

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Held on Monday, 12 March 2012 at 9.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Councillor C Bowes
Mr T R Carter
Mr C. S. Clark
Councillor E. Gould
(Chairman)
Mr T.J. Lamb
Mrs J A North

Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr M. A. Wassell
Mr N.C. Wilkin (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present

Mrs E. M. Jolly

In Attendance

Paul Jackson
Heather Burlingham
John Chinnery
Jane Osborne
Nick Moys
Jeff Upton

Planning Manager
Assistant Development Control Officer*
Solicitor & Standards Consultant
Committee Officer
Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects)*
Interim Planning & Building Control
Manager*

*Capita Symonds for Breckland Council

24/12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**25/12 DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND OF REPRESENTATIONS
RECEIVED**

Cllr E Jolly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 9, Scheduled Item 2, Roudham/Larling by virtue of being related to the Applicant.

26/12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr Geoff Upton was introduced and welcomed by the Chairman as the interim Capita Planning and Building Control Manager.

The following two site visits would be undertaken by Committee Members during the afternoon.

Land at Snetterton Heath : Erection of 40MW renewable

Action By

Action By

energy biomass power station and associated works :
Reference : 3PL/2012/0029/F

Land at Thetford & Croxton : Comprehensive mixed use urban extension (up to 5000 dwellings, 22.5ha of employment land, local centres, 3 primary schools, green infrastructure, playing fields, other amenity areas and means of access) : Reference : 3PL/2011/0805/O

27/12 REQUESTS TO DEFER APPLICATIONS INCLUDED IN THIS AGENDA

Scheduled Item No. 6 Weeting, of Agenda No. 9 had been deferred prior to the meeting for amendments to be made to the report.

28/12 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (STANDING ITEM)

The Planning Manager advised that the examination in public of the Thetford Area Action Plan took place on 6 and 7 March, 2012. The Inspector's Report was expected to be received end May 2012.

29/12 DEFERRED APPLICATIONS

- 29.1 Attleborough : Proposed Development, Hamilton Acorn Limited, Halford Road : Applicant : Hamilton Acorn Ltd : Reference : 3PL/2011/0489/O

Independent expert advice had been sought from the District Valuer on the financial viability of the proposed development, along with clarification of sewerage capacity issues, following the application being deferred by the Planning Committee in August 2011.

Ms Lockwood, Agent, stated that the proposal was wholly in line with Core Strategy policies. Attleborough had been identified as sustainable for growth. Hamilton Acorn Ltd used to employ 160 people, and the employee traffic went principally through residential streets. Infrastructure issues had been fully addressed with the Attleborough Community Team. The report highlighted the benefits of the scheme. Attleborough Town Council were very keen on transferring open space to them. The proposal would make efficient use of the previously used land. Although there would not be 40% affordable housing, it would pave the way for receipt of a new homes bonus.

Given the application was for outline planning permission a Councillor asked if a clause could be incorporated in that the social housing could be redefined when full planning permission was applied for, as market conditions could have changed. She added that when Hamilton Acorn was a working factory, a lot of employees were bussed into the site, but the proposal would improve the currently untidy site.

Action By

The Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) clarified that within the Section 106 agreement the site could be re-evaluated. The proposal would be expected to provide 10% of the energy used to come from decentralised and renewable sources as required by Policy DC14 of the adopted Core Strategy DPD.

A Councillor drew attention to Network Rail's comments.

RESOLVED that the application be deferred and the Officers be authorised to approve as recommended, subject to conditions, on completion of the legal agreement.

30/12 SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED that the applications be determined as follows :

- (a) Item 1 : Swaffham : Erection of 335 residential units together with assoc. access, car parking, open space & landscape provision : Applicant : Ben Bailey Homes : Reference : 3PL/2011/0868/F

Planning permission had been granted for residential development in July 2009, and the scheme had now come forward in the light of market conditions. The Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) advised that the mix of dwellings was not as set out in the published report, but would comprise of 86 x 2 bed houses (not 89), 156 x 3 bed houses (not 161) and 78 x 4 bed houses (not 70), with the remainder of the mix as detailed in the report. The design of the scheme represented an improvement over the previous one.

