

## Committee Report

**Item No:**

**Reference:** DC/18/05397

**Case Officer:** Mark Russell

**Ward:** Combs Ford

**Ward Members:** Cllr Gerard Brewster and Cllr Keith Scarf

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## RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE RESERVED MATTERS SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

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### Description of Development

Submission of details under Outline Planning Permission 1492/15: Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for phase II for up to 110 dwellings\* to incorporate a sheltered housing scheme of up to 60 units and public open space areas

\*NOTE – the applicant has applied for 90 units only, with a consequent reduction in the number of sheltered housing units.

### Location

Land west of Farriers Road, Edgecomb Park, Stowmarket (in the Parish of Combs) IP14 2FD

**Parish:** Stowmarket

**Expiry Date:**

**Application Type:** Reserved matters

**Development Type:**

**Applicant:** Construct Reason Limited

**Agent:** Construct Reason Limited

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## PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

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The application is referred to committee for the following reason:

It is a 'Major' application for:

- a residential development for 15 or more dwellings.

### Details of Previous Committee/Resolutions and Member Site Visit

None.

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## PART TWO – POLICIES AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

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### Summary of Policies

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework 2018

### Core Strategy Focused Review 2012:

FC01 - Presumption In Favour of Sustainable Development  
FC01\_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development  
FC02 - Provision and Distribution of Housing

### Core Strategy 2008:

CS01 - Settlement Hierarchy  
CS02 - Development in the Countryside and Countryside Villages  
CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment  
CS06 - Services and Infrastructure

### Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998:

GP01 - Design and layout of development  
HB14 - Ensuring archaeological remains are not destroyed  
H07 - Restricting housing development unrelated to needs of countryside  
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  
T09 - Parking Standards  
T10 - Highway Considerations in Development  
CL08 - Protecting wildlife habitats

### Supplementary Planning Documents:

Suffolk Adopted Parking Standards (2015)  
Stowmarket Area Action Plan (2013)

### **Relevant Planning History**

A hybrid application was lodged in 2015 and subsequent planning approvals issued for the following:

- Full planning permission 1492/15 was granted on 6 July 2016 for Phase I comprising 75 single-storey dwellings, garaging and parking and public open space/attenuation basin (SUDs).
- Outline planning permission 1492/15 was granted on 6 July 2016 for Phase II for up to 110 dwellings to incorporate a sheltered housing scheme of up to 60 units and public open space areas. The outline permission included the approval of access (as shown on approved drawing 0787-SK-001-C Rev A), all other matters were reserved.

A section 106 legal agreement has been entered into, dated 6 July 2016, in accordance with the Planning Committee's 2016 resolution.

The current application seeks approval of the outstanding reserved matters following the issue of the outline approval, those being appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. Condition 21 of outline planning permission 1492/15 requires the approval of reserved matters prior to the commencement of the development.

By way of clarification, the submitted documents refer to “phases 4, 5 and 6” these are the applicant’s build phases and are not to be confused with the Planning reference to “Phase II” which is the application at hand.

### **Consultations and Representations**

During the course of the application consultation and representations from third parties have been received. The below is a summary of the responses received.

#### **A: Summary of Consultations**

##### **Stowmarket Town Council**

No objection.

##### **Combs Parish Council**

The Council notes the plan is largely similar to the outline plans previously submitted. They would like to suggest that it be ensured a green belt of trees will be put in place around the entirety of the boundary with arable land.

The Council notes with disappointment that the number of sheltered housing units has now reduced from up to 60 to 42.

Councillors look forward to completion of phase three in accordance with the overall planning consent.

##### **SCC Highways**

The details as submitted are not considered acceptable or sufficient in highway terms for the following reasons:

1. The main point of access onto Poplar Hill is to be in accordance with Drawing Number 0787-SK-001-C Revision A which was submitted and approved with application 1492/15. This includes adjusting Poplar Hill to the east to allow widening of existing footways together with utilisation of land to the east of Poplar Hill to provide a forward visibility splay. I can find no reference to this within the package of information submitted, it has a bearing on the application site outline and the submitted Planning Layout Drawing.
2. The intention is that the existing bus service will be able to divert through the development site. There is a requirement for a bus stop with shelter on the main spine road. To best serve the development it should be positioned centrally outside or adjacent to Plot 501. The footway will need to be widened to accommodate the required hard standing for the bus shelter.
3. The road serving Plots 402 to 410 may be reduced in width from 6m to 4.8 metres to match the previous phases.
4. Private driveways into parking areas should be 4.5 metres wide for the first 10m length.
5. The car parking space for Plot 630 will seriously obstruct the visibility from the adjacent car parking area access.
6. The car parking spaces should be numbered / allocated for the areas of Sheltered Bungalows. It is not currently possible to determine the parking strategy for these dwellings. Numbers and positions of spaces, including provision for visitors, should be indicated.
7. There is a footpath link to existing next to Plot 613. This extends beyond the red site outline. Can the applicant please confirm that this link can be provided?

