

Committee Report

Item No: 3

Reference: DC/17/03147

Case Officer: Alex Scott

Ward: The Stonhams

Ward Member: Suzie Morley

RECOMMENDATION – GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION WITH CONDITIONS

Description of Development

Proposal for 'Mixed use Development' comprising the erection of 3 No. Detached residential dwellings and garages; Erection of 6 No. Small Industrial Units (B1) and 1 No. main Industrial Unit (B2) all with new vehicular accesses, associated parking, landscaping and boundary treatments.

Location

Land on East Side, Flordon Road, Creeting St Mary, IPSWICH, IP6 8NH

Parish: Creeting St. Mary

Expiry Date: 25/09/17

Application Type: Full planning application

Development Type: Minor – C3, B1 and B2

Applicant: Mr Jon Haynes

Agent: Medusa Design

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION

This decision refers to drawing number 1579/17/01 - LOCATION PLAN received 21/06/2017 as the DEFINED RED LINE PLAN with the site shown edged red. This application is submitted as a Full application. Therefore, the following drawings are also of relevance:

- Site Plan - Existing - 1579/17/01 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Land Levels - Existing - 1579/17/01 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Block Plan - Proposed 1579/17/02/C - Received 14/02/2018
 - Land Levels - Proposed - 1579/17/02/C - Received 14/02/2018
 - Site Plan - Proposed (Residential) - 1579/17/03 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Street Scene - Proposed - Residential - 1579/17/03 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Elevations and Floor Plans - Proposed - Residential Plot 1 - 1579/17/04 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Elevations and Floor Plans - Proposed - Residential Plot 2 - 1579/17/05 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Elevations and Floor Plans - Proposed - Residential Plot 3 - 1579/17/06 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Elevations and Floor Plans - Proposed - Residential Garages - 1579/17/07 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Elevations and Floor Plans - Proposed - B1 Units - 1579/17/08 - Received 21/06/2017
 - Floor Plan - Proposed - Ground Floor - B2 Unit - 1579/17/09/A - Received 21/06/2017
 - Floor Plan - Proposed - First Floor - B2 Unit - 1579/17/10/A - Received 21/06/2017
 - Elevations - Proposed - B2 Unit - 1579/17/11/A - Received 21/06/2017
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The application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online at www.babergh.gov.uk or www.midsuffolk.gov.uk.

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason/s:

- The Ward Member has requested the application be brought before the committee.

PART TWO – APPLICATION BACKGROUND

History

There is no planning history directly related to the application site.

All Policies Identified As Relevant

The proposal has been assessed with regard to adopted development plan policies, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other material considerations. Highlighted local and national policies are listed below. Detailed assessment of policies in relation to the recommendation and issues highlighted in this case will be carried out within the assessment:

Summary of Policies

NPPF – NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development

FC02 - Provision And Distribution Of Housing

FC03 - Supply Of Employment Land

CS01 - Settlement Hierarchy

CS02 - Development in the Countryside & Countryside Villages

CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment

CS09 - Density and Mix

GP01 - Design and layout of development

H13 - Design and layout of housing development

H15 - Development to reflect local characteristics

H16 - Protecting existing residential amenity

H17 - Keeping residential development away from pollution

CL08 - Protecting wildlife habitats

CL09 - Recognised wildlife areas

CL11 - Retaining high quality agricultural land

E09 - Location of new businesses

E10 - New Industrial and commercial development in the countryside

New Industrial and commercial development in the countryside

E12 - General principles for location, design and layout

T02 - Minor Highway improvements

T09 - Parking Standards

T10 - Highway Considerations in Development

Details of Previous Committee / Resolutions and any member site visit

None

Details of any Pre Application Advice

A pre-application submission was made to Mid Suffolk District Council and a response was received in January 2017. The response advised that the provision of dwellings in this location may not be appropriate. However, in a subsequent response, attention was drawn to dwellings that had subsequently been approved in the locality of this site.

Consultations and Representations

During the course of the application Consultation and Representations from third parties have been received. These are summarised below.

A: Summary of Consultations

Creeping St. Mary Parish Clerk

Object to this planning application and make the following points:-

1. It is unknown as to who will occupy the 6 commercial units and has no control over who will occupy them;
2. There would be an increase in traffic along the narrow Flordon Road (and Coddenham Road) which would make an already dangerous road even more so;
3. The Infrastructure cannot take further development in the area of a commercial nature; and
4. There has been a 20% increase in planning approved in the last 5 years and the area cannot cope with further development.

