

PLANNING COMMITTEE DATE: 30th January 2019

APPLICATION NO: F/YR18/1095/F

SITE LOCATION: The Laurels, High Road, Bunkers Hill, Wisbech St Mary

UPDATE

Comments have been received from CCC Archaeology: *Noting that the 'site lies in an area of archaeological potential in a roadside location in the ancient hamlet of Bunkers Hill, directly adjacent to High Road which was formerly the main road from Peterborough and Thorney to Wisbech prior to the construction of the road bridge at Guyhirn in the early 20th century, and with corresponding enhanced likelihood of encountering roadside settlement evidence. [...]'.* They do not object 'to development from proceeding in this location but consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a negative condition, such as the example condition approved by DCLG'.

The agents for the scheme have submitted a sequential and exceptions test document; in this they assert that Bunkers Hill is part of the settlement of Wisbech St Mary, highlighting that it is similar scenario to Eastwood End and Wimblington and the a recent appeal decision concluded that this was the case. The agent also highlights that the recent FDC guidance note highlights that the ST should relate to the settlement in which the proposal is located.

Notwithstanding this difference of opinion, and as anticipated, the information which accompanies the ST document clearly shows sites that are reasonably available, albeit the agent has discounted these - of particular interest is F/YR18/0386/O for the erection of three dwellings. The agent notes that the site is being offered for sale by informal tender and it is understood that due to the level of interest this is expected to be sold to a developer in February 2019 and as such will not be reasonably available following this'. Applying the SPD guidance it is clear that sites with planning permission, but not yet developed, fall within the definition of reasonably available - as such there are clearly reasonably available sites and the sequential test cannot be complied with.

They further note that they would be prepared to accept a condition requiring renewable energy provision within the build to satisfy the wider sustainability benefit requirements of the exception test. Such an approach has been accepted elsewhere by the LPA.

Due consideration has been given to the sequential and exception test information supplied; however this is not so convincing as to override the earlier officer recommendation - even should the search area be reduced to the settlement of Wisbech St Mary, which Officers do not consider appropriate given the location of the site and its relationship with the main settlement.

RECOMMENDATION: Remains as refuse; as per pages 73-74 of the Agenda