

Committee Report

Item No: 3

Reference: DC/18/04191

Case Officer: Alex Scott

Ward: The Stonhams

Ward Member: Suzie Morley

RECOMMENDATION – GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION WITH CONDITIONS

Description of Development

Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered) - Erection of up to 5 no. dwellings and construction of new access.

Location

Land to the rear of The Leas, Quoits Meadow, Stonham Aspal, STOWMARKET, IP14 6DE

Parish: Stonham Aspal

Expiry Date: 15/11/18

Application Type: Outline planning application

Development Type: Minor Dwellings

Applicant: Mr R Tydeman

Agent: Philip Cobbold Planning Ltd

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason:

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

Details of Previous Committee/Resolutions and Member Site Visit

- Outline planning permission ref: DC/17/04419 was refused by committee for the erection of 9 dwellings on the site on the 13th December 2017.

PART TWO – POLICIES AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Summary of Policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

Relevant policies in the Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 and Mid-Suffolk Local Plan 1998:

FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development
FC02 - Provision And Distribution Of Housing
CS01 - Settlement Hierarchy

CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment
CS07 - Brown Field Target
CS09 - Density and Mix
GP01 - Design and layout of development
H13 - Design and layout of housing development
H14 - A range of house types to meet different accommodation needs
H15 - Development to reflect local characteristics
H16 - Protecting existing residential amenity
H17 - Keeping residential development away from pollution
HB1 - Protection of Historic Buildings
HB14 – Ensuring Archaeological remains are not destroyed
CL08 - Protecting wildlife habitats
T02 - Minor Highway improvements
T09 - Parking Standards
T10 - Highway Considerations in Development

Supplementary Planning Documents

Suffolk Adopted Parking Standards (2015)

There is currently no neighbourhood plan for Stonham Aspal village or parish.

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

Stonham Aspal Parish Council

Members of Stonham Aspal Parish Council agreed at a meeting on 16 October 2018 that they do not support this planning application on the following grounds. There is no need for the development of the proposed properties which impact on a quiet cul-de-sac in a secondary village. There would be safety implications and increased pollution with the addition of an estimated 32 vehicles regularly accessing Quoits Meadow. There would be a change in character of the Quoits Meadow cul-de-sac which would become a thoroughfare. This application does not appear to address the issues affected by the previous application which was refused by Mid Suffolk District Council and then refused again on appeal. This application does not appear to address the impact of the settlement of Orchard Farm as a listed property. The proposed development is outside the village envelope. Aspal Parish Councils previous comments still stand for this re-consultation

SCC Highways Authority

No Objection - Subject to compliance with suggested conditions.

County Archaeological Service

There are no grounds to consider refusal of permission to achieve preservation in situ of any important heritage assets. However, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, any permission

granted should be the subject of a planning condition to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed.

MSDC – Environmental Protection - Land Contamination

Further information with respect of land contamination assessment required.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

The site appears to be partially surrounded by hedgerows. There is no information regarding the composition or fate of these hedgerows. Hedgerows are a UK and Suffolk Priority Habitat and could provide terrestrial habitat for great crested newts, which have been recorded in the parish. There are also a number of ponds in close proximity to the site, some of which are known to contain populations of great crested newts. Nesting birds may also be utilising the hedgerow.

MSDC - Heritage

Based on the information provided, the Heritage Team considers that the proposal would likely be considered to cause a certain level of less than substantial harm to Orchard Farmhouse because the proposed development would diminish the rural setting of the neighbouring listed building.

MSDC – Waste and Environmental Management

Details of bin presentation areas prior to final approval of reserved matters.

County Fire and Rescue Service

Recommend that fire hydrants be installed within this development on a suitable route for laying hose, i.e. avoiding obstructions. It is not possible, at this time, to determine the number of fire hydrants required for fire fighting purposes. The requirement will be determined at the water planning stage when site plans have been submitted by the water companies.

Recommend that proper consideration be given to the provision of automatic fire sprinkler systems as part of the proposed development.

