

PLANNING STATEMENT

on behalf of Mr J Braybrook

Proposed residential development

on land at 22 Backgate, Cowbit.

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For and on behalf of Brown & Co.

Brown & Co is a leading provider of agency, professional and consultancy services across the whole range of rural, commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.

Date: March 2019.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Brown & Co to support of an outline planning application submitted on behalf of Mr J Braybrook for the demolition of the existing dwelling and ancillary storage building and erection of a five two storey detached dwellings, and hardstanding along with a new vehicular access on land at 22 Backgate, Cowbit.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out the background to the applicant's proposals and the key planning issues raised by them. The statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2:** describes the physical characteristics of the **site and its surroundings**;
 - **Section 3:** outlines the **proposed development**;
 - **Section 4:** summarises the relevant national and local **planning policy context**;
 - **Section 5:** provides a **planning assessment** of the key considerations raised by the proposal; and
 - **Section 6:** sets out in brief our overall **conclusions** on the proposal.
- 1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following application documents submitted as part of the outline application: Planning Application Form, Site Location Plan (red line plan), Ecological Assessment, Indicative Site Plan, Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises of a largely rectangular-shaped parcel of land located on the eastern edge of the village of Cowbit. The site is currently the domestic garden of the host property. The land is level and extends to around 0.2 hectares. Access to the site is taken from the existing access from Backgate which fronts the site. The site is adjoined to the north and south by residential properties.

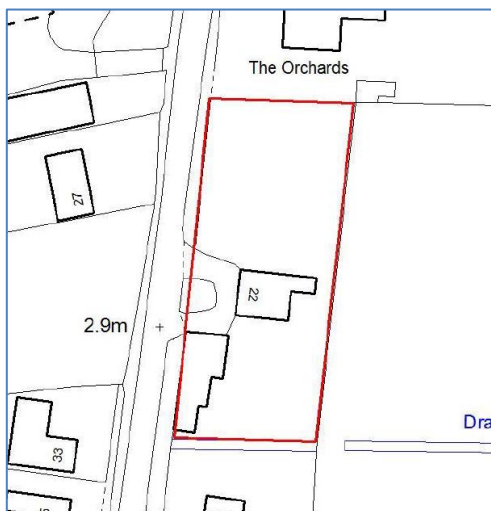


Figure 1 - Site location

- 2.2 Cowbit is a small village, located approximately three miles south of Spalding. The village is particularly well located in relation to the A16, the site can be easily accessed, providing local road links to Peterborough and Spalding. Spalding Railway Station is three miles to the north providing access to the Peterborough, Sleaford and Lincoln, as well as the East Coast Main Line at Peterborough for destinations including London, Newcastle and Edinburgh. The station can be reached by bicycle in 20 mins. Cowbit is served by a number of regular rural bus services to Spalding and Peterborough and the bus stop is located approximately 500m south of the site on Barrier Bank.
- 2.3 The village has a number of facilities including;
- Village Hall
 - Primary School
 - Village Store
 - Playing field and play area
 - Parish Church
 - Post Office (Outreach post office on Tuesdays and Thursdays).
- 2.4 The village is also the focus for a number of rural businesses and services.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Outline planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing dwelling and ancillary storage and erection of five detached two-storey dwellings. Precise details of the layout, scale and appearance of the proposed dwellings are reserved for later approval, although the submitted indicative layout demonstrates that such a development can be suitably accommodated on site.
- 3.2 Individual accesses to the dwellings are proposed from Backgate. Parking and turning for each dwelling will be provided on site.

Pre application advice

- 3.3 Pre application advice was sought from the Council in October 2018¹. The advice given by officers is that a proposed development would be acceptable. Additionally, the Council indicated that the existing buildings on the site are of no particular architectural merit and so we would not object to their demolition. The Council also indicated that the scope of the flood risk sequential test be limited to the village of Cowbit².

¹ PE-00433-18

² Email from Lucy Buttery 12th November 2018

4. Planning policy context

- 4.1 Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise³. The development plan is, therefore, the starting point for the assessment of all planning proposals. Development plan policies of particular relevance to this application are summarised in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.9 below.
- 4.2 The Government's planning policies, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are also a significant material consideration in deciding planning applications. National planning policies of particular relevance to this application are summarised in paragraphs 4.10 to 4.14 below.

