

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 13TH JUNE 2009

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Author: Nick Moys, Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects))

DEREHAM: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, FORMER CRANE FRUEHAUF SITE, SOUTH GREEN

Applicant: City & West End Property Investments Ltd

Reference: 3PL/2009/0385/O

Summary – This report concerns proposals to develop land in Dereham for housing. It is recommended that outline permission is granted subject to conditions and legal agreement.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report concerns an application for outline planning permission for residential development on land at South Green in Dereham. Based on indicative details submitted with the application it is anticipated the site would accommodate around 40 dwellings. An area of public open space is proposed as part of the development, and a new access would be created onto South Green.

The application is supported by a number of technical reports, including a Design & Access Statement, Tree Survey/Arboricultural Assessment and a Ground Investigation Report. A draft section 106 legal agreement has been prepared which includes obligations relating to affordable housing, public open space and financial contributions towards recreation, transport and library facilities.

The application site is located about 700 metres to the south of Dereham town centre. The site extends to 0.9 hectares and was until recently used for commercial purposes. The site includes a series of large industrial buildings, together with extensive concrete hardstandings. The site is adjoined by residential development and a retail warehouse park.

2. KEY DECISION

This is not a key decision.

3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The following Council priorities are relevant to this report:

- A safe and healthy environment
- A well planned place to live and work

4. CONSULTATIONS

Dereham Town Council has raised objection to the application on the grounds that it wishes to see the site remain in commercial use. If housing development were to be permitted, the Town Council would wish to see a low density scheme with more open space.

The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions and the payment of contributions towards public transport improvements (£3,500) and walking/cycling initiatives (£156/dwelling).

Norfolk County Council has raised no objection subject to the payment of contributions towards education (£3,491/dwelling) and library services (£60/dwelling).

The Environment Agency has raised no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions relating to ground contamination and surface water drainage.

Norfolk Police have raised concerns in relation to the proposed open space and footpath link.

The Council's Tree & Countryside Officer has raised no objection subject to measures to protect a preserved oak tree and landscaping details.

The Council's Senior Planning Policy Officer has raised no objection subject to the provision of affordable housing and open space.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection subject to the provision of adequate noise mitigation measures and surface water drainage details.

The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has raised no objection in principle, but has asked for further information to be provided.

Objections have been raised by a local resident concerning the impact of additional traffic on local roads.

5. POLICY

Relevant national planning policy can be found in PPS 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' and PPS 3 Housing'. At a local level, Policies DC 11 Open Space, DC12 Trees and DC15 Renewable Energy of the Core Strategy and Development Control Proposed Submission Document are also relevant. Local Plan Policy HOU.2 permits housing in the District's market towns subject to criteria relating to local character, amenity and traffic.

6. ASSESSMENT

The principal issues raised by the application concern: i) planning policy matters, ii) recreation provision, and iii) the effect of the development on local character and amenities.

Planning policy

It is considered that the redevelopment of the site for housing would accord in general terms with national and local planning policy, as set out in PPS 3 and saved Local Plan Policy HOU.2. The proposal would be compatible with the established character of the area, and would provide for the re-use of previously developed land located within the existing built up area of the town. The density of development proposed (approx.43 DPH) would fall within national guidelines. Given the location of the site close to the town centre and local facilities, it is not considered that a lower density would be appropriate here. Affordable housing would be provided as part of the development (35%) in line with current planning policy. The development would be constructed to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3.

It is not considered that a rejection of the proposal could reasonably be sustained on grounds of loss of employment land. Although the site has historically been used for commercial purposes, its potential for new business development is limited by the nature of the road access and the predominantly residential character of the surrounding area. The site has not been identified as a general employment area in the emerging LDF. Policy CP3 of the submitted Core Strategy proposes the

allocation of 5-10 hectares of employment land to accommodate future employment growth in the town.

Recreation provision

Saved Local Plan Policy REC.2 requires housing developments of 25 dwellings and above to include public open space to meet the recreational needs of future residents in accordance with the NPFA '6 acre standard'. Core Strategy Policy DC11 includes the same requirements. The proposed on site open space would meet the children's play space element of the 6 acre standard. It is proposed to address the requirement for outdoor sports provision by way of financial contribution towards improvement of off-site facilities. Given that there are significant areas of open space nearby, including the Dereham Recreation Ground, and taking into account the physical constraints of the site, it is considered that this approach is reasonable and would adequately address the recreational needs of the development.

Local character/amenity

The indicative development layout submitted is considered to be generally well-conceived. The development would be laid out and designed to reflect the character of the existing street scene and minimise the impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties. The proposed layout would also provide for the retention of important trees. Revisions have been made to the position of the proposed site access to protect an adjacent oak tree. A landscaped buffer would be provided to screen adjacent commercial development. This buffer, together with proposed open space and garden areas, would help to mitigate the potential impact of noise on proposed dwellings.

Other matters

Some concerns have been raised locally about the impact of traffic generated by the development on local roads. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the application on these grounds. Given the previous commercial use of the site, it is not considered that the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed housing development would adversely affect the surrounding road network.

In relation to security matters, it is accepted, as suggested by Norfolk Police, that the proposed open space should be well overlooked and should be designed/equipped to minimise disturbance to neighbours. The submitted indicative site layout and Design & Access Statement make appropriate provisions in this respect. Whilst the Police's concerns relating to the proposed new footpath link are acknowledged, it is considered that the benefits of improved accessibility and permeability outweigh these concerns in this instance.

7. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions relating to submission of reserved matters, layout/design details, tree protection, landscaping, access, drainage, contamination, noise mitigation, construction methods, fire hydrants and renewable energy, and a section 106 agreement relating to affordable housing, open space and contributions to recreation, education, libraries and transport facilities.