B: Representations

Letters of concern or objection have been received from a total of 9 third party individuals:

- The Proposal lies outside the village settlement boundary and so should not be approved;
 - The Council says it has over a 5 year housing land supply (6.5 years) there is, therefore no need for the proposed houses;
 - There have already been recent planning approvals for new dwellings in Stonham Aspal and the village does not require any more housing for the time being;
 - The proposal does not offer anything new or beneficial to the village;
 - The proposal fails to comply with MSDC's development plan and does not represent small-scale development;
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- Recent other approvals in the village are infill development and so cannot be compared with this proposal;
- The proposal would encroach into the countryside and approval would set a precedent for future applications for housing developments in Stonham Aspal;
- The proposal represents backland development, intruding into open countryside outside the settlement boundary of a secondary village;
- The proposed development does not reflect the existing locality. Quoits Meadow has only 6 houses on a similar land area to the development. Furthermore it changes the fundamental character of Quoits Meadow from rural cul de sac to an access road for a larger development;
- The hedge on the eastern side of the site is an important wildlife corridor and Great Crested Newts may be using ponds in the vicinity of the site;
- The Council recently refused permission for a similar development on the site, which was also turned down at appeal. The current proposal is not significantly different and so should be refused also;
- Along the Street, Stonham Aspal (the A1120), there are very few parking spaces, even for residents and consequently Quoits Meadow has become an unofficial village Car Park. Entry into and exit from Quoits Meadow has become, in effect a single track road with Blind Corners. The anticipated additional vehicle movements, as a result of the proposed development, along this highway (reduced to a single track road with blind corner) would result in a significant adverse effect on road safety;
- The proposal would severely limit parking in Quoits Meadow and would result in more instances of onstreet parking on the main A1120, which is detrimental to highway safety;
- Concern with regards existing road network capacity to accept additional traffic movements associated with the proposed development. Note that when there is an event on at Stonham Barns then this already gridlocks the A140/A1120 crossroads;
- The planning statement says the proposal would create jobs. Work may be temporarily generated during construction; however this does not mean that new jobs and employment would be generated, even temporarily;
- Employment opportunities and services and facilities locally are very limited and future occupants would, therefore need to travel to work and to access services and facilities. The proposal is not, therefore, sustainable;
- The village has no food shop and there are no regular bus services. The proposal would, therefore, place full reliance on the private car as a mode of transport, which is unsustainable;
- The additional car movements generated would create pollution which would harm the environment;
- The proposal would still impact the amenities of neighbouring occupants, as per the previous refusal;
- The proposal would still result in harm to the setting of the nearby grade II listed building at Orchard Farm and so should be refused;
- Those in support of the application live outside of Stonham Aspal and so are not relevant;
- As housing has already been refused on the site, and turned down at appeal, surely this should not result in relentless and constant regurgitation in varying formats of the same declined application;
- Surface water drainage is a concern and existing soakaways are ineffective as the current site has caused waterlogging on adjacent land.

7 letters of support have also been received for the proposed development. Comments received are summarised below:

- Support this application for a small development;
- Site ideal for development within the village boundary, with minimal disruption;
- Happy with the plans, looks like a perfect spot to build more houses for the village;

- Proposal site would respect the existing built up line of the village;
- In-fill sites have been successful in other nearby villages – perhaps this could also be the case in this locality;
- Site is ideal area to infill especially by using the established entrance from the A1120;
- Support proposal which will support and strengthen local services and facilities;
- Proposal would have a positive impact on the local community, schools, small businesses etc.;
- Application makes good use of land in a village which would benefit from growth;
- Proposal will help meet the overall need for housing in the country, which are desperately needed;
- The development will only help the village expand to be able to carry some of the strain for new housing nationally;
- There is a clear shortage of housing locally;
- Demand for properties in the village has always been greater than that available;
- Proposal will help young people stay in the area and keep the village alive and vibrant;
- Young people have had to move away from the village due to lack of housing;
- Would like the opportunity to buy a property locally;
- The proposal is similar to developments at Walnut Tree Close and Wingfield Close, which have kept the village growing;
- Proposal site is off the main street which is a benefit;
- Proposal is beneficial as it would not require any additional access roads onto the A1120;
- 5 houses would not generate a significant amount of extra traffic and the main road is more than adequate to accommodate;
- Quoits Meadow will remain as is, only larger

PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

1. The Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.91 hectares and comprises an existing horse paddock set back from The Street, to the north of existing dwellings in the Quoits Meadow cul-de-sac.
- 1.2 To the north and east of the existing paddock lie agricultural fields, defined by hedgerow boundaries. An unmade access track runs adjacent to the south boundary of the paddock giving existing access to the paddocks and the agricultural fields to the east. Further to the south, on the opposite side of the track, lies the Grade II listed Orchard Farm with the existing housing estate at Walnut Tree Meadow beyond this. The existing Quoits Meadow estate and further dwellings fronting The Street lies to the west and south-west.
- 1.3 The site lies outside of, but adjacent to, the settlement boundary of the village. The site also affects the setting of a grade II listed building at Orchard Farm, to the south of the site, and affects an area of archaeological potential.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1. The application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of 5 no. new dwellings, following demolition of an existing dwelling within the Quoit's Meadow cul-de-sac, known as 'The Leas'. The proposal would, therefore result in a net increase of 4 no. dwellings.
- 2.2. The proposal would also involve the construction of a new estate road access to Quoits Meadow, in the location of the existing dwelling at 'The Leas', proposed to be demolished. The proposed development would be accessed from 'The Street' via the existing Quoits Meadow junction and estate road. The proposed estate road would be located 12 metres and 10.5 metres from the existing dwellings at nos. 3 and 5 Quoits Meadow respectively.
- 2.3. Although the final layout and scale and appearance of the proposed dwellings is reserved the indicative layout provided with the application indicates that 1 no. detached dwelling, 2 no. semi-detached dwellings and 2 no. detached bungalows are proposed.
- 2.4. Although the final landscaping scheme is reserved the indicative layout provide shows existing boundary hedge planting to be retained. An additional landscape buffer is also proposed to be planted to the south-east site boundary.

3. The Principle of Development

- 3.1. Paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) states that: "Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old". Furthermore, paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF states that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: i. the application of the policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. 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". NPPF footnote 7 states that "This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites".
- 3.2. It is not considered that Mid Suffolk District Council currently has a five year supply of deliverable Housing, and as such the relevant planning policies contained within the existing development plan are considered to be out of date, as per the consideration of the NPPF (2018).
- 3.3. The application site is considered to lie within the existing settlement pattern of Stonham Aspal, which is a secondary village which benefits from a school, church, shop and village hall. The site and village also benefit from a paved footway to the north side of The Street (the A1120) highway which allows pedestrians to traverse the village safely away from the metalled carriageway. The application site is also within the existing 30mph speed limit and the development would result in only a marginal increase in pedestrian traffic when compared to the existing situation.
- 3.4. The village benefits from a number of services and there are bus services available providing access to various places, including Ipswich and its railway station, at such times as to be viable for employment purposes. Villages are, by their very nature, a mixture of people of varying

characters and natures, whereby what does or doesn't work for one may be entirely appropriate for another. In this regard, the distances to facilities and services are not such that would be entirely unreasonable for people to cycle or access via public transport.

- 3.5 As such, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development with regards to access to services and facilities.
- 3.6 With regards to a need for dwellings local to Stonham Aspal itself, the development would deliver 5 dwellings which would contribute to the wider supply of housing. The Council could not sustain a refusal of planning permission solely on the basis of their being no locally identified need in the village, particularly in the absence of a five year supply of deliverable land overall.
- 3.7 The provision of employment during the construction period would provide a short term economic gain. Whilst this does not weigh heavily in favour of the development, and therefore should be given little weight, it also does not result in any adverse impact to the economy, indeed it is considered that an increased population base would provide a greater catchment and more opportunities for local business growth as a result.
- 3.8 It is acknowledged that the proposed development would meet a social role as required by the NPPF by providing new family homes that would serve to support and grow local services and facilities.
- 3.9 In conclusion, the sustainability of the development relative to the NPPF has been taken into account when considering this proposal and 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 range of facilities and services via alternative means of transport, the development would not be isolated despite its position outside the settlement boundary and would therefore provide sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF when taken as a whole.

