

September 2014

Planning Statement

Planning Application for 37 Residential Units at Land to the West of Backgate, Cowbit

On behalf of Ashley King Developments Ltd

Savills (UK) Limited
Unex House
132-134 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB2 8PA

CAPL/229277/A6/CF



Contents

Contents 2

1 Introduction 3

2 The Site and Surrounding Area 6

3 The Proposal..... 9

4 Policy Context and the Proposal 11

5 Analysis..... 20

6 Statement of Community Involvement..... 29

7 Conclusion

Appendix 1

Appendix 2



1 Introduction

- 1.1 Savills Planning and Regeneration team has been instructed by Ashley King Developments Ltd (the applicant) to submit a detailed planning application for the provision of 37 residential units at land off Backgate, Cowbit.
- 1.2 This planning application is submitted in detail and seeks to establish that residential development of the site is achievable, deliverable and suitable and that the proposed development will greatly enhance the site and the surrounding area. Further detail and justification for this proposed use will be provided in Section 3 of this statement.
- 1.3 The application has been submitted following detailed pre-application discussions with South Holland District Council and public consultation with the local community and Parish Council.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement should be considered alongside the other documents that form the application package. These include the following:

Design and Access Statement

- 1.5 The Design and Access Statement sets out the design strategy surrounding the scheme. This includes an appraisal of the surrounding context and the intended design principles and features associated with the scheme.

Archaeological Evaluation

- 1.6 This document was produced by Archaeological Project Services and assesses the possibility of archaeological remains existing at the site. Various trial trenches were used to assess the likelihood of archaeological remains. The report found evidence of remains of Iron Age to Roman, medieval and post-medieval time periods. For further details regarding the specific findings, please refer to the detailed report.
- 1.7 Given the finds, more thorough excavation may be subject to condition of any future planning permission.

Ecology Report

- 1.8 An ecological assessment was conducted by URS Scott Wilson to assess the likelihood or level of various species being present. This involved an ecological risk appraisal, as well as an extended Phase 1 habitat survey. The report found that there

were no statutory or non statutory protected sites that would be affected by the proposed scheme. No habitats on site were found to be of high value in nature conservation terms with the report concluding that *'In ecological terms the loss of an individual arable field has limited consequences for wildlife'*. However, mitigation measures are still suggested within the report should any species be found during site clearance.

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy

- 1.9 A flood risk assessment has been conducted Geoff Beel and the drainage strategy by RSK. These assessments detail that the proposed site is appropriate for residential development in respect of potential flood risk. The drainage assessment provides the strategy for dealing with surface water drainage and attenuation from the site.

Transport Assessment

- 1.10 WSP Group has prepared a Transport Assessment in support of the application. A detailed access drawing is also submitted and subject to approval.
- 1.11 Access is to be taken from Backgate which runs to the east of the site whilst pedestrian access is to be available to the recreation ground to the west. The site lies within walking and cycling distance of the majority of Cowbit and is therefore considered to achieve a high level of non-car accessibility to a range of services.

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 1.12 The site sits in close proximity to a Grade II listed Mill. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Alliance Planning to assess any possible impacts of the proposed development on the building.
- 1.13 The focus of this report is to illustrate the ways in which the proposal has considered and complied with policy guidance, both at the local and national level. This indicates that the proposed use of the site is appropriate and provides a suitable contribution to the character and quality of Cowbit.
- 1.14 The report concluded that the impact of the proposed development would cause a 'less than substantial' impact on the setting of the listed building.

Plans and Drawings

Table 1

Number	Name
001	Location and Site Plan
002	Proposed Site Layout
003	House Type A – Floor Plans and Elevations
004	House Type B – Floor Plans and Elevations
005	House Type C – Floor Plans and Elevations
006	House Type C1 – Floor Plans and Elevations
007	House Type C2 – Floor Plans and Elevations
008	House Type D – Floor Plans and Elevations
009	House Type E – Floor Plans and Elevations
010	House Type F – Floor Plans and Elevations
011	House Type G – Floor Plans and Elevations
012	Single Garages – Floor Plans and Elevations
013	Double Garage – Floor Plans and Elevations
014	Open Fronted Carport – Floor Plans and Elevations

2 The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site extends to 1.54 hectares in size and is located within the village of Cowbit approximately 5 miles south of Spalding. Spalding is defined within the South Holland Local Plan (2006) as the District's principal urban settlement and Cowbit's proximity to this town makes it a relatively sustainable village location. Services within Spalding include a train station, primary and secondary schools, various restaurants and retail units, as well as other services including hairdressers, solicitors and health services.
- 2.2 Access is readily available to Spalding from Cowbit via public transport. The Number 37 bus provides an hourly service Monday to Saturday and four times on a Sunday. This service operates between Peterborough and Spalding, stopping at Eye, Crowland, Cowbit and Little London en-route. Cowbit thus also has access to other surrounding settlements, most notably Peterborough.

