpose of this consultation an assumption has been made that there are 8x2 bedroom dwellings -24 persons and 8x3 bedroom dwellings - 32 persons) and the erection of 31 dwellings (6x1 bed – 12 persons, 16x2 bed – 48 persons, 8x3 bed – 32 persons, 1x4 bed – 5 persons). Taking into account the existing dwellings to be demolished the contribution for this application is based on 41 persons in accordance with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Social Infrastructure including Open Space, Sport and Recreation is £75,235.00.

The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy recognises the need to improve existing village hall facilities in the ward of Woolpit. The Village Hall will require improvement over the coming years and is currently exploring funding options to increase car parking. The Institute requires some work to improve its accessibility and there is also a current project to make the Parish Church more

available for broader use including community events.

Local sports facilities require investment including at the Cricket and Tennis Clubs to ensure they can better serve the growing needs of the community. The Cricket Club are currently looking for funding for pitch improvements including looking at the water supply to the pitches.

MSDC - Strategic Housing

The Parish of Woolpit demonstrates a significant housing need. The affordable housing provisional is a redevelopment of the existing sub-standard Unity homes and the erection of new homes built to code 3+. The proposed mix has been reached following a detailed analysis of the needs of the existing tenants and owner occupiers on the site and the spread of applicants on the Council's Housing register awaiting rehousing. The type of property in highest need on the housing register is one and two bed roomed units. The types of unit most in need for existing tenants is for 2,3 and 4 bed units, a balance has been struck between the two needs groups.

Parking has been an problem in this part of Woolpit the application proposes parking which will provide a tangible visual improvement. Granting of planning permission will end the uncertainty experiences by the existing residents during the past 3-4 years.

MSDC Arboricultural Officer

The arboricultural report submitted with this application provides accurate analysis of the impact of development on existing trees and landscape features. Whilst a number of trees are proposed for removal their amenity value is generally low and compensated by replacement planting as part of the overall scheme. Of more importance is hedge H2, a section of which is scheduled for removal. This provides an important function in screening and incorporating the existing and proposed development within the landscape; appropriate and successful planting to replace this.

SCC - Development Contribution

There is sufficient surplus capacity at Woolpit County Primary School and Thurston Community College to accommodate all pupils arising from this scheme. However this scheme is part of the Unity Project tranche 2 which includes similar re-provision of schemes in Woolpit and Stowmarket. It has been agreed that whilst the infrastructure requirements will be separately assessed against each individual scheme there may be an element of cross-subsidy in terms of development contributions.

SCC – Archaeology

As this site has already been the subject of an archaeological investigation, in my opinion there would be no significant impact on known archaeological sites or areas with archaeological potential. I have no objection to the development and do not believe any archaeological mitigation is required.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

No objections recommends new fire hydrants

Ministry of Defence

No safeguarding issues

SCC Minerals and Waste

The land does lie within a Minerals Consultation Area. However, I note that the application relates to development within the curtilage of the village of Woolpit and is therefore unlikely to affect any mineral interests.

SCC Highways

No objections, recommends conditions.

MSDC Environmental Protection – Land contamination

No objections.

MSDC Strategic Housing

The Parish of Wool demonstrates a significant housing need. The affordable housing proposed is a redevelopment of the existing sub-standard Unity homes and the erection of new homes built to code 3+. The proposed mix has been reached following a detailed analysis of the needs of the existing tenants and owner occupiers on the site and the spread of applicants on the Council's Housing register awaiting rehousing. The type of property in highest need on the housing register is one and two bed roomed units. The types of unit most in need for existing tenants is for 2,3 and 4 bed units, a balance has been struck between the two needs groups.

Parking has been an problem in this part of Steele's Road the application proposes parking which will provide a tangible visual improvement. Granting of planning permission will end the uncertainty experiences by the existing residents during the past 3-4 years.

