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Supporting Planning Statement

Proposed New House
Plank Drove, Crowland

October 2015

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared in relation to a planning application for the construction of a new dwelling at Plank Drove, Crowland, on behalf of Mr and Mrs J Sadler.
- 1.2 The application proposes the construction of a single house, on residential garden land. The house has been designed with care by Studio 11 Architecture, and is intended to be an exemplar of good design. It has a contemporary appearance, and uses high quality materials which are intended to make it blend well with its setting. The proposed house will also exceed building regulations requirements with regard to energy efficiency, and it is intended to achieve an energy rating of 'A'. As such, it will be an exceptional development which will go beyond the standards of typical residential developments today.
- 1.3 This application is also made in the context of a shortfall in the current supply of housing. This means that local planning policies which seek to restrict development to within defined boundaries around existing settlements are out of date, and carry limited weight in decision making. In contrast, the provision of new housing benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As such, where there are no adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, the proposed development should be granted permission would delay, in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 Contextual Appraisal

The Site's Location

- 2.1 The application site is located a little over 10 minutes' walk from the centre of Crowland, and no further from the centre than many of the more outlying parts of the town. It lies between existing houses on Plank Drove.



Crowland

- 2.2 Crowland is one of the most sustainable settlements within the district, and is identified by the South Holland local Plan as an **'Area Centre'**, which is intended to provide services for a wider rural community. Being close to Crowland, the application site benefits from the services it provides.

The Application Site

- 2.6 The application site is already in residential use, as garden land. It is enclosed by hedgerows and a belt of leylandii trees, which separate it from the adjacent field.



An aerial view of the application site. It is enclosed land, separate from the surrounding agricultural fields.

- 2.7 The site is abutted to the north and south by housing, and there are already a total of nine houses on Plank Drove. As such, the road already has a residential character. Its proximity to Crowland also means that there are clear views of residential and industrial development in the background. This gives the site a semi-urban character, and its development would not have a detrimental impact on a landscape which is flat, and typified by long views which mean it is already dominated by many urbanising influences, such as the industrial site a short distance to the east (see the photo above).

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application proposes the construction of a new house which is of a bespoke contemporary design, and which would utilise suitably high quality materials. It is intended to fit well within its context, with an affinity both with a style of architecture which is typical of rural Lincolnshire, and with reference to the form of nearby housing and also with a more rural agricultural style of architecture. It does this by utilising a contemporary approach to design, both in the form of the building and its materials. It is intended to be of the highest quality of design and appearance, and we believe that it can be an exemplar which could influence future housing in the area.



An artist's impression of the proposed house.

- 3.2 The house would sit between existing houses on a generous rectangular plot, already defined as an area of residential garden. The houses to the north and south of the plot face the road, and neither have windows from habitable rooms facing into the application site. The plot measures around 45m in width, leaving plenty of space for the new house to be sited without harming the amenity of existing residents. The proposed house would be separated by a distance of 17m from the house to the north, 24 Plank Drove, and 5.5m from the house to the south, 30 Plank Drove. Given that these are side-to-side distances, they offer a very generous degree of separation. In addition, the house would be orientated to face front-to-back on its plot, and not look out towards the neighbouring properties. We therefore believe that the proposals would be entirely acceptable with regard to the amenity of neighbouring residents.



The Proposed Site Plan (Extract from Drawing 283.AL.01)

- 3.3 This would also be a very sustainable form of development, focussing on energy efficiency. For instance, the building would be constructed to a standard of airtightness which would exceed current building regulations, and which would result in a far more thermally efficient building than is typical. Energy saving measures would also be incorporated, including low-energy lighting, a mechanical heat recovery and ventilation system and a heat-pump based heating system. It is anticipated that this building will achieve an energy efficiency rating of 'A'.