NOTE – Access has already been secured and is not for consideration here; however, the applicant has now provided comfort on this point and responded to the majority of the other requested changes. A further response is awaited from the Highway Authority and will be reported in the late papers or at Committee.

#### **BMSDC – Heritage Team**

No comment.

#### **Strategic Housing**

Affordable housing requirement:

Phase II includes = 17 dwellings for affordable housing which equals 18.88% (NOTE – a scheme-wide provision on 19 per cent was agreed at Outline following a viability appraisal).

Phase II:

4 x 1-bedroom 2-person bungalows; 13 x 2-bedroom 3-person bungalows

1BB's are 56.38 sqm and 2BB's are 67.44 sqm. I would confirm that these are acceptable sizes for this application.

The confirmation that there will be no service charges is interesting as I would expect there to be some charge even if only for any communal garden maintenance which is fairly standard for a sheltered scheme.

I would confirm that I have no objection to the reserved matters application.

#### **Natural England**

No objection.

#### **Environment Agency**

No objection.

#### **Environmental Health**

No objection.

#### **SCC - Flood and Water**

No objection.

#### **BMSDC Environmental Health – Sustainability**

The details submitted thus far do not involve sustainability issues.

#### **Suffolk Secure by Design**

“I commend the developers for incorporating a number of back to back gardens, reducing the need for alleys and reducing the risk of rear intrusions.” However, some comments were added, detailing how the scheme could be amended in order to achieve Secured by Design accreditation.

In particular, concern was raised about the width of proposed footpaths to the south and west and its proximity to vegetation, which could lead to users of the paths feeling unsafe.

The applicant has been asked to deal with the issue of the vegetation within the landscaping condition, and has been asked about the footpath width and has responded thus:

"I agree about the Landscaping but there are some things I would like to clarify about the independent footpaths crossing the POS.

We have the same arrangement within our current phase of the development in which after much deliberation the HA agreed upon a compromise width of 2.5m which is an increase of 0.5m over the usual width for adopted independent footpaths. Secondly as these paths are adopted by the HA they are already included within the street lighting design.

I would confirm that I have drawn the paths on this application at 2.5m wide to match what we are linking to on the earlier phase and that the tarmac sections will form part of the road adoption agreement.

We normally only seek Secure by Design accreditation for the affordable units within our developments."

NOTE – As stated, the planting can be covered with the submission of details to discharge the landscaping condition; similarly, the issue of boundary treatment to the Public Open Space will be dealt with by discharge of a boundary treatment condition. Lighting has already been covered by condition 27 of the Outline permission.

It is not possible to agree to all of Secure by Design's requests such as removal of all rear parking (only five units in this case) and provision of secure garage parking for each unit, as the current provision makes the scheme work in a visually acceptable manner and deferring to Secure by Design standards on all fronts does, in your Officer's opinion, stifle interesting layout and matters of good urban design.

**PROW Officer**

No objection.

**SCC Strategic Development**

There is a completed planning obligation dated 08 July 2016 which is attached to the planning permission previously granted under reference 1492/15. There are a number of existing obligations in the legal agreement in respect of phase 1 which require monitoring by the local planning authority to ensure that they have been discharged by the applicant. Otherwise, I have no comments to make on the reserved matters planning application.

**SCC - Archaeological Service**

This large site lies in an area of archaeological potential as recorded by information held by the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The site lies between two tributaries of the Rattlesden River in a location that was topographically favourable for early occupation of all periods, as indicated by multi-period finds scatters recorded in the vicinity. A first phase of archaeological evaluation carried out at the site has detected a number of boundary features containing Roman and medieval pottery and as a result there is high potential for further archaeological remains to survive within the development site. The proposed works would cause significant ground disturbance that has potential to damage any archaeological deposits and below ground heritage assets that exist.

There would be no grounds to consider refusal of permission in order to achieve preservation in situ of any important heritage assets. However, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 199), we would recommend that any permission granted should be the subject of planning conditions to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed.

NOTE – these conditions were imposed at Outline and remain relevant.

### **MSDC Waste Management Officer**

Please can the below bin presentation points be amended to the following.

Plot 515, 513, 514 & 516 bin collection point to be moved to the end of the drive.

Plot 425, 424, 423 & 422 bin collection point to be moved to the end of the private drive.

Plot 415,416, 417,418 & 419 bin collection point to be moved to the edge of the curtilage.