Highways England

No objection - Subject to compliance with suggested condition.

SCC - Highways

The proposed visibility splays for the commercial vehicular access are still not as standard - Recommend a speed survey is carried out to enable a lower standard of visibility to be accepted.

Economic Development & Tourism

Support the Proposal: Whilst site is allocated for employment, do not object to mixed use proposal for housing as this will make the scheme viable - It is not appropriate to impose "artificial" restrictions such as business operation hours as modern business is a 24/7 operation.

Environmental Health - Land Contamination

No objection to the proposal from the perspective of land contamination - Request that EH are contacted in the event of unexpected ground conditions being encountered during construction and that the developer is made aware that the responsibility for the safe development of the site lies with them..

Environmental Health - Noise/Odour/Light/Smoke

No objection - Subject to compliance with suggested conditions.

Ecology - Place Services

Badgers have been recorded within the red line boundary of the proposed development and there are records of Common Lizard and Hedgehogs within 500 metres of the site.

Landscape - Place Services

Recommend landscaping scheme should include submission of: Landscape Visual Appraisal; Landscape Strategy; Detailed landscape planting plan, landscape maintenance plan and specification; Detailed boundary treatment plan and specification; and protection of existing landscape planting.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

No comments received.

SCC - Flood & Water Management

Recommend approval subject to conditions.

B: Representations

Letters of concern or objection have been received from 6 no. third party sources during the course of determination. Comments received are summarised below:

- Residential and commercial development on the site should not be allowed;
- There is no need for commercial development on this site as there is existing vacant space at Lion Barn industrial estate, Needham Market and at Tomo industrial estate, Stowmarket;
- The proposal is outside of the current settlement boundary - concern that this will lead to precedent and pressure on adjacent land for further development;
- This is a green field site and should be protected - Note other brown field site in Needham Market and Stowmarket should be developed first;
- Do not consider the development at the Laurels should be used as a comparison as this was infill development;
- The land should be retained as grazing land and trees and wildlife protected;
- There is no fronting paved footpath to the highway and the increased traffic would endanger pedestrian safety (some raise concerns that increased traffic resulting from the development would result in a threat to the lives of pedestrians);
- Consider the existing road network to be unsuitable for commercial vehicles;
- The land is close to the Coddendam road junction and would result in increased pressure on this junction which has had numerous accidents;
- Concern with regards impact on traffic if high sided vehicles miss the junction and have to turn before the railway bridge into Needham Market;
- Concern that the proposal would result in increased instances of high sided vehicles striking the railway bridge;
- Consider the majority of journeys to and from the development would be made by motorised vehicles due to the lack of footpath connections;
- Consider that if the development goes ahead the exit road from the site should be designed such that it prevents vehicles from turning right into Flordon Road and through the village;
- Others consider that a left exit turn only would be difficult to police;
- Concern with regards noise, disturbance, air pollution and artificial light nuisance;
- Do not consider existing broadband speed is appropriate for business;
- Consider proposal would have a detrimental impact on the existing street scene and ruin the character of the village.

PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

1. The Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site is located between the A14 and Flordon Road, close to the junction with Coddenham Road, approximately half a kilometre to the north east of Needham Market.
- 1.2 The site is located outside of any settlement boundary and extends to approximately 1.44 hectares. The site comprises existing agricultural/pastoral land which is predominantly grade 3 agricultural land with a small portion of grade 2 to the north-east corner. Land levels rise at a moderate rate through the site from Flordon Road to the boundary with the A14.
- 1.3 A group of approximately 15 dwellings, fronting Flordon Road lie to the north west of the site and Bosmere Lake lies to the south, to the opposite side of Coddenham Road. There is a further parcel of agricultural land to the east of the site which abuts a slip road leading from Coddenham Road onto the A14.
- 1.4 J H Breheny, a civil engineering company occupies a site further to the north west, accessed via the Flordon Road/Coddenham Road junction, and associated large commercial vehicles regularly pass the site.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1. The application seeks planning permission for the erection of 7 no. new business units and 3 no. new dwellings on the site, as well as the construction of 2 no. new vehicular accesses to Flordon Road (one serving the proposed dwellings and one the proposed business units) and associated ancillary buildings, private driveways and hardstanding.
- 2.2 In respect of the business units, these are provided in two separate areas of the site, being a terrace of 6 no. B1 units to the northern end of the site and a single, larger B2 unit, to the eastern side. A central access point would provide access into the commercial aspect of the site, allowing access to the parking spaces associated with the commercial units and a loading/unloading yard to serve the large single unit.
- 2.3 The proposed 3 no. dwellings would be one-and-a-half-storey in scale and would be a mix of 3 and 4 bedroom properties. The proposed dwellings would be sited fronting onto Flordon Road and would also have a shared point of access. The dwellings are proposed in order to enable the commercial development, with the sale of these properties providing the finances to support the construction of the commercial buildings and the relocation of the applicant's business into the new B2 unit on the site.
- 2.3 The proposed layout shows structural landscaping, including earth bunds, between the proposed dwellings and the proposed business units.