4 Planning Policy Review

- 4.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise². The development plan for South Holland District comprises the saved policies of the South Holland Local Plan (2006) and the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan. In addition, the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) constitute important material considerations.
- 4.2 However, paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where Local Plans are out of date, **'due weight should be given to relevant policies... according to their degree of consistency with this framework'**. As such, the weight to be accorded to the Local Plan's policies will vary depending on their degree of consistency with the more up to date policies of the NPPF. This effectively means that the material considerations formed by the NPPF can be of greater importance in decision-making, and can be accorded greater weight than the Local Plan's policies, where these policies are both out of date and inconsistent with the NPPF.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 4.1 The fundamental precept of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 states that for decision-taking, this means:
- **'approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; 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, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or**
 - **specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.'**
- 4.2 Footnote 9 then clarifies that the policies in the NPPF which may indicate that developments should be restricted relate to a number of issues, such

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

as the protection of designated wildlife sites, landscapes or Green Belt, none of which relate to this application. As discussed throughout this Statement, we do not believe that any of the policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted on the application site, and we do not believe that there would be any adverse impacts which would meet the high test of **'significantly and demonstrably outweighing the benefits'** that the application would bring. As such, we believe that this application benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.3 Paragraph 17 states that:

'Every effort should be made to meet the housing and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.'

4.4 Paragraph 19 states that planning **'should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth'**.

4.5 Paragraph 47 requires local planning authorities to **'boost significantly the supply of housing'**. In this context, it requires local planning authorities to identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites to provide five years' worth of housing against their requirements with an additional buffer of 5%, or 20% where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing.

4.6 This is a matter which is given great importance within the NPPF, and paragraph 49 notes that **'housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development'**. This paragraph also states 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.'**

4.7 The latter part of this paragraph indicates that policies in Local Plans which are out of date, as those of the South Holland Local Plan are, cannot be accorded full weight in decision making. This should be read alongside paragraph 215 of the NPPF, noted above, whereby out of date policies are accorded weight only according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

4.8 With regard to residential development in rural areas, paragraph 54 states that **'local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs'**.

4.9 Paragraph 55 allows for **'isolated new homes in the countryside'**, where the new house would meet various criteria, including that it should:

- **'be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;**
- **reflect the highest standards in architecture;**
- **significantly enhance its immediate setting; and**
- **be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.'**

South Holland Local Plan (2006)

4.10 We set out here the Local Plan policies which we believe are most relevant to the application proposals.

4.11 Policy SG1, General Sustainable Development, states that:

'Planning permission for development will be granted where the Council is satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the principles of sustainable development'.

4.12 In addition, this policy requires new development to comply with three criteria, and these are set out below, alongside the application's response.

Policy Requirement		Application Response
1)	The quality of life for residents is unimpaired or enhanced.	The application proposals would not in any way impair residents' quality of life.
2)	Reasonable measures have been taken to conserve energy and natural resources.	The proposals would go well beyond building regulations requirements for new residential development, and this would as a consequence be one of the most energy efficient houses in the District.
3)	South Holland's essential character and main environmental assets are not damaged.	The proposals would not result in any unacceptable harm to the District's essential character. We have explained in Section 2 that the application site lies within a landscape dominated by urban influences, including housing adjacent the application site, whilst the site would continue to benefit from a mature landscape setting. As such, there would be no unacceptable impact on the landscape or local character. There would also be no damage to the District's main environmental assets.

- 4.13 Policy SG2, Distribution of Development also sets out criteria with which new development must comply, and these are again set out below, alongside the application's response.

Policy Requirement		Application Response
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 to land adjacent to defined settlement limits.	This matter is considered further in Section 5 below.
2)	Make efficient use of land.	We believe that the proposed development does make an efficient use of land. It provides a new dwelling on underused residential garden 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 the existing highway network.	Crowland is well served by public transport, as well as being a highly sustainable settlement in its own right. The application site is only a little over 10 minutes walk from the centre of Crowland, and a little over 5 minutes walk from bus stops. Its location is comparable to many other potential locations for new development on the town's edges.
4)	Ensure that the development is acceptable in terms of traffic generation and road safety in the surrounding area.	This matter is considered further in Section 5 below.

