

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 11 MAY 2009

**REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER
(Author: Chris Raine, Senior Development Control Officer)**

**FLEECE MEADOW, DEREHAM
ERECTION OF BLOCK OF APARTMENTS INCLUDING MEANS OF
ACCESS AND PARKING AREA**

**REFERENCE: 3PL/2008/1685/O
APPLICANT: DEREHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

Summary: The application seeks outline planning permission for 14 apartments with accompanying off-road parking, consisting of 14 spaces for the apartments and 10 spaces for visitors to and staff of the adjacent Memorial Hall. It is proposed that "layout" and "access" be considered with all other matters reserved for consideration. The layout consists of parking in the eastern (front) part of the site with a long and narrow footprint proposed for the apartments, access is to be provided from Norwich Street which lies to the east of the site.

Introduction

The site is a rectangular plot of land which forms part of the Fleece Meadow which is an informal public open space located within the Settlement boundary for Dereham and the front part of the site lies within the Conservation Area. The application site is accessed via Norwich Street which lies to the south. To the south-east of the application site is the Memorial Hall and commercial premises. To the west are residential dwellings and the Territorial Army site and to north is a residential development (John Bates Close). The site is enclosed by a mix of hard boundary treatments ie fencing and vegetation.

Key Issues

1. Impact upon the character and appearance of the locality
2. Highway safety and traffic movements
3. Neighbour amenity
4. Impact upon public open space

Planning History

3PL/2003/0773/F New centre for the retired over 55's and disabled.
Approved.

3PL/1993/1026/F Resurfacing of temporary car park and wasteland, repair of boundary wall, planting and lighting installation. Approved.

Policy Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3: Housing

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment

PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

TRA.5 Where development would endanger transport safety, generate traffic that would be detrimental to the transport network, require highway improvements that would conflict with conservation considerations or attract traffic that would have an adverse effect on residential amenity, it will not be permitted.

HOU.2 Housing development within the Settlement Boundaries of the five towns will be permitted subject to criteria.

ENG1: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance

Consultations

DEREHAM TOWN COUNCIL - No objection.

COUNCIL'S CONTAMINATED LAND OFFICER - No objection subject to conditions.

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - no objection subject to conditions.

COUNCIL'S TREE OFFICER - Require confirmation that there is no legal requirement for the fleece meadow to be used for entertainment purposes as they would compromise the proposed enhancement of the remaining public open space. It is essential that the improvements to the fleece meadow are controlled through condition.

COUNCILS HISTORIC BUILDINGS OFFICER - Given the nature of the site, a full application should be submitted as opposed to an outline.

COUNCIL'S PLANNING POLICY OFFICER - Clarification of how 10% of their energy requirements can be met through renewable energy sources in accordance with Policy ENG1. A need for the applicant to demonstrate that either open space can be provided in an alternative location within the town or the remaining area can be suitable enhanced as a public open space as required by PPG17.

Representations

One letter received which confirms that they have no objection to the principle of the development and wonder whether their land could be taken to form part of the application site. The only concern is the boundary wall to the south of the site should be re-built in a more substantial manner.

Assessment

The application is referred to Development Control Committee as it is a major application.

Given that the proposal would result in the loss of part of Fleece Meadow, PPG17 requires that alternative public open space is provided elsewhere within the locality or the remaining area can be satisfactorily improved/enhanced when there is not a surplus of public open space locally. There is an under provision within Dereham and consequently the applicant (Dereham Town Council) has prepared an enhancement package for the remainder of Fleece Meadow. This proposes the introduction of significant new planting in order to create a more attractive space and also an opportunity to increase wildlife and biodiversity. On this basis it is considered that the scheme adequately mitigates against the loss of part of Fleece Meadow. A condition would be attached to any permission requiring the finalisation of the details of the scheme based upon the submitted documents and also to agree a time frame for implementation. This part of the condition in relation to timing of the works is vital in order to prevent any conflict between construction work and the additional planting.

A query has been raised as to any legal requirements which exist requiring the fleece meadow to be used for outside events which could compromise the integrity of the enhanced area ie The Dereham Fair. The Town Council have confirmed that there is no legal requirement for the Fleece Meadow to be used for such purposes and they will use alternative sites under their control. On this point the landscaping and boundary treatments adjacent to the proposed parking would act as a physical barrier to such events being undertaken upon the Fleece Meadow.

The application is in outline with only layout and access to be agreed, it is considered that there is no fundamental objection with considering the site as an outline application. In terms of the matters to be considered "layout " and "access" they are assessed in detail as follows:

In terms of layout, the footprint follows the shape of the plot with a long and narrow building. This shape repeats that of the adjacent TA building. The footprint retains sufficient space around it so as to maintain and enhance boundary treatments, this is crucial for the integration of the scheme into its surroundings, especially in relation to the Fleece Meadow. The scale, mass and height of the building is to be considered at reserved matters stage. The parking is to be provided in front of the building (to the east) which relates well to the building, vehicular access to the site and also with the formal parking which is to be created to accompany the Memorial Hall.

In terms of access, the Highway Authority have confirmed that they have no objections to the scheme in terms of visibility or the on-site parking and turning arrangements, subject to conditions. Furthermore, the formalisation of parking on the site will address current problems relating to unregulated parking on Fleece Meadow.

Policy ENG.1 of the adopted East of England Plan requires developments of over 10 dwellings to provide 10% of their energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources. The applicant accepts that this must be provided and has requested that this be a condition of any approval. It is considered that this is an acceptable approach.

In terms of neighbour amenity, whilst the overall scale, mass and height of the building is to be considered at reserved matters stage, as are the position of windows in relation to neighbours. It is evident that the footprint in relation to the neighbouring properties will allow for light, outlook and privacy levels of existing residents to be adequately preserved at reserved matters stage.

Recommendation

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the relevant planning policies subject to conditions and as such the applications are recommended for approval.