3. The Principle of Development

Commercial Units

- 3.1 Paragraphs 18 and 19 of the NPPF identify that; "The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future" and "The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system".

- 3.2 In respect of rural areas, the NPPF also provides that; "Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should: support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings; promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship"
- 3.3 The existing business that will accommodate the main large industrial B2 unit currently provides employment for 18 full time members of staff. It is envisaged that the proposal would give the opportunity for this number to increase and for the business to grow and expand.
- 3.4 The proposed B1 units would also provide job opportunities for businesses in need of smaller sized units not currently available on existing industrial estates within the District.
- 3.5 Your economic development officers have been consulted on the application and have advised that whilst it is acknowledged that there is land allocated for employment purposes in the development plan, there are deliverability and viability issues on these sites which restrict the delivery of small-scale. Mid Suffolk District is home to thousands of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and therefore the demand for small scale premises is far in excess of our current supply. Modern energy efficient units are in demand as there has been little development over the last decades, so a new opportunity such as this would broaden the scope of potential users and provide choice in the market place.
- 3.6 Your economic development officers advise that the location of these units adjacent to a major junction on the A14 will be attractive to local businesses and as such the proposal will deliver a much needed boost to the supply of employment premises options, which is welcome.
- 3.7 The principle of the inclusion of residential elements to cross-subsidise the development is supported by your economic development officers.
- 3.8 The principle of the commercial aspect of the development proposal is, therefore considered acceptable, subject to other material planning considerations.

Residential Units

- 3.8 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that: "Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites."
- 3.9 Mid Suffolk District Council does not have this housing land supply at this time and, as such, the Council's housing supply policies are not considered to be up to date. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states in this respect: "For decision-taking this means: approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless: any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in

this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted".

- 3.10 In light of this, as the development plan is considered out of date in terms of the Council's housing supply policies, it is necessary to consider that, nevertheless, the NPPF requires that development be sustainable and assess whether the adverse impacts outweigh the benefits when considered in the whole. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out three dimensions for sustainable development, economic, social and environmental: "an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure: a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."
- 3.11 The specific location of the proposed residential development is at the end of the row of an existing residential street scene and the proposed residential development is considered to represent a natural extension. The proposed residential development is not, therefore, considered to be visually isolated within the meaning of paragraph 55 of the NPPF. The site is also considered to be within walking distance of the Town of Needham Market, accessed via public rights of way, clear of the vehicular highway, via Needham Lakes. The Town has a full range of services and facilities required for day to day living and regular public transport links (Train and Bus) are available to larger centres, including Stowmarket, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. In this regard, the distances to facilities and services are not such that would be entirely unreasonable for people to walk, cycle or access via public transport.
- 3.12 As such, the proposed residential aspect of the proposal is also considered to represent sustainable development.
- 3.13 Overall it is not considered that the proposal conflicts with the NPPF to such an extent that would justify refusal of the application. Occupiers of the development would have access to a full range of facilities and services via alternative means of transport, the development would not be isolated despite its position outside settlement boundaries and would therefore provide sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF when taken as a whole.