Figure 1 (South Holland Inset Map, 2006)



- 2.3 Cowbit itself is defined as a 'group centre' within the South Holland Local Plan (2006). This means that the settlement is a local service centre, supporting the surrounding rural area.
- 2.5 The Cowbit settlement boundary is triangular in shape (see Figure 1), with the site in question located fairly centrally within it. The site is consequently located within the

settlement boundary and development of such land, in principle, remains logical and a efficient use of land. It should be noted that no specific designations are identified on the adopted proposals map, for Cowbit.

- 2.6 The Grade II listed Mill Tower is located in close proximity to the site on Backgate. This is to the north of the site and adjoins the proposed access of the site onto Backgate. An image of the Mill is provided in Figure 2.
- 2.7 The site is currently used as agricultural land, which is somewhat out of context given its location within the centre of the village. North of the site are the residential cul-de-sacs of Vicarage Close and Orchard Way, the residential gardens of these properties face onto the site. It is considered that sufficient separation exists between these properties and the site, assisted by the necessary easement as is visible on the plans and discussed in further detail within the Design and Access Statement.

Figure 2: The Grade II Listed Mill Tower



- 2.8 Access to the site will be taken from Backgate which runs adjacent to the site to the east. The site is bound to the south by agricultural land and farm buildings. Beyond this land is further residential development.

- 2.9 To the west of the site, is existing public open space in the form of a playing field. A children's play area and pavilion are also provided within this space. The playing field is accessed from Parkin Road and various events and clubs operate from this space. This includes an after school football club that is organised by the Cowbit St Mary's Primary School. The Primary School is located close to the junction of the B1357 with Barrier Bank, close to the Church.
- 2.10 The abovementioned facilities all provide valuable services to the community and will continue to the benefit of future occupiers. There will be a direct access from the site to the playing fields.

3 The Proposal

Description of the Proposal

- 3.1 The present planning application seeks planning permission for the construction of 37 residential units, 33% of which will be affordable units.
- 3.2 The detailed design demonstrates that a mix of detached, semi detached, terraced units and flats is appropriate and achievable. This ensures that a mixed community with a range of housing options is produced.

Design of the Proposal

- 3.5 The submitted design seeks to reflect the existing character of Cowbit taking into account the importance of:
- Providing residential streets that can be readily used by residents, with slow vehicular traffic;
 - Vehicular speeds exceeding little more than 10mph, ensuring a safe environment for residents that is not vehicular focused;
 - Promoting connectivity to suitable play space for children;
 - Ensuring a high quality built environment, respecting the character of the existing locality;
 - The provision of a mix of housing types, both in terms of tenure but also size and style;
 - Increasing the use of informal surveillance, most notably with the sensitive use of natural and appropriate overlooking onto public or shared space;
 - Ensuring suitable landscaping is incorporated within the design to provide an attractive and desirable environment.

Access

- 3.6 Access into the site will be from Backgate. This is a minor road within the village of Cowbit that connects Barrier Bank to the south and west of the settlement to the



B1367 which runs through the north of the village connecting it to the A101 and the A17.

- 3.7 The proposed access into the site will be on the eastern boundary, although further towards the south of this border with Backgate to ensure that suitable visibility splays can be implemented. The access and splays are visible on the proposed access plan submitted with the application (Drawing Reference: 1553:ATR-002).
- 3.8 The proposed access from Backgate will then provide one principal route into the site from which all proposed properties and the retail unit can gain access. A turning head has been incorporated into the design to ensure adequate provision for service and refuse buildings.

Section 106 Agreement

- 3.9 Initial discussions have been conducted regarding the planning obligations that will need to accompany the proposal. It remains evident that contributions will be required for the following:
- Assurances that 33% of the residential units provided at the site will be made available as affordable dwellings;
 - Sufficient off-site contributions for open space will be provided.
- 3.10 Discussions will also need to be held with the relevant parties to ascertain if any sum payable for the following forms of infrastructure and services:
- Provision of financial contributions towards education facilities;
 - Contributions towards highway improvements or public transport provision;
 - Contributions to various community or health-based facilities;
- 3.11 Whilst paragraph 3.49 of the Local Plan (2006) notes an intention to develop a SPD to guide developers as to the requirements for financial contributions, this document has not yet been provided. Negotiation consequently remains crucial.