- 4.14 Policy SG3 identifies Crowland as an Area Centre, the second tier within the settlement hierarchy after the Main Town of Spalding. The Policy states that Area Centres **'will continue to provide for housing, employment and commercial development to support their roles as service centres for surrounding rural areas.'** Crowland therefore has an important role to play in the provision of housing within the District, as it is one of only five Area Centres, providing housing not only for the need arising within the town itself, but also in a wider rural hinterland. As noted in Section 2, it is the only Area Centre in the south of the District.

- 4.15 Policy SG4, Development in the Countryside, concerns development proposals which are located beyond defined settlement limits. It states that:

‘Planning permission will only be granted for development in the open countryside which is essential in the proposed location and cannot reasonably be accommodated within defined settlement limits. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable impact upon the landscape character of an area, either individually or cumulatively, will only be permitted where:

- 1. the need for the development in that location outweighs its impact; and**
- 2. no other site or solution exists to accommodate the proposed development.**

- 4.16 This policy is considered in relation to the principle of the proposed development, in Section 5.
- 4.17 Policy SG7, Energy Efficiency, requires new developments to achieve maximum efficiency through site design and orientation. This development would provide a highly energy efficient new house, which would more than meet the essential requirements of this policy.
- 4.18 Policy SG11, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), concerns the application of surface water drainage measures, where appropriate and relevant. The application proposals include the use of SuDS, and the requirements of this policy would be met.
- 4.19 Policy SG12, Sewage and Development, requires proposals that would give rise to foul sewage to include provision for its effective collection, treatment and disposal. In this case, the new house would benefit from the presence of a private sewage treatment plant, which would accommodate waste from the development without placing a burden on the local sewerage network.
- 4.20 Policy SG17, Protection of Residential Amenity, states that permission will be granted for development which would not cause harm to residential amenity. We have noted when describing the proposed development in Section 3 above that the amenity of neighbouring residents would be protected, and so this policy would be complied with.
- 4.21 Policy SG18, Landscaping of New Development, supports the retention of existing landscape features and the provision of new strategic tree planting of indigenous species to improve the setting of development within the wider landscape. The proposed development would generally

retain the existing landscaping which surrounds the site, in order to allow it to be better assimilated within the landscape.

- 4.22 Policy HS7, New Housing in the Open Countryside including other Rural Settlements, identifies that outside defined settlement limits proposals for housing will only be permitted where they are for small scale, rural exception affordable housing. As with Policy SG4, we consider this policy in Section 5, in relation to the principle of development.

Emerging South Lincolnshire Local Plan

- 4.23 Once adopted, the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan will set out planning policies up to 2031. It is being jointly produced by Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council, and it will eventually replace the existing South Holland Local Plan 2006. Work on the new Local Plan is currently underway, and the Councils' Local Development Scheme indicates that a draft Local Plan document may be subject to a public consultation later in 2015, with its eventual adoption envisaged for 2017.
- 4.24 At this stage, the emerging Local Plan is at a very early point, and it cannot be given any substantial weight in planning decisions. However, it is useful as an indicator of the Councils' latest evidence. We have noted in Section 2 that the evidence base documents for the emerging Local Plan identifies that Crowland is one of the most sustainable locations for new development in South Holland District. In light of this, the consultation document proposes to identify Crowland as a Main Service Centre, the second tier of settlement below of the Sub-Regional Centres of Spalding and Boston. Main Service Centres are intended **'to provide significant housing, employment and commercial development to support their roles as service centres for surrounding rural areas'**.
- 4.25 In response to this status, the emerging Local Plan proposes to allocate an additional 300 new houses within Crowland, for construction in the period up to 2031. This figure was determined on the basis that it was around 3% (actually 3.2%) of the overall housing requirement proposed by the emerging Local Plan, and this was consistent with the previous trend of housing delivery within the District.
- 4.26 However, since the Local Plan was published, the Council's evidence has indicated that a higher housing target is required, in order to meet the level of need indicated by the Government's Household Projections. This target is 13,950 dwellings over a longer plan period of 25 years, running from 2011-2036. This equates to an annual requirement of 558 dwellings. This is an increase from the previous requirement of 9,400 dwellings over the period 2011-2031, which equated to an annual average of 470 dwellings.