LOCAL AND THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

7. This is a summary of the representations received.
- The one comment received was subsequently withdrawn.

ASSESSMENT

8. The following matters are considered to be appropriate in the consideration of this proposal:
- Principle of development
 - Impact on the Character and Appearance of the area
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway matters
 - Landscaping
 - Biodiversity
 - S106 Obligation Requirements

Principle of Development

Woolpit is defined as a 'key service centre' in Policy CS1 of the Mid Suffolk

District Core Strategy 2008 and is a location in the district that is a focus for development. The dwellings on Steeles Road lie within the settlement limits of Woolpit and as such in this location the erection of residential development would be considered acceptable in principle, subject to satisfying the criteria as contained in other development plan policies and all material considerations.

The land to the south of property numbers 46 to 64 Steeles Road lies within the open countryside where the properties can be justified on exceptional grounds as identified in policy CS2 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy. One of the exceptions is affordable housing on exception sites. Policy H5 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan is also applicable and states that in order to provide affordable housing for local people who are unable to compete on the housing market, the Council may grant permission for residential development as an exception where the site abuts a town or village boundary. Applications will only be supported where the applicant demonstrates that there is a local need in the area for the affordable housing.

The scheme as submitted proposes 31 dwellings of which 30 would be affordable, however of the six properties which would be sited outside the development limits for Woolpit as identified in the adopted Local Plan, it is proposed that one of these (plus one dwelling on the same rural extension site land on tranche 1) would be for private ownership. The proposals for market dwellings on the land outside the settlement are not a form of cross subsidy which is specifically disallowed by Policy HS5 (although could be supported under the NPPF) but replacement for existing privately owned dwellings which are proposed to be demolished. The owners of these properties have agreed to sell their existing houses on the site provided they received a new home within the rural exception site area. The two privately owned dwellings are in strategic areas of the site and having to retain them would result in a far smaller and less comprehensive redevelopment and might compromise prompt delivery.

Although strictly a rural exception site, the land in question is a small part of the overall redevelopment, and forms a strip of land between other developments. It can be considered as a logical way of rounding off the village in this location. Allowing market housing in this location, as part of a wider regeneration scheme, can be considered to be a different situation to a standalone rural exception site. For these reasons a departure from the development plan is considered acceptable.

Having regards to the identified affordable housing need, it is considered that the erection of six dwelling outside, but adjacent to the development limits can be justified as necessary to the scheme to meet the overall identified affordable housing needs of Woolpit. The proposal also demonstrates sustainable development in line with the requirements of paragraph 14 and 49 of the NPPF and the requirements of policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review.

Impact of the character and appearance of the area

The site as existing is composed of existing local authority post war dwellings some of which are in poor condition. The land to the rear of 30-40 Steeles Road is used for informal parking and has an unkempt appearance. To the west of the site is the building site where the redevelopment of 66 to 80 Steeles Road (tranche 1) is current being undertaken following granting of planning

permission in 2013.

Policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 emphasises that all development must reflect local distinctiveness and enhance the character and appearance of the district while Policy SB2 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan 1998 states that within settlement limits proposals will be supported where they do not have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding locality. Policy GP1 states to be supported all proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area and should respect the scale and density of surrounding development.

The proposal involves the demolition of the existing dwellings and their replacement with residential properties. The development would follow the form of the tranche 1 redevelopment, with the layout forming a cul-de-sac. The pedestrian link to tranche 1 would be retained. Again following the form of the adjacent redevelopment, a block of three semi-detached dwellings would extend the site into the neighbouring open countryside. The majority of the dwellings would be two storey, with two bungalows in the centre of the site. The development would be in keeping with the character of the tranche 1 development; using the same palette of materials and would result in a cohesive character to this area of Steeles Road. Overall it is considered that the development will result in a significant improvement in the character of the area.

