



- BACKGROUND AND PRESENT SITUATION

This is an amended proposal of the recent, withdrawn re-application ref: H23-1026-14 following the lapse of the previous approval numbered H23-0615-10. Regrettably, brisk marketing by Hix and Son of Holbeach met with a disappointing response and the site could not be sold and developed in the time available. The result of this was that the Site Owner was unable to dispose of redundant property, and SHDC were unable to benefit from the then-proposed affordable housing. The NPPF, which emerged in recent years allowed for a re-think on such matters in view of the serious slow-down in essential development, due at least partly to draconian Planning controls. The recent Government Directive in respect of 106 requirements for residential proposals of ten units or less has now consolidated this for such small proposals to reduce the present situation of stalled development.

- SITE ASSESSMENT

- The site is some 0.565 hectares in area, and is positioned on the southern side of Whaplode close to and served by Churchgate which leads out of the village to the south.
- The portion of land which forms the present application site is currently a redundant farmyard, which will not now ever return to agricultural use, and is largely covered

by concrete, and is routinely used by some local youngsters as a suitable place to vandalise. It is far from being an asset to the village.

- The broad grain of the area on this southern area is a mix of estate development of modest density and roadside development along Churchgate with slightly larger properties and slightly larger plots.
- The application site has a wide neck of land running up to Churchgate, which is amply wide enough to allow necessary visibility splays along Churchgate at a proposed access road junction. This would also allow the continuation of an informal, but well-used pedestrian way from Churchgate, alongside the open drain running east-west, leading to The Tilney and beyond.
- Building styles within the area, landscaping and boundary treatments etc. vary, but are mostly low-key traditional styles. The present Planning Application is in Outline only, and would therefore leave such matters of detail as Reserved Matters
- Site levels are flat and horizontal to all intents and purposes, and match the surrounding areas. There would be no intention to vary these levels within the site to an incompatible extent with its surroundings.
- Whaplode is not in a high flood risk area, and specific flood risk measures are therefore felt to be unnecessary. However, due consideration will be given to surface water disposal. The recent approval of the affordable homes along Cobgate, which is within half a mile from the application site appears to confirm that flood risk issues are not a problem in this area
- EVALUATION
 - Opportunities
 1. There is an opportunity to make the best use of available land, and which is most unlikely to return to agricultural use. There is a double opportunity to clear away a troublesome area on the southern extremities of Whaplode, whilst also providing inexpensive housing in an area where there is an identified and ongoing need.
 2. It is possible to provide a sensible number of dwellings, within the village envelope as identified on the Local Plan settlement maps, and within a short walk to all the amenities that the village has to offer. Any number of affordable dwellings however, would be likely to reduce the financial viability of the proposals and slow up the eventual construction. The new Directive is therefore most welcome and will certainly ensure that the housing stock of the District will be increased by ten dwellings as a result.
 3. There are few opportunities in Whaplode to provide a coherent development to contribute meaningfully to the need for additional housing, in such a sustainable and appropriate location
 - Constraints
 1. Any development must pay heed to the effect it will have on the surrounding properties and the amenity of existing dwellings. This site has only a small number of adjoining dwellings and it will be necessary to ensure that potential overlooking etc. is avoided
 2. Clearly the necessary road junction and indeed the routing of the new access

road must meet normal standards, and must not impose unsatisfactory levels of traffic disturbance on existing properties. This however has previously been agreed with County Highways.

- DESIGN

- The purpose of this Outline Planning Application is to demonstrate that the application site is appropriate for a 10 house development. The indicative layout is the culmination of consultations with Richard Fidler of the Planning Department, adjusted a little to reduce dwelling numbers from 12 to 10. The scheme has received a positive response in principle to date. A similar response has been received from Phil Norman at least insofar as the advice relating to the new directive is concerned.
- All issues relating to Site Access, Archaeology, Flood Risk Public Open Space etc. were covered in the previous application and should not need to be revisited. It is understood from Phil Norman that there can be no 106 agreement to require offsite POS, and so this is not proposed as part of the application. On-site POS is more than adequate for purpose in any case, and this is shown to share a boundary with the existing Playing Field
- The relatively minor issues raised by Mr Fidler in his pre-app advice have been accounted for on the submitted indicative layout. The actual designs, occupancy and layout will be the subject of a Reserved Matters Application, and so not too much time need be spent on such detail at this stage. However, an arrangement will be made by a Management Company for a private Contractor, such as Biffa, to collect refuse from the roadside to all dwellings, including those served by a private access driveway. Equally, common spaces relating to POS and private access drives will be dealt with by the Management Company paid for and responsible to the successive owners of the dwellings on site. The details of the access road were agreed with LCC Highways at the time of the previous application, but an adjustment of the position of a protected tree within the access land has recently caused additional comments to be made by the SHDC Arboricultural Officer. The alignment of the access road has been adjusted to her approval, and the amount of proposed culverting of the open dyke has been reduced to maintain the water supply to the tree.
- The reduction of the development site area, whilst maintaining the original area of on-site POS and the IDB Maintenance strip, reduces the site density to 17.7 dwellings / hectare.

- ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

- The development is located within an easy walk of central Whaplode. Whaplode offers all essential amenities, and the need to travel elsewhere is small. Whaplode is situated close to an A-road link to Peterborough, Boston, Sleaford and Kings Lynn and beyond, all of which allow easy access to national public transport road and rail links.
- Immediate access to the proposed dwellings will be possible both by foot and by vehicle. Garages / car spaces are allocated to each dwelling, allowing for visitors. The access drives will be hard-paved, as will ramped access to level thresholds at principal entrance doors. The dwellings themselves will comply with Part M of the

Building Regulations, allowing access to essential rooms within the proposed dwellings.

- Allowance has been made for possible extension of development into the field adjoining on the eastern side. Such development may not fit well with current policy, but the field in question would arguably be the very best option for depth development to suit future requirements for growth.

- **CONCLUSION**

- It is considered that the proposed development recognises recent guidance on land use, and occupies a parcel of land identified as available for development within the development boundary of Whaplode.
- The dwelling layout itself reflects the general grain of this part of Whaplode.
- Plot sizes, configuration and orientation are designed to provide maximum benefit to the dwellings, whilst not reducing amenity to neighbours
- The development proposals need not now be blighted by unsustainable 106 requirements and the District's housing stock will benefit as a result. In summary therefore, it is contended that the proposal is of benefit not only to the site, but also to the District.