- 4.27 If this increased housing target is applied pro-rata to the target for Crowland, this increases to around 450 dwellings. It is in the context of this high level of housing need that planning applications for residential development in Crowland should be considered.

5 Consideration of Planning Issues

Housing Land Supply

- 5.1 We have noted above that national policy in the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and maintain a rolling five year supply of identified land to meet the need for housing. The Council have calculated that there is a shortfall in the housing land supply within South Holland District. This is set out in the Council's document *NPPF 6 Year Housing Land Supply Assessment for South Holland District as of 31 December 2014*, from which the figures in the table below are taken.

A	Housing requirement for plan period (2011 – 2036)	13,950
B	Annual housing requirement across plan period (A / 25 years)	558
C	Five year requirement, no adjustment (B x 5)	2,790
D	Shortfall in housing provision from earlier in plan period (requirement less completions)	1,285
E	Five year requirement incorporating shortfall (C + D)	4,075
F	Buffer (20%)	815
G	Five year requirement incorporating buffer (E + F)	4,890
H	Annual requirement for next five years (G / 5)	978
I	Current expected deliverable supply 2014/15 – 2018/19	2,257
J	Gap (G – I)	2,633
K	Housing land supply in years	2.3

- 5.2 This assessment is based upon the Council's conclusion that there has been a persistent failure to meet housing needs in recent years, hence the 20% buffer, rather than the lesser requirement for a 5% buffer, in accordance with paragraph 47 of the NPPF. We agree with this view.

- 5.3 The assessment also seeks to make up the shortfall in provision since the base date for the housing target (2011) within the immediate 5 year period, adopting the Sedgefield approach. This is in accordance with guidance in the National Planning Practice Guidance, and again we agree with the approach taken.
- 5.4 It is also worthy of note that the Council's assessment of the housing land supply position in 2014, which was based on the same housing requirement, showed that there was at that time a 2.9 year supply. The shortfall in housing provision within the next 5 year period has therefore increased, from 1,938 dwellings to 2,633 dwellings. This trend is only likely to continue increasing until a new Local Plan is able to make a large number of new housing allocations. Arguably, it will continue even for some time after that, as this level of shortfall will take a considerable time to address.
- 5.5 The background for considering applications for new residential development is therefore one of a persistent failure to provide sufficient housing, and an ongoing shortfall in provision for some time to come. In this context, paragraph 49 of the NPPF is very clear that policies for the supply of housing should be considered out of date, and proposals for new housing should be considered in light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The Principle of Development

- 5.6 We have noted above that Local Plan policies SG4 and HS7 seek to prevent development in the countryside, on land which is beyond the defined settlement limits. However, we have also noted that where there is a shortfall in the housing land supply, as there is in this instance, paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that policies for the supply of housing should be considered '**out of date**'. This means that these policies can only be given limited weight in decision making.
- 5.7 This policy approach is intended to ensure that housing can continue to be delivered to meet social and economic needs, even where a Local Plan is out of date. The South Holland Local Plan is out of date, and its policies are clearly not able to deliver sufficient new housing, as it does not make allocations which would meet the current level of housing need. This is demonstrated by the worsening position with regard to the 5 year housing land supply.
- 5.8 With reference to the tests set out by Local Plan Policy SG4, it is clear that there is a high level of need for the proposed development. The lack of available housing also demonstrates that there are not any alternative options available which could meet the need for development elsewhere.

- 5.9 In this context, the proposed development must be considered in light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that where local policies are out of date, planning permission shall be granted unless:
- **'any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or**
 - **specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.'**
- 5.10 We do not believe that there are any policies within the NPPF which indicate that this development should be restricted, and we explore this further below. In this context, development should be permitted unless there are adverse impacts of such severity that they **'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'**. Where there are no such adverse impacts and we believe that planning permission should therefore be granted without delay.