The extension of the three blocks of semi-detached dwellings into the countryside will fill in a gap between the older development on Roman Fields and tranche 1, as such it will provide a logical extension into the countryside. As with the tranche 1 it is considered important that consideration is given to the boundary treatment in this location as the site is visible from a number of vistas. It is therefore proposed that the boundary treatment follows that of tranche 1 with a native hedge along the southern boundary of the site to soften the impact of the proposal on the surrounding open countryside.

Impact on residential amenity

Policies SB2, H13 and H16 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan aim to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. These policies are considered to have significant weight in the determination of this application as they do not conflict with the main thrust of the NPPF as stated in paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

The development is a high density scheme and the layout has had to be carefully designed to avoid loss of amenity. Many of the dwellings are located in similar positions to the dwellings they replace so will have no more impact on neighbouring properties. Nos 28 and 30 Steeles Road which are to be retained will be the closest existing dwellings. These have the majority of their gardens to the side. Plot 31 will be marginally closer to no. 28 Steeles Road (5 metres rather than 6 metres dwelling to dwelling distance) but its siting will not affect the outlook from No. 28. Within the centre of the sites plots 23 and 24 will be bungalows, which will ensure privacy to surrounding dwellings and plots 19 and 22 will be 1 bedroom dwellings with only bathroom windows to the rear which can be conditioned to be obscurely glazed. All the dwellings have adequate private amenity space.

It is considered that the proposal in terms of its impact on residential amenity complies with the requirements of policies SB2, H13 and H16 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan and the good design principles of the NPPF.

Highway and Parking

Policies SB2, H13 and T10 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan states that development will be supported where it does not have a negative impact on highway safety. Policies GP1 and T9 also provide criteria in relation to the provision of car parking in relation to development. The policies referred to above are in line with the requirement of paragraph 39 of the NPPF to provide safe and suitable access for all and carries significant weight the determination of this application.

The previous 'U' shaped road was stopped up as part of The Tranche 1 development. The proposed development could comprise a cul-de-sac with various private drives. A pedestrian link to the Tranche 1 site would be retained. The highway authority has not objected to the proposals, which would provide sufficient parking for the new development both in parking courts close to dwellings and within driveways. Although not part of the application it is proposed to provide dropped kerbs and parking bays from nos. 18 to 22 Steeles Road which are the dwellings to be retained close to the new development. This will help to decrease on street parking surrounding the site.

Landscaping

Policy GP1 and H13 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan requires that landscaping is considered as an intrinsic part of every proposal. This criteria is repeated in the NPPF in terms of the requirement for a good standard of design and layout with every scheme. The same requirement is also contained in policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy.

There are a number of existing trees and hedging within this site with some of them being within existing garden areas and others being on public open space areas. The applicant has carried out an arboricultural survey of the site.

The arboricultural report has identified that there will be a requirement to remove the remainder of the hedge on the existing boundary of the development which was partly loss in tranche 1 to facilitate the extension of the site into the adjoining countryside. The hedge includes a number of mature hedge trees which would also need to be removed. One of these trees is a good quality oak but it cannot be retained without significantly compromising the development. All the remaining trees that are to be removed have been graded as being of a low amenity value and it is considered that they can be replaced within a suitable landscaping scheme. The existing tree at no 30 Steeles Road is outside the development boundary and will be retained and protected during the development. The hedge that is to be removed is a necessary requirement to facilitate the development and it can be replaced by a new hedge on site.

The Council's Tree Officer has been consulted on this proposal and he does not raise any objections to the proposal and agrees with the recommendations as made in the applicant's arboricultural report. Having regards to the above, it is considered that in arboricultural terms that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies GP1 and H13 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan and

policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy

Biodiversity

Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Implemented 1st April 2010) provides that all "competent authorities" (public bodies) to "have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions." Policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy also applies which states that development will maintain and enhance biodiversity.

