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Design and Access Statement
Proposed Residential Development
Walnut Tree Field, Coalbeach Lane, Surfleet,
Spalding PE11 4BY

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March 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an outline planning application for residential development on land at Walnut Field, Coalbeach Lane in Surfleet. Originally, a conditional outline planning permission was granted for an identical proposal on 5 May 2015 – LPA ref: H17-0063-15. Although interest has been shown by developers the land has not been sold, and it is therefore necessary to renew the outline planning permission.
- 1.2. The land is a paddock owned jointly by the applicants, and an Ordnance Survey plan of the late 19th Century shows that, together with other land to the north, now the site of seven detached bungalows, it was part of an orchard, as the present name of the land suggests.
- 1.3. The land is irregular in shape, forming a rough triangle, and lies on the east side of Coalbeach Lane, between the semi-detached house at No 17 and the bungalow at No 29, and with a frontage to the highway of some 65 metres.
- 1.4. This Design and Access Statement explains the submitted development proposal, provides analysis of the site and the surrounding area and outlines the planning policy context that supports sustainable development on the application site.
- 1.5. The application is accompanied by the original BS 5837 Tree Survey, and an updated letter from the original Tree Consultant, together with a copy of the original Flood Risk Assessment. As there has been an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment published in March 2017, and as the site is located within Flood Zone 3, the original Flood Risk Assessment is being updated and will be submitted in support of the application as soon as it is available.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Application Site

- 2.1. The application site is 0.379 hectares in area, and is within the developed area of Surfleet, classified in the adopted South Holland Local Plan of 2006, as an "Other Rural Settlement".
- 2.2. In addition to its western boundary (65 metres) fronting onto Coalbeach Lane South, the northern boundary of the land abuts the rear gardens of Nos 29, 31, 37a and 37b Coalbeach Lane, while the short eastern boundary is with the rear gardens of 15 and 17 Glen Gardens.
- 2.3. The south eastern boundary is shared with the curtilage of a small Anglian Water Pumping Station, and a parking and former garaging area owned by South Holland District Council that is used in connection with the adjacent housing lies to the south. This now also provides both vehicular and pedestrian access to a group of four semi-detached General Needs houses constructed by South Holland District Council in 2014 (having been granted formal permission (under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992) in April 2013).
- 2.4. The application site is currently unused but is grazed from time to time, and is separated from the public highway by means of a post and rail fence and a hedge. In the southern corner adjacent to the access to the council's land there is gated access from the highway to the application site.
- 2.5. There are four individual mature/semi-mature trees on the land – three Walnut trees and one Ash. Two of the Walnut trees are protected under TPO 017/10/1996. A Tree Survey accompanies the planning application.

The Surroundings

- 2.6. Surfleet, as an "Other Rural Settlement", comprises the historic village centre astride the B1356 (the former A16), and extends eastward as a ribbon of largely residential development along Station Road and the north bank of the River Glen to the A16. Previously, it joined imperceptibly with Surfleet Seas End, a second "Other Rural Settlement". However, since the construction of the A16 following the line of the former Boston to Spalding railway, they are now physically separated.

- 2.7. Towards the A16, and influenced by the junction with Coalbeach Lane (a rural road which initially ran due northward before looping eastward and finally southward back to connect with the Surfleet Seas End) residential development has extended northwards in depth. This is shown on the aerial photograph below, where the application site is outlined in red.



Extract from Google Earth

- 2.8. To the immediate north of the application site and forming its northern boundary are seven detached bungalows and there are a further twelve dwellings with access to Thary Lane and Coalbeach Lane to the north of the bungalows.
- 2.9. In addition to residential development extending northwards along Coalbeach Lane and clustering, two small estate developments (Glen Gardens and Kingfisher Drive) have also extended northwards from Station Road. The resultant concentration of residential development north of Station Road amounts to some 90 to 100 dwellings.
- 2.10. South of the application site are seven pairs of two storey semi-detached dwellings facing on to Coalbeach Lane, and immediately to the rear of these dwellings (to the east), South Holland District Council has recently constructed (2013-2014) a further two pairs of semi-detached two storey dwellings for rent. They are not shown on the aerial photograph, but are shown on photo 2 below.