4 Policy Context and the Proposal

- 4.1 The plan led approach at Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 necessitates that development proposals are determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The Development Plan for the consideration of the proposed scheme is the South Holland Local Plan (2006). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acts as a material consideration to the determination of all planning applications stipulating at paragraph 215 that due weight should be given to local plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF itself.
- 4.2 South Holland District Council has also developed several Supplementary Planning Documents, which act as material considerations in the determination process. Relevant SPDs include the Open Space SPD, the Affordable Housing SPD and the Design and Access Guidance Notes.
- 4.3 South Holland District Council is working together with Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council, collectively known as the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee, to produce a new Local Plan. Upon adoption, this plan will provide the up to date a relevant policies for the area replacing the current adopted South Holland Local Plan (2006). Although not adopted, policies contained within the emerging Local Plan can be considered as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The amount of weight that can be attributed to these emerging policies depends upon the stage of the Development Plan preparation process, as well as the consistency with the NPPF and the amount and type of representations received to the draft Local Plan.
- 4.4 Initially it was intended to produce the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan in two parts – a Strategy and Policies document, followed by a Site Allocations document. However, in February 2014 the Council decided to move to a single Local Plan, effectively combining the two documents. The publication of the first draft of the new Local Plan is expected in Autumn 2014 with the council aiming to adopt the plan in 2016.

- 4.5 Prior to the decision to produce a single Local Plan, the Council had commenced work on its Strategy and Policies document and the Preferred Options document was consulted upon in June 2013. Evidence obtained in support of this document is still applicable to the preparation of the new Local Plan and the relevant emerging policies of the Strategy and Policies are therefore considered as part of this application.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.6 The NPPF was published in March 2012 and replacing previous Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs). This supporting statement refers to the NPPF for the relevant national planning guidance in respect of the proposed development.
- 4.7 The main purpose of the NPPF, as stated at paragraph 6, is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 goes on to identify three dimensions of sustainable development; economic, social and environmental which should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. Please refer to Section 5 for further details on how the proposed development contributes towards sustainable development.
- 4.8 The NPPF also provides 12 core planning principles. The key principle of each of these is provided below:
- *Be plan led, with up to date development plans;*
 - *'not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives'*
 - *... 'Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth'.*
 - *'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'*
 - *'take account of the different roles and character of different areas'*
 - *'support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources'*
 - *'contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value'*



- *'encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed'*
- *'promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas'*
- *'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance'*
- *'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable'*
- *'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.'*

4.9 A key objective of the NPPF is to deliver 'a wide choice of high quality homes' that 'boost significantly the supply of housing.' Local authorities are required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide *'five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and completion in the market for land.'*

4.10 Paragraph 49 goes on to state that *'relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.'* Therefore, where the local authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply, applications should be considered in the context of sustainable development.

4.11 The NPPF acknowledges that importance of promoting sustainable development in rural areas and not just in the principle settlements. Paragraph 55 states *'housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.'*

South Holland Local Plan (2006)

4.12 As has already been mentioned, Cowbit is classified as a 'Group Centre' within the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan (Policy SG3). This policy, relating to the settlement hierarchy of the District, states as follows:

... 'The villages of Cowbit, Deeping St Nicholas, Fleet Hargate, Gedney Hill, Gosberton, Moulton, Moulton Chapel, Pinchbeck, Sutton St James, Weston and Whaplode will act as local service centres for the surrounding rural area. 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’.

- 4.13 Whilst the guidance set out within Policy SG3 is of particular note, other policies are also relevant. These include:

SG2 – Distribution of Development

This policy determines that all proposals for development must be located having regard to sustainable development principles stating they should:

- 1) *Adopt a sequential approach which gives priority to the use of previously developed land and buildings within defined settlement limits, then to Greenfield land within defined settlement limits and finally land adjacent to defined settlement limits.*
- 2) *Make efficient use of land;*
- 3) *Ensure that, wherever possible, development is served by a choice of transport modes including existing public transport or by improvements to public transport infrastructure linked directly to the development and existing highway network; and*
- 4) *Ensure that development is acceptable in terms of traffic generation and road safety in the surrounding area.*

SG6 – Community Infrastructure

- 4.14 This policy requires proposals to confirm how public infrastructure and services for the development will be delivered and such measures should be secured by planning conditions or obligations.