Plot 611, 610, 609, 608, 607 bin collection point to be moved to the end of the drive.

Plot 615, 616,617,618,619,620, 621& 622 bin collection point to be moved the end of the shared access.

Plot 640, 639, 638, 637, 636, 635 & 634 bin collection point to be moved to the end of the drive.

The applicant has responded as follows:

*"I am happy to treat these comments from the Waste Manager as post- committee tweaks discharged by condition, but I have to point out that the positions of the bin collection points shown on our layout are determined by the maximum carry distance permitted within the Building Regulations by the Householder to the point of collection so it may not be possible to comply with his comments in all cases."*

### **B: Representations**

Four submissions received, based on the following:

\*The dwellings to which this application relates should be constructed via the new vehicular access off Poplar Hill and not via the existing access off Farriers Road.

\*Construction traffic be restricted from using the current Edgecomb Park estate for access.

\*Doctors surgery, school and road access do not support the demands this development will bring.

NOTE – most of these issues can be dealt with by a Construction Works Management Plan condition. The final point raised concerns the quantum of development which has already been agreed at Outline.

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## **PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION**

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### **1.0 The Site and Surroundings**

1.1 The site is located at the southwestern periphery of Stowmarket, north of Poplar Hill. The site is accessed from Poplar Hill with connection to the approved phase I development currently under construction which is accessed from Coppersmith. Open countryside is to the west. Residential development is located to the east, with Honeycombs Nursery adjoining the site's eastern boundary at the Poplar Hill entrance. The site currently is open farm land.

1.2 The site is not in or near a Conservation Area. There are no nearby listed buildings.

### **2.0 The Proposal**

2.1 Approval of reserved matters in respect to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale is sought.

2.2 It is to be noted that, whilst the Outline element allowed for "up to" 110 dwellings, permission is only being sought here for 90.

- 2.3 It is also noted that, whilst the submitted comprehensive landscape information is largely satisfactory, this was described at Outline as being a matter to be dealt with by discharge of condition (conditions 28 and 29). Therefore, the applicant will need to apply to discharge this matter following this Reserved Matters application.
- 2.4 The layout of development very closely resembles the indicative layout presented in support of the outline application assessed in 2016. Key elements of the development are as follows:
- Vehicular access via Poplar Hill (as approved at outline stage) with connectivity provided into the phase I development to the north.
  - Substantial public open space area to the south-western corner of the site, featuring a plane and lime treed avenue.
  - Periphery landscape planting to soften the development.
  - Retention of trees at the boundary between the phase I and phase II development.
  - Parking courts and garaging are generally located to the rear of built form.
  - Adoption of traditional vernacular architecture.
  - All dwellings are bungalows.
  - Finishing materials include the typical traditional range – pantile roofs, brickwork exteriors (Anglian Cream and Anglian Red), white uPVC openings.
  - Boundary treatments comprise a mix of hedges, brick walls and timber fences.
  - Proposed footpath connectivity to the east linking with an established network via The Twinings.

### **3.0 The Principle of Development**

- 3.1 The principle of development was established by the granting of Outline planning permission 1492/15. The key test is whether the proposed appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development responds appropriately to the character and amenity of the area, having regard to relevant guiding development plan policies as well as the provisions of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (SAAP) which provided for housing in this location.

### **4.0 Layout**

- 4.1 The development layout is a traditional one and, as noted above, is consistent with that shown in the indicative layout considered at the time of the outline application. The layout offers a conventional suburban character outcome that is consistent with the established development pattern to the north and east. Internal estate roads and footpaths break up the scale of the overall development to form a number of smaller developments rather than being perceived as one large development.
- 4.2 The layout features two culs-de-sac, a legitimate design response supported by the Suffolk Design Guide. There is a plethora of culs-de-sac east of the site which forms part of the prevailing character of neighbouring development. The proposed layout meets the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and there is a clearly defined movement hierarchy, one that offers connectivity with the existing public footpath network. The layout also offers a clear definition of public and private space. The layout is not contentious, respecting the character and appearance of the broader area.
- 4.3 Fundamental to acceptability of the scheme is that it should respect the gap between Stowmarket and Combs. This is implicit with the aims and aspirations of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (SAAP) Policy 6.3, which says, of development proposed between Poplar Hill and Farrier's Road, that "its visual effect must be mitigated by an appropriate planting scheme. The feeling of openness and long-distance views from

the top of Poplar Hill looking South and West will need to be maintained. Suggested open space provision will help in this process.”

4.4 Members are reminded that permission already exists (in Outline) for housing in this location and it is, therefore, essential that the positioning of the open space and of the landscaping is provided in a satisfactory manner. This has the open space in the southern and western aspects, maintaining the desired views south and west.