Sequential Approach to Development

- 5.11 Policy SG2 requires proposals for new development to be located in accordance with a sequential approach to development. This implies that development should be located in the most sustainable locations, with regard to the settlement hierarchy, and also with reference to settlement boundaries. We have noted above that settlement boundaries are not significant matters in the determination of this application. Spalding is the most sustainable settlement in the District, and Crowland is within the second tier of settlements, both according to the adopted Local Plan, and the emerging replacement Local Plan. The application site is within easy walking distance of the centre of Crowland, where there are a wide range of services and facilities available.
- 5.12 It may appear at face value that locating new development within the defined boundary of a smaller settlement than Crowland would be more suitable, with regard to planning policy requirements. However, this would be a less sustainable form of development, if that new house did not have easy access to a good range of services and facilities. The application site is in a sustainable location, and we believe that its location is preferable to one within a village, where the new residents would need to drive a relatively long distance to access services.
- 5.13 We therefore believe that a sequential approach to development indicates that the application site is well placed. It should also be noted that there are not sufficient new sites available to meet the need for

housing in any case, and so there are no sequentially preferable options available to meet housing needs.

Highway Safety

- 5.14 Plank Drove is a single carriageway road. The Applicant consulted the Highway Authority prior to the preparation of this application. In response, the Principle Highways Officer (in an e-mail dated 14 November 2014) noted the following:

‘NPPF advises that development should be refused or resisted on transportation grounds only where the residual cumulative impacts are severe.

I think if you were to submit a revised Application, for just one dwelling, and the design included an area to one side of the carriageway of Plank Drove (say as a slightly wider vehicle access crossing) where a calling vehicle (the post delivery vehicle for example) was able to wait without obstructing the free passage of other vehicles, then I do not think the Highway Authority would have a strong case for saying the impacts of the development would be expected to be severe.’

- 5.15 Following this advice, the application proposals have been designed with the inclusion of a passing place at the site’s frontage. This would effectively improve the situation for existing residents, as well as the residents of the new house, providing betterment over the existing situation. As such, we do not believe that the proposals could be refused on the grounds of their impact on the safe operation of the highway.
- 5.16 There are currently only four houses at the end of Plank Drove where development is proposed. There are a further five houses at the road’s northern end. This amount of development will not generate a high level of car journeys. As such, any potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles within Plank Drove will be very limited. The road has at least one, and often two grass verges to the side of the carriageway, along the majority of its length, and these provide potential refuge for pedestrians from passing vehicles.
- 5.17 The same is true of the limited length of Low Road without footpaths, which must be navigated on walking into Crowland. After a short distance, there is a footpath to the south of this road, which provides pedestrian access to the town centre. We believe that the fact that the verge is not marked out as a footpath is a minor issue in the context of the benefit which this application would bring, through the provision of housing, and other benefits such as the provision of a passing place. We do not believe that this matter is of sufficient weight to **‘significantly and**

demonstrably outweigh the benefits', and so the proposals continue to benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The Need for the Proposed Development

- 5.18 The proposed development would provide bespoke housing for the Applicant, who is a long-time resident of Crowland. The lack of housing in the town should not only be measured in terms of overall numbers, but also in terms of the specific accommodation required by particular people.
- 5.19 The Applicant runs a successful local business, employing a number of local people both within Crowland and further afield. Without suitable accommodation, he and his family would be forced to look elsewhere to meet their housing requirements.
- 5.20 It is a requirement of national policy to meet the housing needs of all people. Paragraph 159 of the NPPF clarifies that where local planning authorities are looking to meet housing need, they should address:

'...the needs for all types of housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children... and people wishing to build their own homes).'