4. Design and Layout

Commercial Units

- 4.1 The large/single B2 unit is proposed to the eastern end of the site, with associated car parking to the south of the building and a loading yard to the north. A total of 10 no. parking spaces (inc 3 disabled parking spaces) are provided. Additional visitor spaces are available in the area to the north edge of the site adjacent to the B1 Units.
- 4.2 The B2 unit itself would have a floor area of 800 square metres, though an entrance lobby of 84 square metres is also provided. The building is set over two stories and split into 3 no. areas accessed via external roller shutter doors at ground floor level. Storage areas, open plan office space and a canteen are located at first floor level. No excuse

- 4.3 The building would be finished in insulated cladding panels under a profiled sheet roof. The roof would be hidden behind a parapet wall, and the walls would be formed off a red brick plinth. The building would have an overall height of approximately 8 metres.
- 4.4 The proposed 6 no. B1 units are proposed as a terrace, sited to the northern end of the site, behind the proposed residential development which fronts Flordon Road. These proposed units would have a monopitch roof, allowing the height of the building to be staggered from north to south and to work with landscape land levels.
- 4.5 The proposed B1 units would provide predominantly ground-floor space (3 of the units would also include mezzanine storage), each one consisting of a single open plan office. They would be constructed of materials to match the proposed B2 (as described above).
- 4.6 The proposed layout defines each separate unit and provides individual parking and servicing spaces and where the uses can operate without conflict.
- 4.7 The proposed Commercial Units are considered to be sited and designed where they would have minimal impact on the landscape and street scene character of the area and the character of the adjacent existing and proposed residential developments.

Residential Units

- 4.8 The proposed dwellings have been designed to be one-and-a-half storey in scale, set in a linear arrangement to the south-west corner of the site.
- 4.9 The properties would sit adjacent to the existing dwellings fronting Flordon Road in a continuation of this established street scene character. The proposed dwellings would be buffered to the north and east by a combination of earth bunding and structural landscape screening which is intended to provide environmental screening from the proposed commercial units and the A14 Trunk Road to the North and North East.
- 4.10 The proposed residential properties have been designed to complement the existing residential properties to the west, being of a low height one-and-a-half storey scale and being externally finished in similar materials (facing brick of mixed colour and concrete pantile roofs). The proposed dwellings would also include design features such as pitched roof porches and dormer windows, and chimney stacks.
- 4.11 The layout proposes private residential gardens of a generous size, consistent with the established density and character of the existing street scene and ensuring a good standard of private amenity space for future occupants.
- 4.12 The proposed residential units are, therefore, considered to be of an appropriate siting, scale, form and design and would complement the established street scene character, appropriate to the existing landscape setting.

5. Site Access, Parking and Highway Safety Considerations

- 5.1 The application proposes the construction of two new accesses to Flordon Road, one serving the commercial aspect of the development and the other the residential. The existing field access is proposed to be stopped up.
- 5.2 The proposed residential access is considered acceptable and has been designed in accordance with current SCC Highways standards.

- 5.3 SCC Highways have raised a holding objection in relation to the proposed commercial access by reason that the proposed visibility splays do not meet the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (where the Y dimension for a 30mph speed limit is 90m). There is also concern with regards the potential for large commercial vehicles turning right when leaving the site, and into the village.
- 5.4 In order to overcome the holding objection the applicant has proposed amendments to the current commercial access proposed and to engineer in such a way that any vehicle exiting the site would only be able to turn left, away from the village and towards the A14 junction. It has been suggested that an "island" would be required to be incorporated within the access design and that the long frontage and can be engineered in such a way to enable vehicles to turn into the site from either direction but only exit the site by turning left. It is considered that there is sufficient visibility to the right when leaving the site to ensure safety and visibility splays are achieved. It is considered that anyone entering the site would also have sufficient visibility in both directions before turning right and anyone waiting to turn right would be visible from a sufficiently long distance before they are reached.
- 5.5 The amendments to the proposed commercial access are proposed to be secured by way of condition which would also secure provision prior to first use/occupation of the commercial developments, and maintenance and retention thereafter.
- 5.6 The proposed layout proposes on-site manoeuvring and parking areas in accordance with current advisory parking standards provided by SCC- Highways. The proposal would provide sufficient on-site parking for all elements of the proposed development and would not result in a need for on-street parking. The proposal would also ensure that vehicles would be able to turn on-site and re-enter the public highway safely in forward gear.
- 5.7 Should the proposed improvements to the commercial access be secured, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety and convenience and not to result in a 'severe' impact on existing highway safety, as specified in NPPF paragraph 32.