SG9 – Development and Flood Risk

- 4.15 This policy requires a flood risk assessment to be provided as part of a formal submission where an area is at risk of flooding, in line with the criteria set within the NPPF. Policy also requires measures designed to reduce the risk of flooding to be incorporated within schemes. It continues by stating that *‘For permission to be granted the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and site specific assessment will need to demonstrate how the proposed development will be defended from flooding for its proposed life, taking into account proposed mitigation measures’.*
- 4.16 An FRA was undertaken by Geoff Beel and has been submitted in support of this application.

SG14 – Design of New Development

- 4.17 This policy requires new development to contribute positively to the *‘architectural and visual quality’* of the area. This should usually include respecting the architectural vernacular and specific reference is made to the following matters when considering the design and layout of proposed schemes:

- 1) *Local distinctiveness;*
- 2) *The choice of materials;*
- 3) *The historic pattern of development in the locality;*
- 4) *The relationship of the development to the character, form and scale of existing buildings nearby;*
- 5) *The scale, form and height of the proposed development;*
- 6) *Architectural detailing;*
- 7) *The effect of the development on the amenity of nearby residents in terms of noise, smell, general disturbance, overlooking and loss of light;*
- 8) *Planting and measures to promote biodiversity;*
- 9) *The layout of vehicular access, parking and manoeuvring facilities and the provision of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians;*
- 10) *The needs of disabled persons;*
- 11) *The use of sustainable materials and methods of construction;*
- 12) *Measures to reduce the potential for crime and disorder.*

- 4.18 Policy SG14 also suggests that development that would *‘prejudice the comprehensive development or redevelopment of an area, will not be permitted’*.

SG15 – New Development: Facilities for Road Users, Pedestrians and Cyclists.

- 4.19 Policy SG15 seeks development to provide *‘safe and convenient access to and within the site for motor vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, the less able-bodied and people with disabilities’* at a scale and character to reflect the anticipated increase in movement arising from the proposal.

SG16 – Parking Standards in New Development

- 4.20 Policy requires parking in accordance with the maximum parking standards set out within the Local Plan. This policy also enables for provision to be assessed *‘as an average across the development rather than on a plot by plot basis’* where appropriate. Policy SG16 also refers to the precise parking provision being

determined based on negotiation and its need *'to reflect the proposed use, its location and potential for access by public transport'*.

SG17 – Protection of Residential Amenity

- 4.21 This policy states that planning permission will be granted for those schemes that do not cause *'material harm to residential amenity'*. This should be assessed against the following criteria:

- 1) *The extent of any overlooking or loss of privacy;*
- 2) *The extent of any overbearing or overshadowing effect;*
- 3) *Potential noise nuisance including that associated with vehicular activity;*
- 4) *The levels of smell, emissions and pollutants'.*

SG18 – Landscaping of new development

- 4.22 Policy SG18 promotes development incorporating landscaping as an integral part of the proposed scheme where possible. It also states that a landscaping strategy should be provided for all major development proposals.

In considering landscape proposals particular reference is given to the following points set out within policy SG18:

- 1) *the protection of any existing trees and hedgerows, and any other attractive landscape features;*
- 2) *the provision of strategic tree planting of indigenous species to improve the setting of development within the wider landscape;*
- 3) *the maintenance and establishment of wildlife habitats and corridors'.*

HS6 – New Housing in Group Centres

- 4.23 This policy supports residential development in Group Centres where the following criteria are met:

- 1) *It is within the defined settlement limits as shown on the proposals map; and*
- 2) *It is on brownfield land; and*
- 3) *It is infilling or represents the replacement of an existing dwelling within the same site'.*

HS11 – Open Space in new Housing Developments

- 4.24 Policy HS11 requires proposed residential development to make provision for open space in accordance with the Council's adopted standards of not less than 14% of the gross site area. The policy then continues by stating that *'Where developments are unable to provide open space requirements on site, or where the development is adjacent to or in close proximity to a sufficient sized area of existing open space the District Council will accept, in appropriate circumstances, financial contributions from developers for the provision of open space off site or enhancement of existing open space if required to meet the needs arising from the development'*. The future maintenance of the open space must then be secured by a maintenance agreement or be adopted by the District Council.

Open Space SPD

- 4.25 The Open Space SPD sets out requirements for open space provision. However, it is also reiterated that should sufficient open space already exist, then a commuted sum may be paid to contribute towards off site provision. Details of how the sum is calculated are provided in Appendix D of this SPD. This document will consequently form a central focus for the negotiations to be held with South Holland District Council in negotiating the figure to be paid.