The applicant had contended that due to current market conditions, the provision of 40% affordable housing, inline with Policy DC4 would render the scheme unviable. A full viability appraisal had been submitted to substantiate the contention. Independent advice had been sought from the District Valuer, who had confirmed that a policy compliant scheme with 40% affordable housing would not be viable. The District Valuer had recommended that the applicant's offer of 20% affordable housing provision was accepted on the basis of current viability.

Mr Armstrong, Agent advised that a lot of discussions had taken place with Swaffham Town Council who proposed to take on the management of all the open space on the site. With regard to viability, the applicant was keen to build on the site, and would look to start Phase 1 of the work during 2012. The housing mix was as detailed in the report.

A Councillor who sat on the Committee when permission was granted in 2009 for 400 dwellings noticed that Georgian type

Action By

homes were not included in the current proposal, although he felt the site looked good and was needed. However he was disappointed that the affordable housing had been reduced from 40% to 20%. There were 514 applicants on Swaffham's Housing Register with over 1/3rd of those being single adults, 54 of which were aged over 60.

The Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) explained that the mix of dwellings had been the subject of long discussions, and whilst Breckland's Housing Team would prefer to see a greater number of smaller units, the applicant was not in a position to increase the number due to viability issues, therefore an element of compromise which was felt to be reasonable was necessary in trying to bring the development forward. He explained the process followed with regard to the very detailed assessment carried out, and the developer had adjusted the scheme to reflect market conditions.

It was confirmed that if the Committee were minded to approve the application, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology's recommendation remained the same as it did in 2007, that the application be subject to a condition for a programme of archaeological work.

Following a Councillor's question as to whether there was another access to the neighbouring site planned, he was advised that the neighbouring development would have its own accesses. Safety measures would be in place with regard to the pond proposed in the development.

Whilst one Councillor commented that she was pleased to see a reduction in the number of dwellings as it gave a better quality layout, she thought the housing designs were bland and urban. Added to that, Swaffham Town had a largely Georgian flavour which was not reflected in the development. It was felt by others that the development was varied, well structured and attractive.

Various detailed design revisions had been made following discussions, including on key corner buildings, adding visual interest to gabled elevations and enhancing levels of casual surveillance. There were a number of equipped and non equipped play areas proposed, but it was not known if the applicant would try to achieve, 'secure by design' status. All the wheelchair flats and wheelchair bungalows would be affordable housing. All mature trees on the site edges would be retained. The lay-bys provided through out the development had deliberately been designed in. The overall provision was quite appropriate and apart from parking courts, parking was generally within the curtilage. The Chairman asked if bollards could be incorporated around the grassed areas.

Action By

RESOLVED that the application be deferred and the Officers authorised to grant approval as recommended subject to conditions, on completion of the legal agreement.

- (b) Item 2 : Roudham/Larling : 2 mobile homes for season workers (retrospective) : Applicant : W O & P O Jolly : Reference : 3PL/2011/1363/F

Cllr E Jolly declared a personal and prejudicial interest by virtue of being related to the Applicant, Mr Tim Jolly.

The application sought retrospective planning permission for the retention of two mobile homes to be occupied by seasonal workers associated with the applicant's agricultural operations (May and June). The mobile homes were sited adjacent to agricultural buildings. The site abutted a part of the Breckland SPA which did not provide a habitat for stone curlews. Whilst the recommendation within the report was for a three year temporary planning permission, it was suggested by the Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) that it be changed to five years. There was no objection from Natural England.

Cllr E Jolly read out her husband's statement. The application was in the name of W O & P O Jolly. Permission was not previously sought due to a genuine misunderstanding, as workers were only employed for eight weeks. Asparagus was important at Roudham Farm, and sixteen staff were required each year for the asparagus operation. Whilst each year job advertisements were placed to fill the vacancies with local people, they were never all filled. Accommodation was offered for the duration of the season. The mobile homes' electricity, water and sewerage was plumbed into the farm buildings. The type of accommodation was unique and was needed for as long as possible, and was an important part of the farming business. There was a continual renewal process with regard to the asparagus beds, which last for seven years. She left the meeting.

Approved, as recommended, subject to the temporary planning permission time limit being changed from 3 years to 5.

- (c) Item 3 : Harling : Extension to Agro-Chemical storage facility : Applicant : H L Hutchinson Ltd : Reference : 3PL/2011/1375/F

The application sought full planning permission for the erection of an extension to an existing agro-chemical storage facility.

