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Design and Access Statement
Proposed Residential Development
Land off Spalding Road, Gosberton PE11 4NP

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Outline planning permission is sought for the erection of up to 38 dwellings on a 1.7ha site with means of access committed as part of this application. All other matters are reserved for subsequent approval. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing range of agricultural buildings.
- 1.2. The application is supported by an indicative site layout; Design and Access Statement (including Heritage Impact Assessment); Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy; Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Assessment, Ecology Survey; Tree Report; Transportation Statement and Infiltration Test.
- 1.3. The reports conclude there are no technical reasons why the site cannot be developed. In Flood Risk terms, the hazard mapping in the latest update to the South Holland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that, sequentially the site fairs better than sites being promoted through the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.
- 1.4. Pre-application consultations were held with the local highway authority, which resulted in a speed survey being carried out and a suitable access position designed and agreed.
- 1.5. The proposal will contribute towards the growth needs identified for Gosberton and assist in the delivery of the Council's five-year housing supply.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. The application site consists of an agricultural small holding and associated buildings with access from Spalding Road, immediately adjacent to the built-up eastern edge of the village.



Plan showing the extent of the application site

- 2.2. The application site measures 1.7ha and is roughly rectangular in shape, with mature hedgerow and trees to the east, west and southern boundaries. The land is essentially flat and used recently to grow agricultural crops.
- 2.3. The north of the site is characterised by a group of old agricultural buildings, which vary in age and condition, and a bungalow. There is an existing access from Spalding Road that serves both the existing bungalow (7 Spalding Road) and the agricultural land and buildings beyond. In the northern corner of the site there is a further access track from Spalding Road, which is also used to access the field to the south.

- 2.4. That track runs between the commercial garage business to the north west and the Grade II Listed Church to the south east. In addition to the Grade II Listed Baptist Church, there is also a Grade II Listed milestone on the opposite side of Spalding Road.
- 2.5. Spalding Road is characterised by existing frontage development in the immediate vicinity of the site comprising dwellings, the Baptist Church and a commercial garage.



Looking at the range of agricultural buildings from the south.



Looking north at the rear of the Grade II Listed Baptist Church.



Looking south west across the application site from the rear of the existing bungalow



Looking west along Spalding Road with the application site on the left

- 2.6. The application site abuts the current settlement boundary and there is existing residential development along the western boundary as shown on the indicative layout plan.
- 2.7. Gosberton Primary School, the village shops and bus stop are all a short walk from the application site.

3. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1. The Gosberton Baptist Church is a Grade II Listed Building and there is a Grade II Listed milestone on the opposite side of Spalding Road across from the site. The church lies within the existing range of buildings along the Spalding Road frontage which includes the old agricultural buildings that are to be demolished. A commercial garage lies to the north west of the church with an unmade track in between. There is a small grass area in front of the church, separated from Spalding Road by iron railings. There is no curtilage to the rear of the church and, other than for an undefined 1m maintenance strip around the church, there is nothing between the rear of the church and the application site.
- 3.2. The milestone on the opposite side of Spalding Road is not presently visible from the roadside.
- 3.3. The setting of the church is largely limited to its immediate environment, particularly at the front of the building. The village has grown up around the church with frontage development taking place on both sides. The church was originally founded in 1666 and rebuilt in the C18th and then altered in the C20th. The milestone dates from the C19th and, when photographed in 2003, was seen to be lying at a precarious angle in the roadside verge.
- 3.4. The indicative layout submitted with the application has deliberately shown retained open areas around the church to preserve the existing openness. The removal of the farm buildings and general agricultural clutter will enhance the setting of the Listed Building and the formation of open space around it will serve to preserve the setting in perpetuity.
- 3.5. Having regard to the location of the milestone in the roadside verge on the opposite side of the road to the site, there will be no impact on the setting of this Listed Building. The milestone functions as a guide to the travelling members of the public and will continue to do so irrespective of this planning application.
- 3.6. There are brick and slate agricultural buildings on the road frontage, which are proposed to be demolished as part of the application. These buildings are in a poor state of repair and are no longer required for the existing agricultural activity. They are not particularly good examples of the local agricultural vernacular and are not worthy of preservation through their re-use in any proposed housing scheme.

- 3.7. Overall, the proposed development of the site will see the setting of the church enhanced through the removal of the agricultural buildings and clutter. The formation of open space to the rear will provide a 'buffer' between the Listed Building and the new housing.
- 3.8. The proposal, therefore, accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and in particular paragraph 131 which requires local authorities to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets.
- 3.9. The change to the setting of the Listed Building is simply by virtue of the removal of the agricultural buildings around it. This change amounts to less than substantial harm and this is weighed against the public benefits of providing much needed housing.

4. PLANNING POLICY

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

4.1. The NPPF sets out Central Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

4.2. Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the NPPF confirm the commitment to sustainable development based on three dimensions:

"an economic role - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

a social role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy."

4.3. This is followed by a commitment to a presumption in favour of sustainable development and at paragraph 14,

"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."

4.4. Paragraph 49 confirms this to be the case by referring to housing applications and the presumption in favour of development where, as in this case, there is demonstrably not a 5-year housing land supply.

4.5. Paragraph 55 states that local authorities must "promote sustainable development in rural areas, 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.”