6. Impact on Residential Amenity

- 6.1 The nearest proposed new dwelling would be located a minimum distance of 20 metres from the nearest existing dwelling to the west of the site. By reason of the separation distances of the proposed dwellings, their low height and scale, and the absence of facing above ground floor windows, the proposed residential development is not considered to result in demonstrable harm to the amenities currently enjoyed by occupants of neighbouring properties.
- 6.2 The proposed B1 units would be located a minimum distance of 60 metres from the nearest existing neighbouring dwelling to the south west, and 55 metres from the nearest dwelling proposed as part of this application. By reason of the: proposed separation distances; single storey scale and low impact design of the units; proposed intervening landscape bunding and planting; and the proposed B1 use of the building, being compatible within a residential environment, the proposed B1 units are not considered to result in significant harm to the amenities currently enjoyed by occupants of existing dwellings, or those of future occupants of the proposed dwellings.
- 6.3 The proposed B2 unit would be located a minimum distance of 107 metres from the nearest existing neighbouring dwelling to the west of the site, and 35 metres from the nearest dwelling proposed as part of this proposal. By reason of the: proposed separation distances; the proposed intervening landscape bunding and planting; and having considered the existing background noise and disturbance emanating from the adjacent A14 Trunk Road, the proposed B2 unit is not considered to result in significant harm to the amenities currently enjoyed by occupants of

neighbouring properties, and is considered to ensure a good standard of amenity for future occupants of the proposed dwellings, as required by NPPF paragraph 17.

- 6.4 The comments of the Council's Environmental Protection Officers are noted, however, It is not appropriate to impose 'artificial' restrictions such as business operation hours as a condition of and permission granted as the success of modern businesses are very much reliant on 24/7 operation in order to be competitive within current market conditions. It is proposed that appropriate hard and soft landscape mitigation should instead be imposed and maintained as a means of avoiding environmental harm to the living conditions of existing residents. This would also enable the prospective businesses to operate fully in accordance with their requirements in the interest of building a strong and competitive economy in the District.

7. Ecology, Biodiversity and Protected Species

- 7.1 Having assessed the proposal against standing advice provided by Natural England the proposal site is predominantly pastoral land and is not considered to comprise optimum viable habitat for protected species.
- 7.2 Although Badgers, Hedgehogs and Common Lizards have been recorded within 500 metres of the site it is not considered that the proposed development would result in the loss of these species' habitat or have a significant impact on foraging areas for the reason of the close proximity of the site to the A14 Trunk Road.
- 7.3 It is noted that existing tree planting to the south of the site, adjacent to Flordon Road would be retained and enhanced as part of the application proposal.

8. Flooding and Drainage

- 8.1 The applicant has provided a comprehensive Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage Strategy for the proposed development site.
- 8.2 The proposed strategy has been assessed by the County Flood and Water Engineer who recommends approval of the application subject to the proposal being carried out in accordance with the provisions of the strategy and other relevant conditions.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

9. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 9.1 Substantial weight is attributed to the development proposal in relation to the economic dimension of sustainable development. The overall proposal would allow for the creation of additional jobs/ employment within the local area and would enable the retention and growth of an existing business within the Mid Suffolk District.
- 9.2 Significant weight is also attributed with regards the social dimension of sustainable development as the proposal would deliver three additional homes within a sustainable location, in support of the District's housing supply and would provide increased employment opportunities locally.
- 9.3 The proposed development is considered to result in minimal additional environmental harm due to the existing impacts relating to: the adjacent A14, adjacent dwellings, and the existing nearby business that currently requires regular large commercial vehicle movements; visual and

environmental screening provided by existing and proposed landscaping; and the existing land not providing optimal habitat opportunities for protected and priority species.

- 9.4 On balance, therefore, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development when assessed against the provisions of the NPPF and development plan when taken as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Manager – Planning for Growth be authorised to grant Full Planning Permission subject to conditions including:

- Standard Time Limit Condition
- Approved Plans
- Detailed landscaping scheme and aftercare
- Those required by SCC-Flood and Water Engineer
- Standard Highways Access and Parking conditions relating to the proposed dwellings
- Submission and agreement of detailed access scheme in relation to commercial units prior to commencement
- On-site parking and manoeuvring provision in relation to commercial units
- Those required by Highways England
- Submission, approval and provision of sound insulation against noise from A14 and the proposed B2 unit prior to occupation of the new dwellings
- Lighting scheme
- Construction hours
- No burning on-site during construction