Photo 1: Application site frontage to Coalbeach Lane; looking south.



Photo 2: Adjoining South Holland District Council new-build for rent.



Photo 3: Application site frontage to Coalbeach Lane; looking north.



Photo 4: Application site northern boundary from the parking area.

3. PLANNING POLICY

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 3.1. 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."
- 3.2. The Development Plan consists of the saved policies of the South Holland Local Plan 2006 (the 'Local Plan'). The saved policies are those policies set out in the Local Plan of 2006 which as of 18 July 2009, were listed in the direction from the Government Office for the East Midlands under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 18 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and continue to form part of the Development Plan.
- 3.3. In these circumstances, the policies referred to below accord with the thrust of guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and in particular the context of Paragraph 55 and Paragraph 215.

Policy SG1 - General Sustainable Development

Policy SG2 – Distribution of Development

Policy SG12 – Sewerage and Development

Policy SG14 – Design and Layout of New Development

Policy SG18 – Landscaping of New Development

Policy HS7 – New Housing in the Open Countryside including Other Rural Settlements.

- 3.4. The NPPF is itself also a material consideration, a fact emphasised when the development plan is silent or out of date, and sets out in Paragraph 17 the core requirements to promote sustainable development through decision making and local plan formulation.
- 3.5. Surfleet's designation as an "Other Rural Settlement" means that Policy HS7 is relevant. It states that only essential housing should be permitted. In that respect the proposed development may appear to be contrary to policy.
- 3.6. However, the application site has existing residential development on all sides, including the four dwellings recently constructed by South Holland

District Council close by to the south. Additionally, in Part 6 of the NPPF "Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes" Paragraph 55 states that "To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the viability of rural communities". As the proposed development is comfortably within an established area of residential development and within walking distance of the local shop on Station Road, it is considered that this requirement is met.

- 3.7. Furthermore, the introduction of a small number of dwellings on the application site, as shown on the indicative plan submitted as part of the application, is considered to be in keeping with the existing residentially developed surroundings.

SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

- 3.8. The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan is currently in the final stages of its formal consideration on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with few days remaining for further examination before the Inspectors commence the preparation of their report and recommendations.
- 3.9. There is however still not a five-year land supply in the local plan area, and it has been indicated by the Inspectors that the requirement for new housing in the local plan area still exceeds the numbers identified by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee.
- 3.10. In addition, the emerging local plan indicates that Surfleet, a Minor Service Centre, is a sustainable location, and within the defined settlement boundary three sites have been allocated for residential development.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.11. The NPPF sets out Central Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied.
- 3.12. Sustainable development is the key to and heart of the Framework, as it makes clear in paragraphs 6 – 10. Paragraph 7 explains there are 3 dimensions to sustainability, an economic role, a social role and an environmental role and paragraph 6 explains that the rest of the Framework, paragraphs 18 – 219, sets out the Government's view of what constitutes sustainability in the planning context.

3.13. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that:

"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking...

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."

3.14. The paragraph 14 presumption applies to sustainable development and so the first question is always "is this development sustainable"? To answer that question one has to judge the proposal against the relevant paragraphs in the Framework.

3.15. The three dimensions to sustainability are explained in more detail as:

"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." ¹

3.16. The economic dimension identifies the need to ensure sufficient land is available for the right type of development in the right places.