- 5.21 The NPPF also recognises the economic problems which can be caused by a lack of suitable housing. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that:

'...planning should... proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. 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.' (Our emphasis)

- 5.22 Paragraph 21 of the NPPF also notes that potential barriers to economic growth include a **'lack of infrastructure, services or housing.'**
- 5.23 Without sufficient housing, or housing of the right types, people will be forced to move elsewhere to find what they require. This is particularly the case with more footloose people, who are generally higher earners, with a greater choice over where they live.
- 5.24 An example of this can be found in evidence relating to the nearby town of Wisbech. Here, a recent study by the Cambridge Centre for housing and Planning Research found that the local economy was dominated by agricultural and manufacturing jobs, and that there were low and

declining levels of jobs within the professional and associate professional fields (we believe that similar characteristics generally apply to South Holland District). This report identified that one of the factors which was constraining Wisbech's economic potential was negative perceptions of the living and working environment it offers, and a lack of social infrastructure, which deters incoming professionals. It therefore made the following recommendation:

'There needs to be continued investment in social infrastructure provision. These place-making strategies to improve the quality of the living environment include providing a strong residential offer in order to attract and retain a skilled workforce.'³

- 5.25 The quality of the living environment within the Borough, and the quality of its housing stock, can therefore be seen to have a direct effect on the area's economic prospects. Should aspirational housing such as that proposed by this application be refused, the effect will be to force those people who can help to build and diversify the local economy to move away.

A Sustainable Form of Development

- 5.26 We have explained in Section 3 above that the proposed house would be a highly sustainable form of development. It would exceed current building regulations requirements, and provide a far more thermally efficient building than is typical. Energy saving measures would also be incorporated, including low-energy lighting, a mechanical heat recovery and ventilation system and a heat-pump based heating system. It is anticipated that this building will achieve an energy efficiency rating of 'A'.
- 5.27 This would greatly reduce the amount of energy required to heat and light the house, when compared to any normal new house today, and the improvement would be huge when compared with most existing housing. This would substantially reduce the carbon emissions generated by the house over the course of its lifetime.
- 5.28 By encouraging the construction of housing like the proposed development, the Council has an opportunity to raise awareness of the potential to build to higher standards. We believe that the presence of houses like this are likely to encourage more people to build their own houses to similar high standards.

³ Economic Analysis of the Wisbech Travel to Work Area (Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research), March 2013, page 41.

High Quality Design

- 5.29 The proposed house would also set a high standard for design quality. It would be a far more accomplished building than is typical of Crowland or the rest of the District. Again, by championing this type of high quality design, the Council has an opportunity to encourage a higher standard of appearance and general design competency in other new developments. This application has the potential to be used as an exemplar.



The Proposed New House, viewed from the rear.

- 5.30 We have note in Section 4 that paragraph 55 of the NPPF allows for **'isolated new homes in the countryside'**, where the new house would meet various criteria, including that it should **'be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas'**.
- 5.31 We do not believe that the application site is isolated, or entirely within the countryside, due to its proximity to existing house and the town of Crowland. However, we do believe that the principle expressed by the NPPF is relevant, as it recognizes that design quality which can help to raise standards in the wider area can justify an exception to normal planning policies. In this context, it is clear that the quality of the proposed building is an important material consideration in favour of the proposed development.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The application site is on land which lies beyond the identified settlement boundary for Crowland. However, it is within a cluster of houses, and it would not stand out within a landscape which is dominated by urbanising influences.
- 6.2 Local Plan policies which indicate that residential development should be confined to the existing settlement boundary are out of date, due to the substantial shortfall in the housing land supply. As such, they can only be given limited weight in decision making.
- 6.3 In contrast, other factors weigh heavily in favour of the application proposals. These include:
- The high level of need for housing to meet social and economic needs;
 - The need for housing to be provided in sustainable locations, such as within and close to Crowland;
 - The need for aspirational housing for people who will help to boost the local economy;
 - The high standard of energy efficiency which the house will provide, providing an exemplar 'A' rated development which exceeds building regulations requirements;
 - The high standard of design which the proposals represent, which could provide an exemplar which would help to raise design standards more generally in the local area.
- 6.4 Most importantly, the proposals benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that they should be approved, unless the proposals would result in negative effects which would **'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'**. We have explained that we do not believe that there would be any such adverse impacts. We therefore believe that the proposed development should be approved without delay, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.



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