4. Site Access, Parking and Highway Safety Considerations

- 4.1 The proposed means of access to the proposal site would be through the existing Quoits Meadow housing estate, utilising the existing junction onto The Street.
- 4.2 The proposed estate road connection between Quoits Meadow and the proposal site is through the existing property on Quoits Meadow at 'The Leas'. The existing dwelling at 'The Leas' is proposed to be demolished to make way for the proposed estate road.
- 4.3 The site's existing access to The Street is via the existing unmade track to the south of the site. This existing means of access is not considered suitable for use by further development due to sub-standard visibility splays. Should the application be supported, a condition of approval should be the stopping up of the existing site access to the south, onto the unmade track.
- 4.4 The final proposed layout would be expected to provide off-street parking in accordance with current advisory highway parking standards. Should appropriate detail be secured in this regard then the proposal would not result in an increased need for on-street parking.
- 4.5 The local highway authority have assessed the application proposal and are satisfied with the principle of the proposed access to the site, through the existing Quoits Meadow estate, should

the existing site access onto the unmade track to the south of the site be permanently stopped up. The proposal is not, therefore, considered to result in a severe impact on existing highway safety.

- 4.6 Access was a reason for refusal of prior application DC/17/04419 on the site. The present proposal is considered to have significant highway safety improvements, with increased space available to the access road, improving forward visibility and the ability for vehicles to pass safely. The proposed reduced number of dwellings would also result in less pressure on the ultimate point of access onto the main road, via the existing Quoits Meadow estate junction.

5. Design and Layout

- 5.1 The application proposes a housing density of 4.5 dwellings per hectare. This is below the 25 to 37 dwellings per hectare encouraged by Policy H15 of the Local Plan, however a lower density is considered appropriate in this circumstance in the interest of existing village character and the landscape character and quality of the adjacent countryside, in accordance with development plan policy CS9.
- 5.2 Although matters of layout, scale and appearance are at present reserved indicative information provided with the application shows a layout reflective of the existing estate road character of development projecting back from the highway on both sides of the street. The indicative layout is also considered to show an appropriate mix of types of dwellings, in accordance with development plan policy CS5.
- 5.3 Further consideration of the final detailed layout, scale and design of development will be undertaken as part of a reserved matters application. Further detail with regards landscaping is also expected as part of a reserved matters submission.

6. Listed Buildings

- 6.1 The application site is located in proximity to a grade II listed building at Orchard Farm, to the south, across the existing access track.
- 6.2 The Council's Heritage officers have assessed the application proposal and consider the proposal would result in a certain level of less than substantial harm as the proposal would diminish the rural setting of the farm buildings at Orchard Farm.
- 6.3 Having considered that the eastern portion of the existing paddock is not proposed to be developed, the existing impact of estate developments on the setting of these buildings, and the opportunity to provide increased soft landscape screening to the eastern boundary of the site (as indicated) your officers consider any harm to the setting and significance of these buildings would be minimal.
- 6.4 As required by the NPPF, any harm to the significance of heritage assets must be outweighed by the public benefits of a proposed development. The development proposal would deliver 4 no. additional homes in support of the District's housing delivery targets (which, are at present lacking) within a sustainable secondary village environment. The public benefits of the proposal are, therefore, considered to outweigh the minimal harm to the heritage assets.
- 6.5 Impact on the setting of the listed building was a reason for refusal of prior application DC/17/04419 on the site. The present proposal is considered to have significant improvements upon the setting of the heritage assets, when compared to the initial scheme, most significantly the reduced number of dwellings proposed, the increased visual break between the site and the

heritage assets, and the additional landscape screening proposed. These provisions are considered to overcome the previous reasons given for refusal.