- 4.6. Paragraphs 196 and 197 confirm that applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and that, in such cases, Local Authorities should apply the presumption in favour of development. The core planning principles set out in Paragraph 17 are to underpin plan making and decision making.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 4.7. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, “If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”
- 4.8. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application is comprised of the saved policies of the South Holland Local Plan (the ‘Local Plan’).
- 4.9. South Holland District Council has joined with Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council to form the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Planning Committee. This Committee is preparing a joint local plan for the South East Lincolnshire area, comprising all of the administrative areas of Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council.
- 4.10. During the process of producing a new local plan, the targets for growth across South East Lincolnshire generally and Gosberton specifically have been subject to some change.
- 4.11. The National Planning Policy Framework and the evidence base for the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan are also material considerations in respect of this planning application.

SOUTH HOLLAND LOCAL PLAN

- 4.12. A number of saved local plan policies from the 2006 Adopted Local Plan are relevant to the current proposal and these are set out below.
- 4.13. SG2 – Distribution of Development states that new developments should take a sequential approach starting with brownfield sites in a settlement limit and ending with greenfield sites adjacent to the settlement. Development should make efficient use of land, be accessible to a choice

of transport modes and be acceptable in terms of transport generation and highways safety.

- 4.14. SG3 – Settlement Hierarchy – Gosberton is defined as a Group Centre, which acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area and where development can support or improve the role of the settlement. This policy designation must, however, be reviewed in light of the June 2015 sustainability appraisal, Gosberton is now considered to be the twelfth most sustainable settlement in both South Holland and Boston Borough and, accordingly, it is now defined as a 'Minor Service Centre' in the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.15. SG4 – Development in the countryside – states that development should take place outside the settlement boundaries when the need for development outweighs its impact and no other site or solution exists to accommodate the proposed development.
- 4.16. SG14 – Design and Layout of New Development – requires development to make a positive contribution to its surroundings, respecting the vernacular architecture of the area.
- 4.17. HS1 and HS2 – set the targets for growth and the arrangements for the monitoring and phasing of residential development. These policies, together with HS3 – new residential allocations, are out of date due to the changing housing need for the area, as represented in the Objective Assessment of Need prepared for the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan and the need to roll the plan period forward.
- 4.18. HS8 – Affordable Housing - one third of new housing provided in new development is required to be affordable housing, however, this is now to be reduced to 25% in the emerging local plan.

5. DESIGN

Use

- 5.1. The application site lies adjacent to the existing built-up settlement boundary and there is also existing residential development to the frontage on Spalding Road.
- 5.2. The old farm buildings to the north of the site will be demolished as they detract from the character of the area and have an adverse impact on the setting of the church.
- 5.3. Residential development is, therefore, an appropriate use of the site having regard to the character of the area.

Amount and layout

- 5.4. The proposed development for up to 38 dwellings on 1.7 ha results in a density of approximately 22 dwellings per hectare. This density is consistent with the development within the built-up area of Gosberton.
- 5.5. An indicative layout below submitted with the application shows how the site could be developed for up to 38 units and it can be seen that this would fit with the general character of development to the west.
- 5.6. The indicative layout shows how space will be left around the Listed Baptist Church and that the setting of this building can be preserved.
- 5.7. Ultimately, the layout proposed is indicative and will be subject to discussion at the Reserved Matters stage in the event that Outline Planning Permission is granted.



Indicative layout

Scale

- 5.8. There are examples of both two storey and single storey development on the boundary of the site and there are no technical (including Flood Risk) reasons why both dwelling types could not be accommodated in any subsequent Reserved Matters Application.

Landscaping

- 5.9. Having regard to the number of dwellings on the site, it is likely that the majority of landscaping will take the form of planting within the individual plots, this will be left to the home owners.
- 5.10. The existing western, southern and eastern boundaries are already well screened and the tree survey that accompanies the application considers those trees and their retention.

Appearance

5.11. The appearance of the dwellings will form part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application when details of individual units will be agreed.

Access

5.12. Early consultation with the highway authority has resulted in an agreed location for the proposed access to ensure appropriate visibility splays in both directions.

5.13. The application site is very well connected to the village with the school, shops and the bus stop being within a minute or two walk. The bus stop adjacent to the site covers the B13, G53, G76, G78, G79, H26D, K59 routes linking Boston and Spalding and surrounding villages.

5.14. The site is highly sustainable and safe access can be provided.

6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1. A Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy have been provided, which show the site is safe from flooding and that there will be no impact on other land uses or land users. The proposal will incorporate a sustainable drainage system, which will ensure surface water run-off is limited to Greenfield run-off rates.
- 6.2. Although the site lies within Flood Zone 3a, the hazard mapping for the area in the updated South Holland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment shows that the site is sequentially preferable than other sites being promoted in the emerging Local Plan.
- 6.3. A tree survey has considered the existing trees on the boundary of the site and shown how those can be incorporated into what is a low-density development.
- 6.4. An ecology survey has considered the presence of Protected Species, especially within the buildings on site which are to be demolished, and found that there are no protected species, however, the existing boundary planting supports a variety of native birds and forms part of a wider habitat corridor. There are also nest boxes in the existing trees.
- 6.5. A ground investigation report recommends intrusive testing in the north of the site where the agricultural activity has taken place over the years to rule out the potential for ground pollution.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The NPPF asserts a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that, where housing proposals are made and there is not a 5-year housing supply, this presumption should be afforded full weight.
- 7.2. The application site is well located in relation to the existing settlement with screened boundaries and a footway connection with the village amenities to the west. Spalding Road is on a main bus route linking Spalding with Boston and surrounding villages.
- 7.3. There will be little or no visual impact arising from the development of the site having regard to the existing boundary screening.
- 7.4. The proposed density will ensure that the setting of the adjacent Listed Building is enhanced.
- 7.5. A Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the site is not at risk of flooding and that, in hazard terms, the site is sequentially preferable to other sites being promoted in the village.
- 7.6. There are no technical issues that would prevent the site from coming forward.