Affordable Housing SPD

- 4.26 The Affordable Housing SPD (2007) provides clarity on the classifications of the tenures and the housing need within the South Holland District. Details are also provided for on site and off site contributions. On site contributions are most relevant in this case. It will be ensured that a suitable contribution is provided, integrated within the development as required. 33% of the housing provision will be affordable units.

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan

- 4.27 As discussed above, in February 2014 the decision was taken by the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee to produce a single Local Plan. Prior to this work had commenced on the Strategy and Policies Document with consultation on the Preferred Options Document taking place in Summer 2013. Whilst this document will not be taken forward, it is assumed that in the context of the NPPF and the presumption of sustainable development the same principles towards housing growth and distribution will be applied. With this in mind, the relevant emerging policies of the Preferred Options Document have been considered below.

- 4.28 The Preferred Options Document identified Cowbit as a 'Service Village' as a result of its range of local services and the role it plays in servicing the local community and surrounding settlements. Table 6.11 sets out various options for Service Village Dwelling Allocations ranging between 25-50 dwellings. At 37 units, it is considered that the proposed development is appropriate to the size of the village and its services and facilities.
- 4.29 The Preferred Options document outlined the Council's preferred approach to the distribution of development and sought to *'increase the proportion of development in the Service Villages and using the availability of non-ROY land for development as a reason for the promotion of settlements to Service Villages'*. Although the Council are no longer seeking to adopt this document, in the context of the NPPF, it is assumed the Council's approach to promoting growth in sustainable villages will continue.
- 4.30 The spatial strategy states that service villages *'will act as local service centres for the surrounding rural area. Limited new development should support or improve their role as a focus for social and economic activity'*. This approach to rural development is supported by the NPPF, notably paragraph 55.
- 4.31 A range of other guidance is also provided in draft relating to the design of proposals, consideration of the environment, access to services and facilities and a range of similar factors.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 4.32 The application site (reference Cow001) was identified as available, achievable and suitable for development in the 2012 SHLAA.
- 4.33 The site's key attributes were identified as follows:
- Availability – *There are no legal or ownership problems.*
 - Achievability – *Values are moderate and opening up infrastructure costs are likely to be very low.*
 - Suitability – *The scale of development proposed is appropriate to the village's range of services. The site is within the village's built up area, and its development would have few harmful impacts upon the character of the area.*

In total ten sites were submitted to the SHLAA, five of which were identified as suitable for development. We consider that the application site is the most suitable for development in the village given its central location and relationship with surrounding

area. Access is readily available from Backgate and the site can be developed in the next five years.

NPPF 6 Year Housing Land Supply Assessment for South Holland (March 2014)

- 4.34 The NPPF 6 Year Housing Land Supply Assessment for South Holland District Council (March 2014) states that the Council's housing land supply is equivalent to 2.9 years (see table 1 below). As stated above, in the context of the NPPF when the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing, applications should be considered in the context of sustainable development. Please refer to Section 5 for further details.

Table 1: Breakdown of South Holland 5 year supply

Housing Target for Plan Period (2011-2036)	13950
Annual Housing Target (2011-2036)	558
Five Year Supply Target (no adjustment)	2790
Shortfall of Housing Provision from earlier in the plan period	1054
Five Year Supply Target incorporating shortfall	3844
Current Expected deliverable supply (2014/15-2018/19)	2675
Shortfall	1938
Housing Land Supply	2.9 years

5 Analysis

5 Year Housing Land Supply

- 5.1 Although not forming the basis of this application, South Holland District Council have acknowledged that they cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In these circumstances, Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides clear guidance on how planning applications should be considered:

'Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'

- 5.2 In a situation where an adequate supply of housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, paragraph 49 of the Framework makes it clear that policies for the supply of housing land should be considered out-of-date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. Policy HS6 in the adopted South Holland Local Plan (2006) seeks to restrict residential development in Group Centres to brownfield land and, if applied, would render the application site inappropriate for development despite its highly sustainable credentials. However, in light of the lack of a 5 year housing land supply, it is considered that this policy cannot be applied.
- 5.3 The proposed scheme will make a positive contribution to sustainable development, as set out below, and fully accords the overall national objective of boosting the supply of housing. If this planning application is approved, it will contribute towards the overall supply of housing immediately.

Contribution to Sustainable Development

- 5.4 Sustainable development is at the heart of the planning system through which sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development are facilitated and promoted.
- 5.5 The requirement for development to comply with sustainability objectives is embodied in the NPPF and land for development is required to be used efficiently and effectively. In addition to the overall contributions to economic, social and

environmental wellbeing of an area sustainable principles also relate to accessibility and integration with existing communities. How the proposed development contributes to the three dimensions of sustainable development, as identified in the NPPF, is set out below.