With regard to the colour of the external cladding, dark green or brown would be the most appropriate colour, with the

Action By

overall footprint of the extension being 625 sq m.

Approved, as recommended.

- (d) Item 4 : Besthorpe : Increasing size & height of earth bund using excavated material from on-site (partially retrospective) : Applicant : Petrell Ltd : Reference : 3PL/2011/1426/F

The application sought full planning permission for the extension of the earth bund to the rear of an existing petrol filling station and associated diner, in part the application was retrospective. The earth had resulted from improvements to slip roads and rather than remove it to landfill the applicant had proposed to use the earth on the bund.

Approved, as recommended.

- (e) Item 5 : Necton : Demolish garden centre premises, shop, polytunnels etc & erection of 10 houses : Applicant : Necton Garden Centre : Reference : 3PL/2012/0036/O

The proposal was a re-submission of an identical application which was refused by the Planning Committee on 28 November 2011.

It was recommended for refusal on the grounds of being outside the Settlement Boundary, contrary to PPS3, impact on amenity and impact of earth bund on the character of the area.

Mr Evans, Agent, stated that the brown-field site was covered in buildings and set out as a garden centre. The site was fairly built up. Four of the dwellings were within the development guidelines. There were four affordable dwellings amongst the six outside the Settlement Boundary, which he did not believe to be an issue. It was an outline application and therefore details of bund noise and layout were indicative, but the applicant would be more than happy to do what was necessary, with bund alternatives being provided. He concluded that any issues could be overcome by working directly with the planners.

A photograph was shown to the Committee of the prominent roadside site which had received a lot of interest with regard to housing and a Councillor advised that the gateway appearance to the village of Necton was on the verge of quite considerable change, which was very much a brown-field site. He questioned policy and spoke about the previous site permission for an aquatic centre. He believed the design, although in outline, could be re-addressed.

The Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) explained that whilst the proposal was recommended for refusal it was not to

Action By

say that a different scheme and proposal could not be considered and accepted along with an appropriate noise assessment being provided.

Refused, as recommended.

- (f) Item 6 : Weeting : 7 Pilgrims Way : Demolish garage, erect front single storey ext, carport & garage to side, rear single storey ext with room in roof : Applicant : Mr R Green : Reference : 3PL/2012/0058/F

The item was deferred prior to the meeting to allow for amendments to the report.

Notes To Schedule

Item No.	Speaker
1	Mr Armstrong - Agent
2	Mrs Jolly
3	
4	
5	Mr Boldero – Applicant Mr Evans - Agent
6	

Written Representations Taken Into Account

Reference No.	No. of Representations
3PL/2011/0868/F	
3PL/2011/1363/F	
3PL/2011/1375/F	1
3PL/2011/1426/F	
3PL/2012/0036/O	1
3PL/2012/0058/F	

31/12 VARIATION OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENT : ERECTION OF 22 DWELLINGS, GARAGES AND ACCESS ROAD : APPLICANT : BENNETT HOMES : REFERENCE : 3PL/2010/0033/F

The purpose of the recommendation was to broaden the scope of the Section 106 agreement. In the current economic climate, developers were experiencing some difficulties in finding providers able to take the units due to financial constraints being experienced by them, and it was the opinion of the Authority that the options outlined in the report would result in a contribution being made in some form towards affordable housing within the Breckland district.

Following a Councillor's comment that the application was the third to be heard by the Planning Committee that day with regard to viability

Action By

issues, the Chairman explained it was the Authority's ambition to achieve 40% affordable housing and that the three applications were coincidental.

A Councillor advised that Housing Associations were also suffering in the current climate and Breckland might have empty properties as the Housing Associations could not afford to buy them. Due to that he asked if it would be practical if Attleborough could be consulted on with regard to what they would want to be done with the proposed financial contributions if no one bought the social housing. The Solicitor explained that the financial contribution could only be used for that particular purpose, but it could be used for affordable housing in some other part of the district.

Approved, as recommended.

32/12 APPEAL DECISIONS (FOR INFORMATION)

Noted.

33/12 APPLICATIONS DETERMINED BY THE DIRECTOR OF COMMISSIONING

Noted.

The meeting closed at 11.40 am

CHAIRMAN