

Committee Report

Item No: 1

Reference: DC/18/01487

Case Officer: John Pateman-Gee

Ward: Bramford & Blakenham.

Ward Member/s: Cllr John Field. Cllr Kevin Welsby.

RECOMMENDATION – GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION WITH CONDITIONS

Description of Development

Submission of details under Outline Planning Permission 2022/16 - Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 130 dwellings and includes affordable housing, car parking, open space provision with associated infrastructure.

Location

Land On The West Side Of, Stowmarket Road, Great Blakenham, Suffolk

Parish: Great Blakenham

Expiry Date: 12/07/2018

Application Type: RES - Reserved Matters

Development Type: Major Large Scale - Dwellings

Applicant: Persimmon Homes (Suffolk)

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

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

It is a “Major” application for:

- a residential land allocation for 15 or more dwellings

Details of Previous Committee / Resolutions and any member site visit

None

PART TWO – POLICIES AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Summary of Policies

CL11 - Retaining high quality agricultural land

CL05 - Protecting existing woodland

CL08 - Protecting wildlife habitats

CL09 - Recognised wildlife areas

CS01 - Settlement Hierarchy

CS02 - Development in the Countryside & Countryside Villages

CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment

CS09 - Density and Mix
FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development
GP01 - Design and layout of development
H03 - Housing development in villages
H04- Altered Policy H4
H07 - Restricting housing development unrelated to needs of countryside
H13 - Design and layout of housing development
H15 - Development to reflect local characteristics
H16 - Protecting existing residential amenity
HB01 - Protection of historic buildings
T10 - Highway Considerations in Development
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

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

Great Blakenham Parish Council:

- Construction phase, there is only one exit/entrance to the site. This will make the existing problems with mud being transferred on to Stowmarket Road even worse and could also present a risk to other users of the road. They would like to see measures undertaken. *(Note: Condition 12 of the Outline covers this point and would need agreement by the LPA)*
 - Also, an additional exit should be considered. *(Note: Outline included access and so further access matters cannot be considered further.)*
 - The Council feels it is essential that the infrastructure (access road, lighting etc) is put in place before the construction of houses starts to prevent the problems experienced by new residents in other recent developments in the area. *(Note: As a single access proposal and given the scale of development, this is likely. Lighting would be a matter for SCC Highways as it would be on land to be adopted)*
 - the lagoon should be made into a feature for the development with landscaping and other measures to encourage wildlife. *(Note: This is likely, but would also need to be balanced with the need for the attenuation basin to function.)*
 - Councillors noted that there is insufficient parking, especially in the north area. This will cause problems similar to those on Blakenham Fields where residents end up parking on the road, either to have their vehicle near their home or because there are not enough parking spaces for the number of vehicles. There is also insufficient allocation of parking for visitors. *(Note: Parking meets Suffolk Highways Standards)*
 - The Council agreed that a pedestrian crossing should be installed on Stowmarket Road so that people using the bus stop on the opposite side of the road to the development will be able to cross safely. *(Note: This was not sought or agreed at outline stage and can not be sought under reserved matters)*
 - Concern of pressure on parking and risk of accidents on B1113
-

- Concerned about access to the allotments. *(Note current provision and current access is unchanged from existing arrangements, but opportunity has been provided for additional access to the allotments via this scheme. Public parking is not secured by the outline and can not be secured under reserved matters).*

- The Council believes that there must be an improvement in the quality of life for the wider community as part of this development. *(Note: It is not clear as to the requirement sought by this statement.)*

- The Council would urge that some provision is made to improve village facilities. For example, the provision of land, either as part of the development or elsewhere, as a nature reserve and/or the development of the footpath network in the area e.g linking the footpath beside the development to other paths in the area, so that a footpath network can be established. *(Note: None of these things were secured as part of the outline that included access as part of the application. However, a footpath across the site to the woods and allotment is secured, previously residents crossed the site unauthorised.)*

Historic England: No comment

Place Services Ecology: Holding Objection

SCC Minerals and Waste: No objection

Environment Agency: Do not wish to be consulted.

Natural England: Seek monies for the RAMs fund. *(Note: This request was not made for the outline application as it did not apply to the location at the time and can not be secured under reserved matters.)*

BMSDC Environmental Health Air Quality: No comments to make.

BMSDC Environment Health Other Issues: Loven Acoustics on the impact of transport noise on the development report concludes that there is no impact on the majority of the site but dwellings on the boundary with Stowmarket Road (Plots 67 to 78) will require acoustic double glazing and trickle ventilation in accordance with the specification of "Table four" to the report. The report also recommends that there should be a wall or acoustic fence to protect amenity space (if any) at the front or sides of these plots. No objection provided the dwellings are constructed in accordance with this recommendation.

Place Services Landscape: The proposed development (as shown on layout plan 042-P-100) fails to deliver a satisfactory landscape infrastructure which demonstrates effective mitigation of the development impact. The layout also fails to provide an acceptable approach to the design of the public realm. The submitted layout plan fails to reflect the landscape design principles set out within the masterplan (drawing 2546_022H) under outline application ref: 2022/16. The tree areas of planting identified as 'potential' in the previously submitted masterplan drawing 2546_022H have not been included in the latest submitted scheme. The planting areas fail to be adequately integrated into the development layout missing opportunities to reduce the impact of the built form. We recommend that the development layout and proposed planting is reviewed to conform to previous landscape officer response under outline application ref: 2022/16.

SCC Archaeology: Recommends conditions for a programme of archaeology works. *(Note: It is not possible to introduce such overarching conditions to the reserved matters application. However, a detailed assessment that included trenching was carried out at the time of the outline permission. On this basis as layout is now known, a further programme of works for specific plots is considered reasonable based on that assessment and recommended).*

SCC Travel Plans: Comments on Legal Agreement of outline only. No comment on this reserved matters application

Design out crime officer: Concerns and comments on scheme. Detailed list of particular parts of the layout that could be improved from planning out crime.

B: Representations

One letter of objection has been received:-

- Wish to see bungalows and two storey only.
- Concern in any reduction of light to the east facing woodland.
- Lack of screening towards No2 Chequers rise and objects to bin collection areas.

PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

1. The Site and Surroundings

1.1. The site is located on the northern edge of Great Blakenham. It comprises an area of approximately 4.76 ha of open grassland to the west of Stowmarket Road. Woodland lies along the western boundary and the site is on sloping land up to the wood. The current point of access to the field is via a track lying to the west of Stowmarket Road, which leads through a small informal parking area adjacent to an area of allotment gardens located to the north of the application site.

2. The Proposal

2.1. Outline Planning permission (with all matters reserved except access) for up to no 130 dwellings and includes, affordable housing, car parking, open space provision with associated infrastructure was granted 8th May 2017 reference 2022/16. This application is the submission of details under Outline Planning Permission 2022/16 - Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 130 dwellings and includes affordable housing, car parking, open space provision with associated infrastructure.

2.2. The development is similar to the outline indicative layout, but the need to enlarge the attenuation has rearranged the approach to the street frontage and approach. The result being a larger landscape transition area between the existing Chequers Rise estate and the proposal has taken advantage of this by creating more frontage development over this space. The proposed density would 27.3 dwellings per hectare and would be for:-

- 1 bed = 12 units
- 2 bed = 42 units
- 3 bed = 63 units
- 4 bed = 13 units

3. The Principle Of Development

3.1. The site is located outside the Settlement Boundary for Great Blakenham in the Saved Local Plan 1998. However, outline planning permission was granted, and this is the reserved matters application. On this basis this application is not a matter of principle, but design, layout and scale.

4. Site Access, Parking And Highway Safety Considerations

4.1. Access details and connections to the site have been dealt with under the outline permission. The outline permission also establishes the principle of 130 dwellings and related traffic to and from the site.

Parking and visitor parking meets the requirements under the SCC Parking Standards. More parking above the requirement of policy would potentially impact the wildlife buffer zones of both the woodland and corridors through the site or impact drainage requirements.