Economic

5.6 Whilst the proposal will not contribute directly to the economy, the addition of 37 new dwellings will make a significant indirect contribution through:

- The creation of local construction jobs through the building process;
- The use of local tradesmen and where possible the use of local materials;
- Upon completion, the scheme will create a larger local community resulting in additional expenditure in local shops, services and facilities, thus injecting additional wealth into the economy helping to sustain existing businesses.

Social

5.7 As discussed in Chapter 2, the village has a wide range of local services and facilities including an excellent bus service connecting the Cowbit with neighbouring settlements including the key town of Spalding and Peterborough.

5.8 Cowbit's designation in the adopted Local Plan as a Group Centre and its identification as a potential Service Centre in the now discarded emerging plan is a further indication that the settlement is sustainable and wholly capable of supporting new residential development.

5.9 Located in the centre of the settlement, the site is within walking and cycling distance of the key services and facilities in the village.

5.10 The addition of 37 new dwellings, 33% of which are affordable, has the potential to strengthen the settlement and integrate with the existing village community.

5.11 As stated above, the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas and acknowledges that development in one settlement can support the services and facilities of villages nearby.

Environmental

- 5.12 In considering the wider environmental role the scheme will play, a comprehensive approach has been taken in order to deliver high standards of energy efficiency, thus helping to minimise any adverse impact arising from development.
- 5.13 Whilst not forming the basis of this application, it should be noted that South Holland District Council have acknowledged that they do not currently have a five year housing land supply. In accordance with the NPPF, where this is the case, applications should be considered of their proposed contribution to sustainable development.

Principle of Development

- 5.14 The proposal seeks to provide a mix of 37 high quality dwellings of which 33% are to be affordable.
- 5.15 Whilst site allocations have not been prepared for the South Holland District, housing need is an established principle and the provision of an additional 37 dwellings will be a valuable contribution. The fact that the development plan for the District is not up to date in terms of allocations, should not hinder the ability to develop much needed residential units.
- 5.16 Policy HS6 of the adopted South Holland Local Plan identifies Cowbit as a 'Group Centre' suitable of supporting new residential development. The site is located within the defined settlement limits and could be suggested as appropriate infill, given the residential nature of it's surroundings. Whilst the site is not brownfield land, the scheme is still deemed appropriate based on the unusual existence of agricultural land within the village envelope. This field is not at a scale to maximise crop production and the benefits of losing this small portion of agricultural land vastly outweighs the loss.

Character, Context and Design

- 5.17 High quality design will be promoted within the scheme. Significant care has been taken to ensure that the proposed homes reflect the traits and character of their surroundings. This is made apparent by being stipulated within the design objectives of the proposal (see Section 3 of this statement, the Design and Access Statement and proposed elevations). The site plan also indicates a layout that shares similar



traits with the neighbouring cul-de-sacs, respecting the established design principles of Cowbit. Such attention to design and the surrounding context is suggested to comply with policy SG14 of the South Holland Local Plan.

- 5.18 In terms of character, mixed use development is proposed. Multiple benefits are thus being obtained from the site, as well as open space and an additional route into the existing playing field. This is beneficial to other existing residents that surround the site.
- 5.19 Given the residential properties to the north of the site, policy SG17 is concluded of particular note. The design has consequently ensured that sufficient distance separates the proposed properties from those that already exist. This is significantly assisted by a 9 metre easement for drainage access being required to the north of the site. This provides a clear buffer between the existing and proposed dwellings, ensuring the proposal does not impose on existing dwellings in an adverse manner.

Ecology

- 5.20 The submitted scheme seeks to preserve the natural environment where possible. The existing use of the land is agricultural and its ecological and environmental value is consequently limited as is confirmed within the ecological report submitted with the application. Appropriate landscaping and such will be incorporated within the proposed scheme, to ensure that a pleasant environment is provided. The site layout indicates the potential position of proposed landscaping and the anticipated outcome. However, it is expected that the full details will be the subject of condition.

Heritage

- 5.21 The only heritage asset within proximity of the site is the Grade II listed Mill Tower, to the north east of the site. Care has consequently been taken to ensure that the proposed development does not impose on this structure. Established vegetation already exists on this north eastern boundary, limiting the views and context of the asset extending into the site. A heritage statement is submitted with the application and confirms there would be a minor adverse impact on the setting of The Mill and its immediate setting would be unaffected.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 5.22 The site, along with the majority of the village, has been identified as being within flood zone 2 on the Environment Agency Flood Map. However flood defences are in place.
- 5.23 A Flood Risk Assessment has been conducted and submitted with this application. This shows that care is being taken to provide practical and sustainable living accommodation that can withstand extreme events in accordance with the requirements set within the National Planning Policy Framework. The report concluded that the actual risk of flooding from any Environment Agency river system is very low.
- 5.24 A Drainage Strategy has been prepared. However, it is considered that the detailed specifications can be made the subject of condition should planning permission be granted.