¹ Paragraph 7 of the NPPF

- 3.17. Although classed as an “Other Rural Centre”, Surfleet has been identified by the local authority through its decisions on applications for residential development over time, as a sustainable settlement that can make a meaningful contribution in respect of the stated intent for growth in South East Lincolnshire and to ensure the 5 year housing land supply requirement is met.
- 3.18. The social dimension seeks to maintain strong and vibrant communities by providing suitable housing. This in turn will support existing services in the settlement.
- 3.19. The environmental dimension considers the natural, built and historic environment.
- 3.20. The application proposed will make a positive contribution to the built environment of Surfleet through careful and sensitive design.
- 3.21. The NPPF requires that people are given a real choice about how they travel (paragraph 29), but recognises that in rural areas standards may have to be relaxed (paragraph 34). Within the constraints of the area the site satisfies the NPPF policies on sustainable transport.
- 3.22. The application proposal is, therefore, supported both by the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.23. Paragraph 49 refers to housing applications and the presumption in favour of development where there is not a 5 year housing land supply.
- 3.24. It 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.”
- 3.25. South Holland District Council’s most recent Housing Land Supply Assessment as at March 2017, clearly shows in the calculated Housing Land Supply Equivalent of either 3.06 or 4.65 years represents a significant shortfall in the supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 3.26. The application proposal will deliver much-needed housing and is fully supported by the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

CONCLUSION

- 3.27. South Holland District Council cannot yet demonstrate a five-year housing supply and as a result, the relevant housing policies in the South

Holland Local Plan 2006 must be considered out of date and in accordance with the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework the presumption in favour of sustainable development must apply.

- 3.28. As such, the Council should grant planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.
- 3.29. It is considered that the application proposal is broadly in accordance with the Saved Policies of the South Holland Local Plan and the housing related policy guidance of the NPPF, and its approval will enable the LPA to deliver housing that will meet an identified and demonstrable need.

4. DESIGN AND ACCESS

Amount

- 4.1. As part of this application, an Indicative Layout has been submitted that demonstrates how the site may be developed taking into account the character of the surroundings and the constraints of the Walnut and Ash Trees.
- 4.2. Four detached and a pair of semi-detached dwellings are shown on the Indicative Layout, as explained below.

Layout

- 4.3. The design of the development will be fixed as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters Application, however, our layout indicates an informal road layout and mix of housing types and sizes that will promote a locally distinctive character in sympathy with the surroundings.
- 4.4. The layout provides for a single highway access joining Coalbeach Lane at the northern end of the frontage, and serving five of the dwellings; with the remaining dwelling having a separate drive accessing directly to Coalbeach Lane at the south of the frontage.
- 4.5. The proximity of the existing residential development particularly on the north and east boundaries of the application site has been respected, to avoid the potential for overlooking and any loss of privacy.

Scale

- 4.6. The character of the surrounding existing residential development in close proximity to the site is predominantly two storey to the south and single storey to the east and north, and the application proposal will reflect this.

Landscaping

- 4.7. The existing mature and semi-mature Walnut and Ash trees on the site are to remain – two of the Walnut trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The indicative layout takes account of this in that it accommodates the four trees that are within the site (three walnut and one ash), in the front gardens of proposed properties.
- 4.8. Existing trees within the site will assist in the assimilation of the development into the surrounding landscape in terms of any views into

the site, as well as providing an attractive and pleasant living environment for residents.

Appearance

- 4.9. The design and appearance of the proposed dwellings will be determined at reserved matter stage, but the intention is that these should reflect the local vernacular, both in terms of architecture and the use of an appropriate palette of materials to create a locally distinctive scheme in keeping with its location.

Access

- 4.10. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be from Coalbeach Lane, with a private road and five individual private drives.
- 4.11. A single private drive direct from Coalbeach Lane will serve the sixth dwelling.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The application site is a suitable and sustainable location for housing development.
- 5.2. Access to the site as proposed will not compromise the safety of the local highway network.
- 5.3. The application is broadly consistent with the Development Plan and complies with the emerging South East Lincolnshire Local Plan in being located within the proposed Settlement Boundary of Surfleet, and its development particularly complies with the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which promotes sustainable development.
- 5.4. It is considered that the application proposal should again be granted outline planning permission in accordance with the Development Plan, and the provisions of the NPPF, particularly whereby "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" (Paragraph 49); and "To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the viability of rural communities" (paragraph 55).

