

PLANNING COMMITTEE DATE: 27th July 2020

APPLICATION NO: F/YR20/0416/O

SITE LOCATION: Land south east of The Poplars, Bevis Lane, Wisbech St Mary, Cambridgeshire

UPDATE

Following the publication of the committee report a revised indicative plan was received from the agent detailing the following.

- Visibility splays added to the vehicular accesses
- Vehicular access crossover
- Replacement of the tree stumps along the site frontage with a new hedgerow
- Retention of existing hedges and trees within the site
- Installation of bird and bat boxes
- Confirmation that the trees indicated as being removed at the access with The Poplars are to be removed regardless of the outcome of the application.

The Agent states that they consider these changes “*overcome the majority of the reasons listed for refusal with the exception of your in principle objection to the scheme.*”

They also state that they consider the site abuts the built form of the settlement, with the proposed development following the line of The Poplars and Jackson Close, and is therefore consistent with other development in the area. They note the site is located in flood zone 1 and that the proposal will allow one of the applicants to downsize and retire within the village.

ASSESSMENT

As noted in the main report, the personal circumstances of the applicant are not material to the consideration of the application.

The inclusion of visibility splays to the accesses is noted, and comments of the Local Highways Authority have been sought.

The replacement of the tree stumps with a new hedgerow is noted and should make a positive contribution to the biodiversity value of the site, however it will not address the character impact resulting from the scheme.

The alterations to the indicative plan also fail to address the site’s detachment from the edge of the settlement, its clear extension of the linear features of that settlement (and resulting ribbon development), and its unsustainable location, as identified previously by the Inspector, in terms of its connection to the village.

The inclusion of a new hedgerow and the retention of the existing trees on the site, alongside the proposed installation of bird and bat boxes are welcomed, however there is still no ecological survey of the land identifying whether or not the site is the habitat for protected species, and if so what mitigation is appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation remains for refusal as per the main report, with the amendment of reason 4 as follows:

Policy LP19 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) states that the Council will refuse permission for sites that cause demonstrable harm to a protected habitat or species. The proposal involves the development of an area of land comprising field margins, which are known to provide suitable habitat for protected species however no ecological survey has been supplied alongside the application to demonstrate that protected species would not be harmed as a result of the works and the proposal would therefore be contrary to the requirements of policy LP19.

Recommendation: