

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 28th October 2013

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMISSIONING

(Author: Jayne Owen, Senior Development Control Officer)

SWANTON MORLEY: Lincoln House Care Home, Dereham Road

(1) 20 Assisted Living Units

(2) 5 Assisted Living Units

Applicant/Agent: Dr S Kaushal/Sketcher Partnership Ltd

Reference: (1) 3PL/2013/0626/F (2) 3PL/2013/0627/F

DEFERRED ITEM REPORT

This report concerns two planning applications which seek the construction of 20 assisted living units and 5 assisted living units at Lincoln House Nursing Home.

Concerns were raised at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 30th September 2013 regarding highway safety and drainage. The proposals were deferred in order that further information could be requested from the applicant namely a traffic assessment and drainage details.

Traffic Assessment

A Transport Statement (TS) has been received and has been reviewed by Norfolk County Council Highways. The report relates to what was applied for under earlier applications 3PL/2012/1060/F and 3PL/2012/1061/F as well as an addendum to this statement which specifically relates to the current proposals.

Norfolk County Council Highways offer the following comments; "Both the TS and Addendum reference an earlier permission on the application for a 30 bed dementia care unit which was approved in 2009 (3PL/2009/0242/F). Planning permission for this unit expired on the 2nd September 2012. Whilst I can understand why comparisons are being made between the proposed assisted units and the previously approved dementia unit, in light of the above it seems the site currently has no extant permission and therefore no/little traffic generation potential.

The TS and Addendum do not make an assessment of the level of junction visibility and forward visibility currently available at the Dereham Road/Woodgate Road junction. The TS refers to Manual for Streets (MFS) as the appropriate guidance document against which the length of appropriate visibility splays should be determined, whereas use of Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) is suggested. However, I am satisfied from my own inspection of the site that adequate visibility splays are available.

The Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) located on Dereham Road was positioned to the west of its junction with Woodgate Road. On this basis the ATC records the speed of southbound traffic when it is exiting the bend, not on its approach to it.

It is generally accepted that residential development on average generates around 8-10 vehicle movements per weekday. It is recognised however that the traffic patterns of certain housing types, such as assisted living units will not normally conform to this

average figure and can be affected by variables such as car ownership levels, local, age and health status of occupants. In estimating the traffic figures for the proposed development it appears sensible, as has been done, to carry out a count of traffic generated by the existing care assisted units on site. The findings of the count suggest the care assisted units will generate significantly fewer movements than those expected from an open market dwelling. It is understood that if approved the permission will be subject to a Section 106 Obligation limiting the use of the units to care assisted dwellings only.

Notwithstanding the above comments, no objections were raised to the applications subject to suitable highway conditions. Whilst it is appreciated local concerns have been raised with respect to highway safety, having reviewed my comments I have no reason to alter my earlier recommendation."

Drainage

Concerns were raised regarding overflowing from the attenuation pond leading to flooding of Woodgate Road. A Drainage Site Inspection has been carried out and a report submitted by the Director of Create Consulting Engineers Ltd who has over 47 years experience in civil engineering and has worked for both the public sector and private sector clients on projects of up to £200 million pounds construction value and have, in the past, advised Breckland District Council as one of his clients. The ditch inspection was carried out by the Director personally and the analysis of the attenuation pond capacity was undertaken by Barrie Anderson C.Eng. M.I.C.E. (Regional Director for Create Consulting in Scotland). The programme used for evaluation was MicroDrainage which is an industry standard software used for the analysis and evaluation of drainage networks. The programme is accepted by the Environment Agency, water authorities and local authorities alike as a suitable analysis tool.

The report concludes that in the author's professional opinion the flooding occurring on Woodgate Road is more likely to have come from road water run off down the gradient away from the B1147 towards the hamlet of Woodgate. "This opinion is based on the fact that the general lie of the land from the attenuation pond overflow is away from the road and that water would have to rise an appreciable amount to overtop the embankments and flow onto the road. From the evidence presented to me, it is more likely that the flooding experienced at the road junctions in Woodgate result from water running down the road towards the hamlet being unable to enter the gulleys and drain away. It therefore continues down the hill to the road junction where it again is prevented from soaking away by the gully here being filled with silt and leaves. It is likely that regular gully cleaning would result in this drainage system functioning better and reducing the incidence of flooding at the road junction".

Review of Attenuation Pond Capacity

Notwithstanding the findings of the site inspection into the possibilities of flooding, the capacity of the attenuation pond has also been reviewed to establish its ability to cope with the increased flows from the development now proposed. The report states that surface water run off analysis in respect of climate change has become more sophisticated in the last six years. The existing development has therefore been re-analysed to establish the capacity required for the development under current design standards. Under current requirements the pond would require another 64 cubic metres of storage. This would most likely be accomplished by excavation to the north and west sides of the attenuation pond where the ground is highest and earthworks will not require to be built up to retain the water in the pond.

The applicant is willing to provide the required additional capacity and this can be secured by way of an appropriately worded condition.

It is also brought to Members attention that comments have now been received from the Environment Agency in relation to these proposals. The Environment Agency has commented that the combined area of these two applications is over a hectare, so the total development would be of a scale where it has the potential to increase flood risk elsewhere, unless an appropriate surface water drainage scheme is included as part of the development. However, it is for the Local Planning Authority to determine whether a Flood Risk Assessment is required to be submitted or whether it is satisfactory to consider the submitted surface water drainage scheme to ensure it is adequate to prevent an increase in flood risk. It is considered that the proposed increase in storage provision with respect to the existing attenuation pond is sufficient to prevent the potential for an increase in flood risk.

Conclusion

In the light of the above, it is considered that the proposals remain acceptable having regard to the fact that enhanced residential care facilities would be provided in line with current health care initiatives. Regard is also had to the precedent set by existing built form at this site, including 24 assisted living units approved in 2007 together with a communal hall approved under planning permission reference 3PL/2007/0115/D, which are all now built and occupied. It is considered that the additional units would be acceptable in terms of visual impact. In terms of highway safety the scheme has been accepted by the Highways Authority and the submitted drainage details are considered to satisfactorily address the previous concerns raised.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that permission is granted subject to conditions.