5. Design And Layout [Impact On Street Scene]

5.1. The proposed dwelling units are a standard product and can be found in many locations across the country. On the basis of the current out of date Suffolk design guide that refers to form and layout rather than specific design quality, it is not considered that the design could be refused and is in many ways similar to the adjacent estate.

5.2. There are two aspect of the proposal that potentially lift this proposal above a standard estate design. Firstly, the site is on a reasonable slope leading up to the woodland that lies along the rear boundary. The slope will add interest to the spaces created with the development, break up rooflines and create views. Blocks of car dominated areas will be broken down into sections due to the slope and houses will need to be cut in. There is 3 storey development, mostly in the form of 2 storey development with rooms in the roof, but this can be accommodated as these units are located on lower land within the development. Officers are also mindful of other 3 storey development in the area and currently being built.

5.3. The second aspect is the extent of landscaped space and the backdrop of the woodland. This is a large site with a wide open space buffer essentially enclosing the development and provides corridors through the site. This is required due to the wildlife mitigation requirements, but the addition of so much green space is a counterbalance to the urbanisation of this development and provides softness needed for a rural edge development. The development will sit within the slope of the land and the woodland behind shall remain the dominant backdrop.

5.4. Comments from the design out crime officer are noted. This development has constructed a layout with gardens back to back and 360 degree frontage development to supervise spaces except when to avoid overlooking of existing gardens. Wildlife mitigation allows for good site connectivity for people and wildlife, but it is appreciated this does also allow better escape for crime in part. Specific boundary treatment can be secure via outline conditions on hard landscaping.

6. Landscape Impact, Trees, Ecology, Biodiversity And Protected Species

6.1. Place Services for Landscape has highlighted that the scheme does not put forward all of the potential landscape opportunities in the outline indicative plan. Consideration must be on the layout before members today and if it is acceptable. It is also accepted that detailed information on landscaping in terms of numbers and tree types will be submitted later as conditioned. The development has reasonable landscaped areas and good public open spaces that in part has reduced the physical landscape opportunity. As a balance it is considered that allowing more open space to ensure people can access and enjoy the outside space should be given more weight. Ecology measures established under the outline are maintained and very much have instructed the layout of housing development in this case.

7. Heritage Issues

7.1. Historic interests are at a reasonable distance from the development and not considered to be significantly impacted. It is acknowledged that given the slope of the site that wider views from some Listed Buildings may be slightly impacted and this would include the Shrublands estate on the far side of the river, A14 and main railway line that lie in between.

8. Impact On Residential Amenity

8.1. There are just two areas of existing residential development affected by this development. To the south, No 2 Chequers Rise is the nearest existing dwelling and is located side on to the site and around 22 metres at the shortest point from the nearest dwelling. No 12 and 14 Chequers Rise have a back to back distance of around 40 metres as their rear gardens share the southern boundary of the site. There will be some overlooking from plots 120 and 121 towards Chequers Rise, but given the distance is considered minimal and not sufficient to warrant refusal.

8.2. To the north 121 to 143 Stowmarket Road have long rear gardens around 40 metres each. The proposed development would be to the rear of these properties and all new properties would be side on. A three storey unit initially proposed close by has been swapped with a two storey unit. The land drops and slopes down to the allotments to the north and so the new dwellings would not be significantly higher than the existing dwellings at this point. Given the distances it is considered there is no significant impact on amenity that would warrant refusal.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

9. Planning Balance and Conclusion

9.1. Given the current policy framework, the proposed details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 130 dwellings is considered to be acceptable. The layout would provide a mix of housing within a reasonable green space environment.

RECOMMENDATION

That authority be delegated to Corporate Manager - Growth & Sustainable Planning to Grant Reserved Matters permission subject to conditions including:

- Approved Plans
- Further Archaeological Works to plots 73-89.
- Development carried out in accordance with recommendations within Loven Acoustics Impact of transport noise report