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1. BACKGROUND AND PRESENT SITUATION

1.1. The site is located on the north side of Spalding Town on the original site of a Builders Merchant's premises. The original buildings have been converted in recent years to low occupancy apartments, and two medium sized detached houses occupy the portion of land to the east of the overall site. Two additional apartments were built approximately two years ago to the rear of the existing units

1.2. Pre-application advice has been sought in respect of making better use of the available land on this site by creating two further units on under-used land currently designated for car parking. A pre-application advice request was requested from SHDC Planning Department, based upon an indicative site layout. Comments received on 19 January 2016 included reservations largely relating to massing and siting of the suggested new building, and expressing concerns relating to a potential loss of site openness and the possible impact upon 202 Spalding Road from an overlooking / overbearing / loss of light point of view.

1.3. Further pre-application advice was sought on 06 April 2016, based upon a revised indicative layout which dealt with all the reservations raised previously. The configuration of the proposed units was amended to an overall mass similar to a row of garages, and it was sited adjacent to a boundary fence / hedgerow to avoid any possibility of overlooking / overbearing / loss of light. Its position on site was moved to an underused area of yard previously designated as car parking, thus resolving any issues with loss of openness.

2. SITE ASSESSMENT

2.1. The site sits within a mixed use area between the settlements of Spalding and Pinchbeck, on the periphery of Spalding Johnson Hospital and the Wardentree Industrial Estate. Residential use, including low occupancy rentable units, is established on the application

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site, and further substantial market housing has been approved in close proximity to the site.

2.2. The site is bounded to the immediate east and west by existing detached houses, and with access to the public road to the west. It is bounded to the north by an open field attached to the industrial estate

2.3. Site access is not a problem since visibility in both directions are more than adequate and current traffic movements work well.

2.4. Site levels are largely flat and even, and flood risk assessments for the site have not required special measures in new construction

3. EVALUATION

3.1. Opportunities

3.1.1. There is a clear opportunity to add new, low-occupancy rentable dwellings to the housing stock of Spalding. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 was introduced in April with the aim of encouraging Local Authorities to support the growth of this sector. It appears that there is now a more structured approach to fostering the opportunities for small scale house building alongside the traditionally monitored medium to large Developer-led housing schemes. It is intended that Local Authorities compile a register which will assist those who may be interested in developing individual plots. Unless suitable plots are released more readily into this equation, the scheme is likely to founder.

3.1.2. It is also understood that the current situation outlined in Paragraphs 14 and 49 of the NPPF, is that where there is no demonstrable five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, as is the case presently within the South Holland District, there is a presumption in favour of approving residential applications “unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the polices in the Framework”

3.2. Constraints

3.2.1. The building design and siting are important to a successful outcome, and any issues of potential overlooking and any possible overbearing effect or loss of amenity on neighbouring properties will need to be addressed. This will need to be addressed also with the requirements for site / floor levels in connection with potential flood risk.

3.2.2. Any residential development proposal should take account of the general character and grain of the established area.

4. DESIGN

4.1. The design of the proposed dwellings as indicated on the application drawing is small in scale to suit the nature and location of the site, and the general grain of the existing buildings on site.
4.2. It is a single storey building with eaves to the boundary to avoid any loss of amenity to neighbouring properties
4.3. The site allows for parking, and manoeuvring as shown on the application planning drawing, including four additional spaces allocated to the new units

5. FLOOD RISK

5.1. The location of the site falls within the Flood Zone 3 area as identified by the EA, and a Flood Risk Assessment has been commissioned and is included with this application. The requirements of this FRA have been complied with in the design proposals.

6. ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

6.1. The proposed bungalow is within Spalding town itself and therefore there will be no sustainability issues

6.2. Access to the site is possible by foot or by vehicle. Disabled visitors can drive, or be driven up to the principal entrance.

6.3. Public transport is readily available within the town

7. CONCLUSION

7.1. It is considered that the proposed development is suitable for its site and the area generally. The details included in this application demonstrate that previous concerns by the Planning Officer at pre-application advice stage are unfounded. There are no problems of an overlooking nor overbearing nature in the proposals, and the presumption in favour of approving residential applications “unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the polices in the Framework” must apply in the case of this proposal.

7.2. In summary, it is contended that the proposal is of benefit not only to the site, but also to this small portion of Spalding Town.