The properties on site are all in a reasonable weathertight condition, are mainly occupied and do not appear to be an obvious place to provide habitat for protected species. The open green land to the rear of the site has been used as agricultural land until the development of tranche 1. It also would not appear to be suitable as a habitat area for any protected species. Furthermore, there are no ponds or any other water environment in the locality which could provide habitat from protected aquatic species. The applicant has carried out a protected species report which has identified that there are no protected species either within the dwellings or within the gardens or open space areas within the site or on the agricultural land to the south of the site. The provision of a new hedge on the boundary of the site and the open countryside to mitigate the effect of the proposed dwellings.

Having regards to the recommendations of the protected species report, it is considered that the proposal complies with the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the requirements of policy CL8 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan, policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk District Core Strategy and the advice as contained in paragraph 118 of the NPPF. In summary it is concluded that there would be no risk of committing an offence to protected species.

Section 106 planning application requirements

The proposal as submitted due to its size triggers the Council's requirements for contributions towards the provision of Open Space and Social Infrastructure (OSSI), affordable housing and education as required by policy CS6 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy. The contributions requested are as follows: -

OSSI - £75,023 towards enhancing existing and providing new facilities in the Woolpit area which is as a consequence of the needs of the residents of the proposed development.

Affordable Housing - Policy H4 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan (as amended) requires that for schemes of 5 or more dwellings in Woolpit, developers are required to provide 35% of the scheme as affordable housing. In this scheme, the applicant is proposing that the scheme is 93% affordable (with 1 market dwelling) and as such there is a requirement in the section 106 agreement to ensure that this is delivered.

Education Contributions – There are surplus places at both primary and secondary school serving Woolpit and therefore no education contributions are required.

The proposal is one of three concurrent Unity housing schemes which have current planning applications, the other two being at Stowmarket and Haughley.

Your officers have agreed that the s.106 contributions can be considered together for the three schemes and a viability appraisal over all the schemes has been undertaken. The viability appraisal has shown a surplus of £60,000 over Tranche 2. Given the high proportion of affordable houses and the requirement to provide an education contribution for the Stowmarket proposal, it has been concluded that it would not be viable to provide the full OSSI contributions for Woolpit. It is considered that, having regards to the wider unity programme, it is appropriate to treat the section 106 aspects in a conjoined manner.

Conclusion

The development is considered to be generally in accordance with the Development Plan and the NPPF. The proposed one market house outside the settlement boundary is considered to be an acceptable departure from the Development Plan. The proposal would provide new affordable dwellings which would in part replace existing substandard houses. The development would not be detrimental to neighbour amenity and would improve the character of the immediate area. The proposal would allow the comprehensive redevelopment of this area of Steels Road, started under Tranche 1. The lack of contribution to public open space would be outweighed by the high proportion of affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATION

That authority be delegated to the Corporate Manager (Development Management) to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the applicant first entering into a Section 106 Planning Obligation to his satisfaction:

- [a] To secure the provision of the 30 of the 31 dwellings as affordable;
- [b] Construction of those dwellings to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes;
- [c] Compliance monitoring costs;

and that the existing s.106 executed in relation to planning permission 2228/13 be varied to allow one private dwelling to be occupied within that Tranche.

and that the planning permission be subject to conditions covering the following matters:

- Time limit for commencement
- As recommended by SCC Highways including parking.
- Native hedge on southern boundary
- Detailed landscaping
- Tree protection measures
- Compliance with the ecological survey
- Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans and documents

Philip Isbell
Corporate Manager - Development Management

Elizabeth Truscott
Senior Planning Officer

APPENDIX A - PLANNING POLICIES

1. **Mid Suffolk Local Plan**

GP1 - DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF DEVELOPMENT

2. **Planning Policy Statements, Circulars & Other policy**

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

C01/03 - Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives

APPENDIX B - NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

Letter(s) of representation(s) have been received from a total of **1** interested party(ies).

The following people **objected** to the application

The following people **supported** the application:

The following people **commented** on the application:

[REDACTED]