Development plan policies

- 4.3 In South Holland, the Development Plan currently comprises the South Holland Local Plan (2006), which sets out the planning policies for the development and use of land in the District until the year 2021.
- 4.4 Policy SG2 of the Local Plan sets out the development strategy for the area. The Strategy indicates that locations for new development must have regard to sustainable development, and should include reusing land within defined settlement limits, make efficient use of land, be well served by a choice of transport modes and ensure the development is acceptable in terms of traffic generation.
- 4.5 The Local Plan approach is to direct new development towards larger settlements with the best range of services and access to public transport, whilst allowing more limited new development in more rural areas to serve local needs and help support local services. Policy SG3 details the settlement hierarchy and prescribes Cowbit as a Group Centre, where, "New development should support or improve their role as a focus for local social and economic activity, having regard to their role within clusters or groups of settlements."
- 4.6 Policy HS6 sets out the requirements for new housing in Group Centres on non-allocated sites. Included in this policy is the requirement for sites to be within the defined settlement limits and infilling or a replacement dwelling.
- 4.7 Other Development Plan policies of relevance to this proposal include:
- **Local Plan Policy SG14 - Design and Layout of New Development**—development should be designed to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the architectural and visual quality of its surroundings.
 - **Local Plan Policy SG16 - Parking Standards in New Development**—Development proposals will be required to provide appropriate parking and servicing arrangements.
 - **Local Plan Policy SG18 - Landscaping of New Development** – Proposals for new development should, where appropriate, incorporate landscaping proposals

³ Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

as an integral part of their design and layout, including protection of existing trees and hedgerows.

Emerging policy

- 4.8 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036: Publication Version (March 2017) is currently undergoing an Examination in Public. Due to the stage of preparation is considered that the plan has some weight in decision making.
- 4.9 The emerging plan defines Cowbit as a Minor Service Centre. Within Minor Service Centres, development that supports the Service Centre role will be permitted (Policy 2). This approach is consistent with the current development plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.10 A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published on 24 July 2018 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.11 The NPPF supports sustainable development, particularly encouraging a variety of land to come forward where it is needed. The requirements of groups with specific housing requirements are also advocated, including people who wish to build their own homes.
- 4.12 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be pursued in a positive way through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking, the presumption in favour means approving developments that accord with the development plan, and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or specific NPPF policies, taken as a whole, indicate that development should be restricted.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.13 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance provides a web-based resource of national planning guidance covering a wide range of topics. Of particular relevance to this application is the guidance set in the sections of the NPPG relating to housing development needs and land supply, rural housing, the natural environment, design and the use of planning conditions.
- 4.14 We particularly emphasise the section on Rural Housing which states,

"all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence."⁴

⁴ Planning practice guidance: Rural Housing: Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 50-001-20160519

5. Planning assessment

Principle of development

- 5.1 The application proposed redevelopment of a site within the settlement limits of Cowbit. Cowbit is identified in the settlement hierarchy as Group Centre which offers localised services and facilities and acts as a focal point for the rural community. Cowbit is therefore considered as a relatively sustainable location which is suitable for new development which will support or improve their role as a focus for local social and economic activity.
- 5.2 The proposed development is a large site within the settlement limit. Whilst not brownfield land, the proposal makes efficient use of the site at a density commensurate with its village location. It must be considered that at the time of preparation of the plan, residential dwellings and gardens were considered as brownfield land, and thus it is advocated that the proposal at hand fully accords with aims of the development plan.
- 5.3 Whilst residents of the proposed development may be reliant to a degree on car travel for their main shopping and leisure trips, due to the site's rural location, a range of sustainable transport options are nonetheless available. National planning policy acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.
- 5.4 Given their relative accessibility, existing local businesses and services, including those in neighbouring towns and villages, will be likely to derive some modest support from the development due to the addition to the local economy of the spending power of new residents. The construction of the development will also provide some economic benefits. New residents will also contribute generally to the vitality of the community.
- 5.5 Proposals will thus be consistent with the guidance set out in paragraph 78 of the NPPF which indicates that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In these respects, the new dwellings will support the shared dimensions of sustainability as defined in the NPPF.
- 5.6 The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies SG2, SG3 and HS6 of the Local Plan and thus should be considered as acceptable in principle. As outlined further below (paragraphs 5.7–5.19), it is considered that the site can be developed in a manner that will be compatible with the established pattern of development in the area and that will not intrude into open countryside. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development may result in some loss of openness, it is considered that the harm caused will be small and highly localised. Overall, the proposal will be consistent with the character of existing development in the locality.

Effects on local character

- 5.7 It is a core principle of the NPPF that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Consistent with this, Local Plan Policy SG14 requires all new development to make a positive contribution to the visual quality of its surroundings. Careful consideration has been given therefore to the likely effects of the development on its surroundings.