Transport, Access and Parking

- 5.25 Cowbit is identified as having 'good' public transport. This was confirmed within the SHLAA with attention has being placed on the bus route, connecting the settlement with both Spalding and Peterborough.
- 5.26 In terms of walking and cycling, the site will be 'pedestrian safe' and avoid cars dominating the residential environment. Further connectivity and potential walking and cycle routes are also opened by the additional access into the existing playing field which is proposed.
- 5.27 The road layout has received significant attention, with the design concept seeking to provide shared surface roads that are not dominated by the car. This is assisted by the actual road geometry planned, as well as landscaping, pinch points and texture indicating a space in which vehicle speeds will need to be slow. The specific materials and landscaping may be the subject of condition. However, the proposed site layout indicates the approach intended and the specific road position.
- 5.28 In terms of parking, each residential property benefits from sufficient space for the off-site car parking that would be needed for the intended occupancy rate. Policy requires a maximum of 2 spaces for a property of 3 bedrooms or less, whilst a property with 4 or more bedrooms should have a maximum of 3 parking spaces. This can be assessed as an average across the development rather than a plot by plot basis.



- 5.29 The proposed site layout provides a total of 67 parking spaces, when one takes into account a garage and the space immediately in front counting as one space. All of the three and four bedroom properties are provided with 2 parking spaces. Whilst the garage and space immediately in front are taken as one space, the length of the drives proposed still enable an additional vehicle to park in front.
- 5.30 The one and two bedroom properties then each have between 1 and 2 parking spaces per unit, with the majority having one parking space if one takes into account the fact that a garage and the space immediately in front count as one space.
- 5.31 The proposal is consequently considered to comply with the maximum parking standards set out within the adopted Local Plan and ensures appropriate, though not excessive, off street parking. This is deemed of particular relevance to ensure a pedestrianised environment is retained with the car not appearing dominant on the street.
- 5.32 With regards to cycle storage, each unit has sufficient outdoor amenity space to store bicycles. This requirement is consequently not directly addressed and is subject to occupier discretion.

Landscaping

- 5.33 The proposed site layout indicates the way in which landscaping can be incorporated into the scheme. This includes trees and hedging within the site, as well as on the site boundary. As landscaping was suggested as a way in which to slow traffic speeds, the utilisation of vegetation to create natural pinch points on the site is identified. This consequently shows that the intended landscaping not only has added visual benefits but can also assist the slowing of traffic speeds.
- 5.34 A detailed landscaping strategy has not been prepared at this stage but is suggested as an appropriate issue to be made the subject of condition.

Planning Obligations

- 5.35 This principle will be met by the signing of an appropriate S106 legal agreement. Negotiations will take place and all relevant contributions will be paid, providing that they are reasonable and suitably applicable to the proposal.
- 5.36 As stated within Section 3 above, care will be taken to provide a suitable S.106 legal agreement, specifying the contributions that will need to be made. This will involve detailed discussions with the relevant parties. Policy SG6 will consequently be met.



6 Statement of Community Involvement

6.1 In support of the application, the applicant has engaged with South Holland District Council, the local community and Parish Council through various meetings, discussions and a public exhibition exercise. This section of the statement provides a comprehensive account of the consultation process.

6.2 The aim of the consultation strategy was to conduct an open and two way dialogue with the immediate local community. The NPPF at paragraph 188 notes that 'early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. To ensure an effective communication, the following consultation objectives were established to shape the consultation strategy:

- Understand any concerns of the local community in respect of the development of the site;
- Allow adequate opportunity for the local community to consider, understand and comment on the draft proposals for the development of the site;
- Promote understanding of the proposals; and
- Achieve improvements in the design of the proposals.

Pre-application Discussions

6.3 The applicant has worked closely with both officers from South Holland District Council and statutory consultees throughout the design process. A pre-application enquiry was submitted to the Council. A meeting was held on 6 June 2012.

6.4 At the time, the adopted Local Plan sought to restrict development in Group Villages to brownfield land. However, policy circumstances have now changed with the emerging Local Plan and NPPF favouring the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Consultation with the Parish Council

6.5 The Parish Council play an active role in the community and, as such, the applicant has held numerous discussions with them in respect of the potential disposal of the site for residential development. The first meeting, held in October 2012, focused on

the principle of development. The second meeting, held on 2 December 2013, focused on the proposed layout.