7. Archaeology

- 7.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential recorded on the County Historic Environment Record, near the site of a probable medieval moat and its likely continuation and near find spots of Roman and Medieval metalwork and coins. Thus, there is high potential for the discovery of below-ground heritage assets of archaeological importance within this area, and ground works associated with the development have the potential to damage or destroy any archaeological remains which exist.
- 7.2 The County Archaeological Unit have assessed the application proposal and consider there are no grounds to consider refusal of permission to achieve preservation in situ of any important heritage assets. However, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 141, any permission granted should be the subject of a planning condition to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed.

8. Ecology

- 8.1 The proposal site comprises a maintained area of equine grazing and exercising land and is not considered to provide suitable habitat for protected species.
- 8.2 Trees and hedgerows surrounding the site provide potential habitat for breeding birds and possibly Newts (pending further investigation), as such, it is expected that the final ecological mitigation and landscaping proposals for the site will conserve and provide enhancements to this existing habitat.

9. Impact on Residential Amenity

- 9.1 In indicative siting and scale of the proposed dwellings provided with the application is not considered to demonstrate significant harm to the amenities currently enjoyed by occupants of existing neighbouring properties.
- 9.2 Further assessment with regards the proposal's impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties will be required at reserved matters stage when final details of the layout, scale and appearance of the proposed buildings are provided.
- 9.3 The application proposal is not considered to result in demonstrable harm to the amenities currently enjoyed by neighbouring occupants due to increased number of traffic movements through Quoits Meadow, which are not considered to be adversely significant because this is a reduction from the 9 dwellings previously proposed and would result in less harm to that previously refused. In addition the proposed access road is considered to be an acceptable distance from existing neighbouring properties and is not considered to result in significant harm with regards increased noise and disturbance from vehicular traffic.
- 9.5 The proposal is considered to accord with the aspirations of local Policies H13 and H16 and paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2018).

10. Land Contamination

- 10.1 The applicant has provided a desk based contaminated land assessment with the application proposal, carried out by a suitably qualified individual, which concludes that it is not considered that the site would be designated "Contaminated Land" within the meaning of Part 2A of the

Environmental Protection Act 1990. A site walkover assessment reveals that the site is currently undeveloped grazing land with no evidence of contaminating materials present. The site is not, therefore considered to pose a significant risk to future occupants from sources of land contamination.

- 10.2 Council's contaminated land specialists have assessed the proposal and consider further land contamination investigation is required prior to commencement.

11. Flooding and Drainage

- 11.1 The site is not prone to flooding, located in Flood Zone 1. It is considered that any issues regarding surface water management can be resolved via planning conditions, established industry practice for detailed engineering matters of this ilk.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

12. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 12.1 In order to achieve sustainable development, the Framework identifies that economic, social and environmental gains must be sought jointly and simultaneously.
- 12.2 The Framework seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and the development would contribute to housing supply in an area where there is a current acknowledged shortage. The proposed development would provide economic benefits relating to employment during the construction phase, although these would be limited and temporary and as such are afforded limited weight.
- 12.3 The proposed development would offer significant social benefits in respect of provision of new housing in support of the Districts existing housing need in a sustainable location. The proposal should, therefore, be attributed positive weight in terms of the social dimension of sustainable development.
- 12.4 In terms of the environmental pillar of sustainable development, by reason of its proximity to services and facilities and the existence of sustainable public transport links to Towns (however limited), the proposal is not considered to place absolute reliance on the private car as a means of transport which would minimise potential environmental harm in this respect. Whilst the proposal would not result in significant environmental benefit, proposed mitigation by way of landscape planting, sustainable land drainage and increased linkage to the Town's existing pedestrian network is considered to offset any harm. The proposal is therefore considered to have a neutral to small positive impact in terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
- 12.6 The application proposal is, therefore, considered to on balance represent sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Outline Planning Permission subject to the conditions below :

- 1) Standard list of approved plans
- 2) Standard time limit for reserved matters
- 3) Standard reserved matters condition
- 4) Contaminated land investigation and mitigation prior to commencement
- 5) Programme of Archaeological works prior to commencement
- 6) Further protected species investigation and mitigation concurrent with reserved matters
- 7) Landscape scheme and aftercare
- 8) Surface water drainage scheme
- 9) Those required by the local highway authority
- 10) Details of location and number of proposed fire hydrants