4.5 Hedge planting to the western-most plots (514-519) would complete the circuit of soft boundary treatment requested by Combs Parish Council. The scheme complies, therefore, with the SAAP.

## **5.0 Scale**

5.1 The proposed quantum of development, in terms of dwelling numbers, does not exceed the outline approval (in fact it falls short of the maximum by some 20 units) and is considered acceptable. The single storey scale of development is welcomed, representing a less prominent, respectful design approach.

## **6.0 Appearance**

6.1 The applicant has paid careful attention to design details. The variation in roof colour finishing is welcomed, providing a development that offers visual interest and variety in appearance, consistent with Policy CS5. Likewise, the variation in brickwork colour finishing is appropriate.

6.2 The permeable paving of driveways and hardstanding is appropriate. The spacing between dwellings is varied and also offers visual relief. Some dwellings are attached and grouped, while others are detached. The siting of garages and shared parking areas to the rear of dwellings is also welcomed, ensuring these structures do not dominate the streetscape.

6.3 The proposed streetscapes will be visually attractive, add to the overall built form quality of the area and establish an appropriate sense of place for future residents. The design incorporates the use of gables to break up what would otherwise be flat façades. The gables incorporate decoration including barge board finials to create interest in the front elevations, and some of the house types have stone head lintels and keystones as decorative features, and coloured brick archways. The appearance of the development respects local distinctiveness, consistent with Policy CS5.

## **7.0 Landscaping**

7.1 As mentioned above, the application is supported by a comprehensive landscaping plan. The plan features site periphery planting (predominantly native hedging), planting within the southwestern public open space area, landscaping around the bungalows, and the retention of existing trees where appropriate. The planting regime includes a mix of planting types, including meadow grassland, lawn areas, planting beds, ornamental shrub and tree planting. On the whole, the landscaping extent and theme is considered appropriate.

7.2 To confirm, whilst this is largely acceptable, a small amount of change is required in terms of the vegetation next to footpaths. The matter is to be dealt with by discharge of condition from the Outline permission.

- 7.3 The supporting landscape plans do not detail boundary treatments. Condition 28 of the outline approval requires the submission of boundary treatment details and these will therefore be assessed separately. Boundary treatments are a critical element of any development of this scale, as they can 'make or break' streetscape quality.
- 7.4 The proposed hard landscaping details are deemed appropriate. As noted above, the use of permeable pavements is appropriate, softening the visual impact of the development.
- 7.5 The s106 legal agreement places the implementation, maintenance and overall management responsibilities of the public open space areas in the hands of the owners and for them to establish an Open Space Scheme detailing these requirements, to be submitted to and approved in writing by Council. The s106 agreement states that the ongoing management of the public open spaces will be the responsibility of the owners until it has been transferred to a Management Company.
- 7.6 The agreement requires the submission of an Open Space Scheme to Council prior to development commencing. The Open Space Scheme is critical to this proposal. It is beyond the scope of this assessment but it will require very careful consideration when submitted for Council review.

## **8.0 Other Matters**

- 8.1 Archaeology was assessed as part of the outline application with conditions 23 and 24 imposed to address potential adverse archaeology impacts.
- 8.2 Objector concerns regarding how the construction of this phase of the development will be accessed is noted. Condition 33 of the outline planning permission requires the approval of a Construction Management Plan and it is more appropriate that this matter be considered at the time of discharging that condition.
- 8.3 The Secure by Design referral response raises a number of safety related design requirements, not all of which have been addressed by the development. Officers are of the view that if all requirements were to be met it would result in a scheme not appropriate for its semi-rural setting. The proposal strikes the right balance in this regard, with officers concluding that it provides a sufficiently safe and secure environment for future residents.

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## **PART FOUR – CONCLUSION**

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- 9.1 The principle of development is established by the previous grant of outline planning permission. The quantum of development accords with the outline approval.
- 9.2 The design, layout, scale and appearance of the development are all acceptable, responding appropriately to local distinctiveness and therefore consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS05. There are no designated heritage assets that require consideration.
- 9.3 The layout offers good pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, with a proposed footpath network connecting with the existing public footpath network. The footpath network is afforded good passive surveillance and landscaped appropriately. Public open space

areas will be designated through the Open Space Scheme separate to this application, as required by the s106 agreement.

- 9.4 The details submitted in support of the reserved matters application are to a standard that is appropriate. The scheme's appearance, layout and scale, together with the landscaping response are recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

(1) That the Corporate Manager- Planning for Growth be authorised to approve reserved matters of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping subject to conditions.

- Compliance with drawings
- Relocation of bin points