Leaflet Drop

- 6.6 Approximately 500 leaflets were distributed to local households within the vicinity of the site. The leaflet confirmed the time, date and venue of the public exhibition and copy of which is shown in Appendix 1.

Public Exhibitions

- 6.7 A public exhibition was organised to communicate the draft proposals to the local community. Representatives from Savills and Ashley King Developments were on hand to answer any questions and/or address any concerns.
- 6.8 The event was held on 24th January 2014 (between 4 and 8pm) in the Cowbit Village Hall. The Village Hall was selected as a suitable venue due to its accessibility and close proximity to the application site.
- 6.9 Various sets of exhibition boards were displayed around the room, copies of which can be found in Appendix 2. The boards provided information about the site and proposed layout and members of the public were given the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the proposals. The exhibition was attended by approximately 51 people.

Review of Consultation and Response

- 6.10 On the whole residents were generally supportive of the scheme considering the design to have been well thought out and positive for the village.
- 6.11 The draft scheme which was displayed at the exhibition event had proposed the provision of a local shop. However, the majority of residents who attended the event raised concerns believing the existing village shop on Barrier Bank to be sufficient to support the needs of the community. Having heard the thoughts of the community, the applicant has revised the scheme to no longer include a retail use.
- 6.12 Figure 4 below details all comments received and how the applicant has responded to the feedback.

Figure 4 (response to consultation comments)

Feedback	Response
Village shop not needed as there is one already in the village	To remove shop from proposals.
Loss of green space	Current agricultural use in the centre of the village is unsuitable and no longer viable. Open space will be provided as part of the scheme.
The need for a proper footpath across the playing fields	The playing field is not within the ownership of the applicant nor does it form part of the application site. However, discussions will be held with the adjacent landowner with the view of providing a suitable path.
The land should be used for further public amenity	The site sits adjacent to a recreation ground and is considered that another large area of open space is not needed. Open space provision is also provided as part of the application.
Concerns over education provision	A formal contribution will be provided if the Council determine the existing school is at capacity as part of the S106 agreement.
The site should be screened	Plants and shrubbery will be planted along the site boundary.
Car parking will be in an issue	Each plot will have two or more car park spaces. The TA confirms that the site is within walking/cycling distance of key village facilities.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of 37 dwellings at the site to the west of Backgate, Cowbit.
- 7.2 Various reports have been submitted in support of the application and illustrate that all relevant factors have been considered and addressed. Flood risk was found to not be an issue and no sensitive habitats or ecological value were found at the site. Archaeological remains were found and suitable trial trenches have been surveyed. Further excavations may be subject to condition, should the Council feel this is necessary.
- 7.3 Planning policy has been addressed within this statement and it has been shown that the proposal meets the relevant criteria, both at local and national level. This particularly relates to the core planning principles of the NPPF and policy SG3 of the South Holland Local Plan (2006). This confirms Cowbit as a local service centre and the importance of enabling a *'focus for local social and economic activity'*. It has been shown that the proposal produces such an outcome. Attention is drawn to section 4 for an overview of relevant planning policies.
- 7.4 The Council have acknowledged that they cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of housing. In light of this the application should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development whilst housing policies in the adopted South Holland Local Plan cannot be considered up-to-date. As demonstrated throughout the statement, notably Chapter 5, the proposed development will make a positive contribution towards sustainable development, providing a mix of housing in the centre of the village which is easily accessible to a range of local services and facilities.
- 7.5 Chapter 6 of this report outlines the community consultation exercises that have been undertaken in support of this application. It confirms that resident's views were considered both via the Parish Council and through direct public consultation events. Relevant advice from the local planning authority was also sought as and when required. It is considered that such consultations ensure a positive and high quality development is put forward.

- 7.6 Based on the points raised within this statement, and whilst also deliberating the various plans and documents submitted with the application, planning permission is sought, subject to appropriate conditions.

Appendix 1

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

You are invited to a Public Exhibition of proposals by Ashley King Developments Limited for 35 new homes and a potential new village shop building on land west of Backgate, Cowbit.



The Exhibition will be held at
Cowbit Village Hall, Barrier Bank on
Friday 24th January 2014, between 4pm & 8pm.

Members of the project team will be in attendance.
For those unable to attend the exhibition, paper copies
of the exhibition boards will be available from
Monday 27th January 2014 by calling Savills on 01223 347259



Appendix 2