- 5.8 The site is well-contained visually by hedgerow planting and by the adjacent residential development to the north and south and has a stronger visual association with the village than with the open countryside, which lies to the east.
- 5.9 The site itself is of limited scenic value, containing no notable landscape features aside from existing boundary vegetation. Views into the site are limited to the immediate locality and will be filtered by existing and proposed landscaping, which can be further controlled by condition at reserved matters stage, should this be considered appropriate.
- 5.10 The proposal seeks to maintain the existing building line and thus will have little visual impact on the existing street scene. The indicatively proposed dwellings directly reflect this grain of development, with ample separation distances to nearby properties. Full details of the scale, layout and external appearance of the dwellings will be able to be controlled by the council at the reserved matters stage.
- 5.11 For these reasons, it is considered that whilst the development will inevitably alter the appearance of the site and result in the loss of some openness, the effects on the landscape setting of the village will be minor and highly localised. Certainly, the proposal will not appear as a visual intrusion into the open countryside. The proposal will not conflict therefore with Local Plan Policy SG14 which seeks to ensure that new development is sympathetic to landscape character.
- 5.12 A well-considered landscaping scheme will accompany the reserved matters submission, utilising native tree planting.
- 5.13 Accordingly, the proposal will comply with the development plan, which advocates an efficient use of land, with developments that are well-designed, take into account the form and character of their surroundings, contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness.

Local amenity

- 5.14 Given the size and shape of the application site, separation distances to neighbouring dwellings and established boundary vegetation, it is considered that the proposed dwellings will be likely to have a minimal impact on neighbouring properties as result of overlooking or overshadowing. Given the orientation of the dwelling to the north, Plot 1 has been set in from the shared boundary, with a catslide roof facing the neighbouring dwelling. This will keep the eaves of the dwelling low, at a single storey level, closest to the boundary. Whilst the indicative plan demonstrates the ability of the scheme to protect neighbouring amenity, matters relating to the detailed design of the dwelling can be scrutinised and approved during the reserved matters process.
- 5.15 Vehicle movements to and from the site can also affect the amenities of neighbours, particularly those immediately adjacent to the access to the site. However, the level of traffic movements expected is not high, and given the proximity of the neighbouring dwellings to Backgate itself, it is considered that a certain level of traffic noise is already experienced.
- 5.16 Taking all of these matters into account, it is concluded that the proposed development will secure an acceptable standard of amenity for both existing and future residents. The proposal will thus accord with the development plan, which seeks to avoid unacceptable impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents and future occupants.

Access

- 5.17 Access to the site is proposed via the individual accesses from Backgate to the west of the site, which represents a safe and suitable access. Adequate visibility is available in both directions for vehicles emerging from the new accesses onto Backgate.
- 5.18 Accordingly, it is considered that the safe and suitable access to the development can be provided.
- 5.19 Adequate vehicular parking and turning is available on site with cycle parking being accommodated on-plot within individual garages. A final design solution is able to be agreed as part of the reserved matters application.

Other matters

Trees

- 5.20 There are no notable trees on site which are proposed for retention and as such all on-site trees should be considered as being lost to development. As indicated in 5.12, a well-considered landscaping scheme will accompany the reserved matters submission, utilising native tree planting.

Flooding and Drainage

- 5.21 The majority of the application site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a small section to the east of the site in zone 2. The application at hand is therefore accompanied by a site specific flood risk assessment which, as required, includes a sequential test. The scope of the sequential test was agreed with planning officers to be the village of Cowbit.
- 5.22 It is anticipated that surface water drainage will be via soakaways. Foul water will be disposed of via the public sewer. Such matters are able to be controlled via planning condition requiring submission of relevant details prior to the commencement of development.

Heritage

- 5.23 The application does not fall within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings or other designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site.

Ecology

- 5.24 An ecological assessment and bat survey accompany the application. The report concludes that the site is generally of limited wildlife interest. Bat use was found within buildings and the report recommends additional emergence surveys along with providing an indication of various mitigation and enhancement opportunities. Given the potential delay between the granting of planning permission and the demolition of buildings, we suggest that a conditions precedent is utilised requiring submission of a contemporary bat survey and confirmation of suitable mitigation in accordance with options set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report, along with timetable for implementation. It is considered that all types of mitigation and enhancement can, in principle, be accommodated on site. Examples of such mitigation are included on the indicative site plan. Moreover, it is acknowledged that bats are protected from harm and a European

Protected Species licence would be needed to implement any impacts upon bats such as damaging a place used for shelter or disturbing the species in its place of shelter.

6. Summary

- 6.1 For the reasons set above, it is considered that the site is suitable in principle for residential development. It is noted, in particular, that the development is well-related to the built form of the village and close to other housing and local facilities of Cowbit. A range of sustainable transport options is available to future residents. Cowbit therefore represents a sustainable location for new housing of the scale proposed.
- 6.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that the development will result in the loss of a small area of garden land, its impact on landscape character and the wider rural setting of the village will be highly localised and can be appropriately mitigated and enhanced by the retention of existing boundary vegetation and new landscaping.
- 6.3 In terms of benefits, the proposal will make a positive, if modest, contribution to the supply of housing in South Holland and add to the choice and mix of housing in the village. The construction of the development will provide some economic benefits, albeit temporary, and new residents will contribute the vitality of this rural community and support local service provision.
- 6.4 Accordingly, the proposal at hand is in accordance with the development plan and as such should be approved.